

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR: A New Color....and some Good News!

As you may have noticed, with the recent autumn, many colors have changed: not only the color of the tree leaves throughout Hardin County, but also the color of the parish rectory/office building, two doors down from the church. As a brief note of explanation, I wanted to share that the repainting of the rectory/office was one of several maintenance projects that I identified pretty early in my time here as pastor since July. In addition to the urgently-needed church drainage project and the social hall roof replacement (which have just been completed), I saw that the exterior of the rectory/office was in desperate need of repainting. In countless places, the old paint from several years ago had peeled so badly as to expose the bare wood to the elements. Before another winter came upon us, I wanted to make sure that the exterior of the rectory got a new coat, so as to responsibly preserve our parish property from further damage. Such projects are necessary steps in caring for the physical plant of any parish and can avoid more costly repairs down the road. Even though the parish has the responsibility of maintaining rectory and office space, I have pledged to donate towards the cost of the repainting from my own personal funds since the repainting partially benefits me as the primary occupant of the building. I usually don't like to make major upgrades to a parish rectory so soon after starting service at a parish, to avoid potential objections or concerns, but in this case, the repainting was clearly needed to prevent further deterioration of the building. Thanks to our own Michael Moloney for his hard work on the painting, which I think also brings out the beauty of the historic wood trim. Certainly, if anyone has questions, please see me.

We are also happy to report that Our Lady of Lourdes Parish has just been awarded two grants from the Catholic Foundation in Columbus. Every year, the Catholic Foundation (the entity which manages the endowment funds of the Diocese and all the parishes) offers parishes the opportunity to apply for grants to fund maintenance or programming projects. These grants are funded by the general endowments of the Foundation. My experience in the past has been that the Foundation typically awards funds to about 50% of the applications submitted.

So, I decided to submit two grant requests for our parish this fall: one for the cost of the church drainage project (with the help of Jim Schieltz), and the other for the cost of subsidizing the annual Newman Club Kairos Retreat, a large part of which the parish is responsible for. Happily, we were recently approved for both grants! We have been awarded \$9,163 toward the former, and \$2,500 toward the latter! This is a huge blessing, which allows us to use more of the offertory and capital fund donations for other necessary budgetary items and projects. On this Thanksgiving weekend, we are grateful for these awards. Please support our Catholic Foundation (especially considering your estate giving plans), and our ongoing efforts to keep improving our facilities and programs here at OLL!

Fr. Ferguson is available to help you with any questions or concerns you may have; please contact him at hamilton.college@outlook.com or at 419-634-2626.

THOUGHTS FOR OUR PARISH CHILDREN by “Jackie”, the Pastor’s Cat

Note to our Children from Father Ferguson: “Hi boys and girls! I’m afraid Jackie is unable to say much to you today. You see, ever since Thanksgiving Day, she has been sound asleep. I think she ate too much turkey. They say turkey can make you sleepy. Well, cats like to sleep a lot anyway, so fill a cat up with turkey, and....let’s just say that I hope Jackie wakes up sometime before Christmas! Right now she is sprawled out on the couch, drooling, and will not wake up no matter how much I try. Even when I opened a tuna can for lunch, she did not budge! She must really be conked out. Did you have a good Thanksgiving Day? What was your favorite part? I think Jackie is definitely thankful for her food, and to our God who provides it for us. Well, as Jackie would say, ‘Have a “purr”-fect week!’”



IMPORTANT NOTES ON PASTORAL CARE

Fr. Ferguson, along with Fr. Jeffrey Tigyer and Dcn. Mike Hood, stands ready to serve your pastoral needs. Periodically, I like to remind parishioners of how best to access pastoral care here in our Hardin County parishes, for your convenience and spiritual benefit.

The following is some important information:

- 1) **HOSPITAL STAYS:** Please note that, due to current laws, hospitals are no longer able to notify local clergy about enlisted Catholic patients. We won't know someone is in the hospital unless you tell us. If you wish one of the parish clergy to visit you or a loved one during a hospital stay, PLEASE LET US KNOW by calling the Parish Emergency Line (419-673-6720), or (in Kenton) you may also call the regular Kenton church number (419-675-1162) and press the emergency option for Fr. Jeffrey. [Columbus-area hospitals also have local priests "on call"; you may ask the nursing staff to contact the "Catholic Chaplain on call"; or you may still always call our Parish Emergency options.]
- 2) **TERMINAL ILLNESSES:** It is important for a gravely sick person to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and also Viaticum (Holy Communion for the last time) [these used to be called "Last Rites" in the old days] prior to death. HOWEVER, we need NOT wait until the "last moment" to call a priest to administer these sacraments. It is okay – and much preferable – to call a priest several days – even weeks – prior to an anticipated time of death to request these sacraments. While some medical emergencies obviously arise suddenly, most terminal patients are ill for some time, and it is much better to be able to minister to a person with less frenzy and haste by not waiting until the "last moment". This will also allow the person to receive Viaticum while still conscious. Plus, in these days of clergy shortages, we may risk not being able to reach a priest in time if we wait until the "last moment". Please arrange for these sacraments, earlier rather than later, by calling the Parish Emergency options as above.
- 3) **FUNERALS:** While you may certainly contact Fr. Ferguson upon a time of death of a loved one, normally a family meets with a Funeral Director, who will then call Fr. Ferguson to finalize arrangements, depending on parish scheduling logistics. Fr. Ferguson will also be the one to "delegate" funeral arrangements to Fr. Jeffrey or Dcn. Mike if circumstances warrant. Parish staff will then make final liturgical arrangements with the family.
- 4) **BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS, ANNULMENTS:** Please contact Fr. Ferguson directly to initiate arrangements for all these cases. He may be reached through his normal contact information. If circumstances warrant, he may then "delegate" a case to Fr. Jeffrey or Dcn. Mike.
- 5) **HOMEBOUND VISITS/NURSING HOMES:** If you or a loved one is unable to come to weekend Mass, we offer a "homebound visitation" program staffed by parish volunteers. You may also ask any of the three clergy to visit as well. Please arrange a one-time or long-term home visitation by calling either parish office, or by contacting any of the parish clergy.
- 6) **GENERAL SPIRITUAL DIRECTION:** Any of the three clergy is available for spiritual direction. Although this is very different from *psychological* counseling – which we are not licensed to do – *spiritual direction* is an important service to help individuals with their spiritual struggles or overall growth by making use of Scripture, prayer, the saints, the Church's wisdom, etc. If interested, contact any of the three parish clergy directly.

Hopefully, these points of information will assist everyone in knowing how best to access the pastoral care services offered by our Hardin County parishes. If you have any questions, feel free to ask Fr. Ferguson at any time. Thank you! St. Mary, our Mother, Pray for Us!