

## June 23, 2019 TIME FOR CHANGE!

**Time for Change.** Nobody likes change. Any major changes takes us away from our comfort zone. Changes happen at the individual level, at the family level, at the workplace level, or at the local level (county). For us at OLHOC as a parish community, a "family of families" united in Christ, changes can take many forms.

When we began the capital campaign 3 years ago, it involved many different changes following consultation with all parishioners for example: a 25 year-old carpet covering the entire church being replaced by new tiles from Italy, 400 25-year old moveable chairs (many of them beyond repair and becoming a hazard to our people) being replaced by brand-new wooden, immovable pews custom-made for our parish in a factory in Pennsylvania (providing a total seating capacity of 550 as opposed to 400 earlier. You will recall that in the summer 2017 (just two years ago), the first phase of our capital campaign was completed after we moved all Masses in the old Social Hall (allowing time for the laying of the new tiles and the installation of fixed new pews. For some of us, it was a radical change: the chair, or the row of chairs we may have used week after week for as many as 27 years was gone, the comfortable seating of a cushioned chair gone too, replaced by hard wood pew; for our 50 volunteer musicians (belonging to 8 wonderful different choirs serving the 8 different Masses we have every week-end) the amazing change of acoustics (wooden pews and tiles provide much more reverberation/echo than wall-to-wall carpet and upholstered chairs) ...and so on and on...Two years later (after the completion of the entire church renovation), some of us have totally forgotten those major changes, some of us (in large numbers) have joined our parish in the last two years and have no clue of what we talk about, but some of us (Hopefully a minority) may still recall with nostalgia the "good old days" and the "homy" feeling of the old church. Yes, any major change in a church can enhance our way of worshipping (qualitatively spiritually or quantitatively, such as a major increased capacity of attendance as we have done) provides some pain, and a need for acceptance and adaptation.

You will be happy to learn that at long last our capital campaign began 3 years ago is coming to an end: you recall that we just completed the Phase 2: the renovation of our Social Hall, now renamed Father Martin Hall at the end of January five months ago (with a blessing by Bishop Michael Fisher and grand opening on Saturday February 2, 2019 - Feast Day of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the temple - and over 300 parishioners participating). We are now entering into the detailed design of the final Phase (Phase 3): as included in the original renovation plan, we will essentially focus on the renovation of the Narthex (entrance into the church), building a small adoration chapel within the Narthex, but accessible only from the outside (see the blue lines on the floor near the current Blessed Sacrament Chapel) and a multipurpose room (help desk, office space, meeting space, confessional space) surrounded by glass walls/doors also inside the Narthex (see blue lines on floor near the piano) and the installation of a high steeple (with lit golden or silver cross on top) replacing the small wood cross we currently have on top of the Narthex). You already had seen the design of the steeple (it was on the top cover of our campaign materials) and we you can now imagine the interior renovation of the Narthex: the old pinkish tiles will be replaced by new tiles (we will display shortly the various choices we are considering) throughout the entire narthex (it was to be included in the First Phase of renovation of the church, but we decided to postpone it for lack of finance at that time).

Praise the Lord! We thank the Lord for your generosity, as we now have enough funds collected and set aside in our separate Capital Campaign Account to complete Phase 3. However, as your pastor, I encourage you to continue funding the Capital Campaign, as from experience we know that we can always have to face unexpected costs during implementation. The original capital campaign was based on 3-year pledges (36-month installments from July 2016 through July 2019). Many of you have already fulfilled your entire pledges and we are most grateful for your generosity. Some of you have still some outstanding pledges and I will encourage you, if you can, to complete your pledges by the end of July (one more month). For those of you who had not pledged earlier, especially the many new parishioners who have joined us in the last three years, I will encourage you to make whatever additional contribution you can make in the next three months: July, August, and September. This is the last call for completing the

funding of our capital campaign. All works of the final Phase III are expected to be completed before September 2020, end of our celebrating 40 years - 1980-2020.

As our maintenance expenditures have increased, our Finance Council is considering ways to increase the regular, non-capital revenues, collections, essentially encouraging you to tithe if you can. Jesus has encouraged us to share generously all the gifts that God the Father is providing us: time, talent and treasure. Our parish is doing very well on sharing time and talent: we have close to 400 volunteers (some parishes have less than 10). I believe that overall we can do better in sharing financial resources with the church, including the poor assisted by our church. Jesus says that we have to give not only from our surplus but also from our needs, meaning that we should feel some pain. St. Paul told us in today's first reading (June 19, 2 Corinthians 9:7) "God loves a cheerful giver." Nobody likes change, even small, in ways of living. Nobody likes pain. Your suggestions on how to make the best possible use of our current resources are most appreciated. In addition, if you have an accounting, financial management background or business, would you consider joining our current Finance Council? Just contact my office or me and we will have your application considered by the next Finance Council.

The most difficult changes in any organization are the changes in personnel. Our own parish has seen many changes of priests and staff in the last five years. First and foremost, by early July, our parish will have had four different Parochial Vicars in the last seven years (Fr. John Clark, Fr. Lopez, Fr. Santiago, and now Fr. Philip Ilg). In the previous 35 years of our existence, we had no parochial vicar and only four pastors (Fr. Aliata, Fr. Dignan, Fr. Crowley, and myself). The change of priests affect everyone in the parish and the decision to transfer priests is made by our Archbishop, another major change for all of us: since May 21<sup>st</sup>, the 140 parishes of the Archdiocese have a new Shepherd, Archbishop Wilton Gregory. In the last four years, we have had three different nuns assisting our parish, and in the last 2 years, we had three different Office Managers. More recently, and as announced first to our latest Parish Council on June 13, Mrs. Therese Thiedeman.

Mrs. Therese Thiedeman, completing 6 years of outstanding service to our CCD children (400 this year) and their families, had let me know her resignation: effective September 1, 2019, she will no longer have the responsibility of our CCD religious education program. On behalf of the entire Parish Council, our clergy, our staff, all CCD Volunteers, all our children and their parents, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Thiedeman for her leadership, her hard work and dedication over the past 6 years. She helped bring much innovation to our CCD program and this was recognized by the staff and managers dealing with Education Programs at the Pastoral Center (helping the Archbishop to manage all parish activities, including education/formation). She has a gift to attract volunteers and I have just written a letter to all CCD Volunteers (catechists, teen aides, office helpers, adult assistants, substitutes) thanking them for all their time and efforts and encouraging all of them to stay on so as to assure that the innovative program put in place by Mrs. Thiedeman will continue in the coming year and beyond. As recommended by Mrs. Thiedeman and our own staff, we are now going ahead with advertising the vacant position of Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) from Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. All CCD volunteers have been invited and encouraged to apply for this position. I now extend this invitation to all our parishioners that may be interested (the vacancy announcement is included in the next page of this Weekly Bulletin and will also be put with more details on our website).

May God give us all the strength and courage to accept any major change affecting our own life or someone close to us. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide our daily decisions! May we all be inspired by the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, which we celebrate at all Masses this weekend and also by having two Separate **Eucharistic Procession** at 12:30 pm and 6:15 pm this Sunday June 23!

*One in Christ,  
Father Alain*