

# SAID ED August 4, 2013

## Obstacles

This weekend we say good bye to Fr Edison as we send him to St. Charles and Holy Name Parishes in Greece with our love and blessing. We'll be having a coffee hour in his honor after the 8:30 and 11:00am Masses. While he has been with us for just a year, he has put his gifts at the service of our community in many and generous ways. Thank you, Fr. Edison!

You have probably noticed the efforts of our Buildings and Ground folks as they take on several projects. A few months ago we were approached by some parishioners asking us to be attentive to the physical obstacles that can "keep people out of our buildings" or things that structurally are not as welcoming as they might be. As a result of this, we committed ourselves to look at the things that might be obstacles for some folks who are less abled than many of us.

Our B & G committee has set about increasing our handicap seating in our church. This work has been completed and there are now six special places for folks who come to church in wheel chairs. We created two new curb cuts to allow folks who have trouble with higher step up from the parking lot. This provides easier access to our church. Our parking lot is scheduled to be resealed and re-stripped after the pot holes are repaired. This work may be completed by the time you read this.

All these exterior efforts are important to our parish Mission Statement to be an "inclusive, welcoming and compassionate community united in faith." We are committed to remove any physical obstacles that might keep people out. BUT there is more to removing things that stand in the way if we are to be a community "that is alive and growing," as our Mission Statement also proclaims. We, each of us and all of us together, must remove any attitudes that keep people away.

Our parish has a wonderful reputation for having a warm and welcoming feeling to it. This is good and we should be proud of this and continue to maintain and grow it. It's the little things that people notice and that mean so much to visitors and occasional attendees. I thinking of the welcoming greeters at the doors, the words of encouragement that we offer to strangers as well as "regulars". All these serve to sustain that atmosphere of hospitality.

Also important is our commitment to the social and justice ministry of the church. It's by our outreach that our mission statement is also tested. How well do we care for the poor among us? How well do our programs strive to bring justice in our world? How are we being a sign of God's loving presence in our village, town, city, county, state and country?

We need to be careful that, having removed physical obstacles in our church, we fail to change that attitudes and behaviors that "keep people out." There must be room for everybody in our community of faith – that's what it means to be "catholic."

Have a great week!

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