

MANY THINGS

When my Godson, Josh, was three or four years old (he's thirteen now) he was in the car with his dad and talking non-stop (as he still does). After a very long while of listening, his dad turned to him and said: "Josh, can't you be quiet for just a minute?" Josh's response: "But Dad, I've got a lot to say!" Well, that's the case with me today, so here goes.....

PADS

I wrote last week about the upcoming relationship we hope to have with the PADS Family Shelter at St. Lawrence O'Toole. They've asked us to join many other local communities of worship in staffing the shelter just one night a month, probably a Wednesday beginning in December. From 12 to 15 volunteers are needed to work the four shifts, with some shifts needing only two or three volunteers. The hours are: 6:00pm to 11:00pm; 10:45pm to 3:00am; 2:45 to 7:00am; and 5:00 to 7:00am. Each shift has different responsibilities, with those in the wee hours of the morning simply ensuring that all the guests are sleeping soundly. No one is asked to volunteer for more than one shift, and again, this is only once a month for St. Joseph parishioners.

If you would be interested in learning more or offering your help with this outreach project, please e-mail me at rkyfes@posjhomewood.org and I'll pass on your contact information to the two parishioners who have offered to help coordinate our participation at the shelter.

PADS HYGIENE BAGS

Right now, everyone has an opportunity to help the families at the PADS shelter who seek emergency assistance during the cold nights of winter and spring by providing *Hygiene Bags* for the guests who come to St. Lawrence O'Toole for overnight shelter. Here is a description of the items needed:

Hygiene Bags (standard sized items except the mouth wash)

- Gallon Ziploc bag with label panel
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Comb
- Bar soap
- Disposable razor
- Deodorant
- Pair of adult socks
- Travel size mouth wash

We're doing this as a Thanksgiving project for our parish and asking that you bring these bags to church when you come to Mass on Thanksgiving Day (or next weekend). What better way to say "thanks" to God for all the blessings that are ours?

NEW OFFERTORY COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Beginning the First Sunday of Advent, the weekend of December 2-3, our faithful and conscientious Ushers have recommended that we begin a new procedure for taking up the Offertory Collection, a system that many other churches have been using for years.

Instead of using the long-handled baskets that are shoved under your noses (and which some seem to artfully ignore), they'll be handing small baskets to those at the end of the pews in the center aisle and to those at the end of the side aisle pews. You'll be asked to drop your offering in the basket before passing it on to the person closest to you. When the basket in your row gets to the other end (or to the wall), you can pass it on to the person behind you or an usher will be there to assist you in moving the basket back to the next populated pew.

To be honest, this may add a minute or two to the collection time; but it should also help to emphasize the personal responsibility every parishioner has to fulfill one of the seven Precepts of the Church: to contribute to the support of one's parish. And if you contribute electronically and don't want to feel guilty, you can drop in an offertory envelope and check the box that indicates your electronic giving option.

But please be patient as we begin this new procedure because it might take a while to get the bugs worked out. Our Ushers will be practicing soon to help ensure that all will proceed smoothly. I continue to be grateful to them for their generous service.

WINTER PICNIC > MARDI GRAS

And last, but definitely not least, I'm happy to announce a new parish event that will replace our successful, enjoyable, but labor-intensive Winter Picnic. That event began as a parish fundraiser meant to be of particular benefit to the school, and it was certainly a great help in that regard. But it also required a huge amount of planning, set-up, execution and clean-up, and the exceptionally generous committee members felt that it might be time to move on to something a bit simpler but no less fun.

By chance and serendipity, the Parish Council had been discussing the idea of a Mardi Gras celebration highlighting the diversity of our parish, with the centerpiece being a potluck dinner—families sharing food representative of their ethnic heritage. The members of the Winter Picnic committee jumped on board with the idea and met recently to begin brainstorming and planning.

So save the date: Saturday, February 10, 6:00 to 9:00p.m. in Sayers Hall (the Saturday before Ash Wednesday). We hope to have a Dixieland band, there will be a raffle, and we'll provide beverages (for a nominal price) and dessert. You bring the food, your family, and a determination to have a good time. The working title for this (which may change) is *Fat Saturday at St. Joe's*. We'll see.... But we also need some new faces and willing hands to make this work. So if you would be interested in helping with what

should be a much less stressful event than the Winter Picnic, please contact me at 708-798-0622, ext. 2 or e- mail me: rkyfes@posjhomewood.org and I'll pass on your contact information to the current committee members. We'll be meeting again on Wednesday, December 6th at 7:00p.m. in the school and anyone is welcome to join us then. We're open to new ideas that will provide an enjoyable evening for everyone but we also want to keep things relatively simple so that no one goes home exhausted when it's over. It would be nice to make some money with this event, but it's more important that we simply enjoy being together with fellow parishioners and, hopefully, with other members of our local community.

I had a lot to say, but I'll be quiet now....

Fr. Bob