



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish

Parish Council ~ Memo from the President ~ South County Parish Cluster

April 2008

My fellow Parishioners,

In the readings that follow Easter, we are reminded of the early days of our church. We are told of how communities of Christians clustered together – sharing their strengths and resources, bearing each others' burdens, and rejoicing in their new life in Christ.

Over time, as these communities grew, Priests were appointed to preside at Mass, to fulfill the sacraments, and to guide them in their faith. Sadly, for a number of years now, vocations to the priesthood have declined, and in the next few years, we will be faced with more parishes than there are priests to serve in them.

Recognizing this fact, the Archdiocese has called upon the South County Parishes (OLPH, Our Lady of Sorrows, and Holy Family) to come up with a plan to “cluster” – to figure out how we might operate with less than 3 priests between us. For the vast majority of us, this will be a situation unlike any we have ever seen, and that is a cause for concern for some.

One thing has been made clear to us – NONE of these parishes are closing. In fact, we are GROWING! That makes it even more vital that we join together, as the early Christians did, to find new ways to share our strengths and resources, bear each others' burdens, and rejoice together in our new life in Christ.

There are many ways we can operate as joint communities of faith – too many, in fact, to detail them all in this letter, but in the coming weeks you will be hearing about the options and where this process may lead us. Your Parish Council, Pastor, and Parish Staff will be working with representative of the other parishes in discussing, praying about, and formulating our clustering plan.

I am writing to ask for your prayers – for this process and for vocations; for your ideas and support, for there are so many things we can offer, and so many things we need as a Catholic community that should be considered in this process; and finally, to ask for your love and support, not only for OLPH, but for our Church and our sister parishes.

Together, we can build a faith richer in love and a Catholic community that is stronger and more deeply rooted in what those first Christians tried to create – a community of faith in each other and in our Lord.

May God's every blessing be upon you and your family.

Sincerely,

Dick Maio

President, OLPH Parish Council