**NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2017**

**Due to vacations** (many prolonged), retirements from the Eucharistic ministry and illnesses, we have a serious shortage of ministers this summer. I have cut back the number of ministers assigned to each Mass throughout the summer months. Nevertheless, many of our ministers will find themselves assigned to Masses they do not ordinarily attend, principally the 5:30 Saturday Mass. In addition, virtually everyone will find that they are assigned to more Masses than normal.

Things will get back to normal in late August when school reconvenes. Until then I thank you for your patience.

When you check out your Mass assignments, be sure to use the Find function which will help you search the entire schedule quickly.

**How to Fix This**. There is a way to avoid such shortages. It is to recruit more parishioners to be Eucharistic ministers. Recruiting is not a one-man job. I would greatly appreciate it if you would raise the possibility of the Eucharistic ministry with someone you know. If they show interest let me know the name and I will take it from there. Be sure to ask your husband or wife.

**Departing Ministers**. I wish to extend my sincere thanks to a number of Eucharistic Ministers whose terms have expired or who are moving from the McLean area. Many of them have served for a decade or longer. They are Bob and Claire Callen (5:30), Choon and Bill Charyk (11), Michael and Mary Quinlan (9), Arch Turner (7:30) and Bryce Weaver (5:30).

**Change on the Horizon**

Significant changes are on the horizon according to discussion at the first meeting of Father David Martin’s Parish Ministry Council last Thursday (May 18).

Father Dave told the 33-member group that one of his goals is to install a tabernacle in the main church. This would necessitate removal of the giant mosaic that occupies the wall behind the altar. The mosaic’s continued presence could undermine the goal of making the tabernacle a major focal point in the church.

The pastor said that improved lighting and safety measures that might include hand railings in the riser areas and one or more new exits from the sanctuary were definite requirements.

Also in consideration is a “cry room” for parents with fussy children.

The pastor underscored the fact that the plans are dependent on a variety of factors still to be resolved, including acceptable architectural plans and financing which would include a major capital improvements fund raising campaign.

Father Dave noted that Bishop Burbidge has had so many requests from parishes to conduct major funding campaigns that he has organized a committee to review the requests and consider all the implications. Diocesan approval is required to conduct major fund campaigns.

Major improvements are required in the rectory. Father Dave said that in its current state “it is not a healthy place to live.” The heating and air conditioning systems are decades old. Also the building does not have a common recreational area for the resident priests to get together.

In announcing creation of the Parish Ministry Council, the pastor recalled that one of the goals of the parish’s strategic plan was to “enhance our internal and external communications, with the objective that everyone – parishioners, staff and clergy- has the information they need to fully participate in the life and work of our beloved parish.”

Members of the committee are, generally, parishioners who head parish ministries ranging from liturgical functions to social activities. The idea is that the heads of the various organizations pass on to members information disclosed at the meetings.

Alan Holmer, president of the Parish Council and chairman of the meeting, circulated copies of the four-year strategic plan for the parish which now has more than 1,500 families. The plan states the parish mission and outlines specific areas of interest – welcoming and community/parish life, faith formation, communications, facilities and sacred space and finances.

Committee members heard a variety of reports that generally showed progress on strategic plan goals.

Franny Rock and Mary Rippert noted the success of several Welcoming Committee initiative, including the highly successful picnic and the Christmas party. Franny said there would be a new attempt to create a parish directory with circulation limited to parish families.

Paul Skevington, the parish director of music and liturgy, said efforts to establish a variety of choirs have been successful and the program is on a firm foundation.

Rob Buck, the chairman of the parish Finance Council, noted that parish income now is approximately $4.6 million a year with $2.8 million of it devoted to Saint Luke School. School enrollment has recovered from a recent low of 185 student to its current 230 under the direction of Principal Louis Silvano.

Rod paid tribute to Father Dave for his willingness to address parish issues that have been neglected.

There was considerable discussion about ways to attract parishioners to become active in our various ministries. There appeared to be agreement with a suggestion by Bill Colosimo, director of the contemporary choir and a frequent cantor at the 11 a.m. Mass, that the annual Ministry Fair be shifted to a winter month. Currently it is held in early September when parents are preoccupied with reorganizing the family following summer vacation and getting children started in school.

Jim McCulla