

From the PA's Desk**Thank You!**

A special note of thanks to the people who remembered me with cards, gifts, candies, and other assortment of treats during this Christmas season. In just six months you've made me feel very at home here, so thank you!

Alpha:

Last week at the weekend Masses I announced our plans to run the ALPHA program starting in Lent and running throughout the Easter Season until Pentecost. The insert in today's bulletin is a repeat of last weeks but it does contain the dates and schedule for our talks and discussions. Maybe put the schedule up on your refrigerator? Each session begins with a sit down meal which will be catered, followed by a 30 minute presentation and small group discussions after.

ALPHA is a commitment as it runs over an entire semester, and its goal is to renew ones relationship with Jesus Christ. The church teaches that everything we do is intended to help people encounter Jesus Christ who is alive and living among us, the body of Christ on earth. ALPHA tries to develop that living, breathing relationship. Before we can invite or attract anybody to the church, we first must be alive in our relationship with the Lord. ALPHA tries to help us grow that relationship, or renew it if it has grown cold. Once we renew or develop our relationship with Jesus Christ, we can better experience him in our faith community, and then invite others to know him as we know him.

In looking at the impressive DVD presentations, we think they are even appropriate for middle or high school students, so everyone is invited to participate from adults to adolescents.

There are some excellent videos on YouTube which give personal testimonies to its place in Catholic parishes. One video is from Bishop Byrnes from Detroit, who is now the new Coadjutor Archbishop in Guam, and the other is Fr. John Riccardo of a large parish in Plymouth Michigan. Check out the videos at the following:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Cc3JLp7NaM>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=soVoQ_eeXAM

More info will follow each week, and in February we will have sign-up weekends in the back of church

Youth Ministry:

The youth ministry team met last Saturday and we talked about going out to the sporting events at Shepherd Schools and other activities such as their School Play on January 22. If you notice us wearing T-Shirts that read BELIEVE on the front and St. Vincent de Paul Parish on the back, that's so we can be recognized. We will also be handing out BELIEVE bracelets. Christmas cards were sent to students last December, and our goal is to make gift bags for the 6th grades that are going to camp in February. If you'd like to join our Youth Ministry Team, we are meeting again on January 30 at 6 PM in the school. Thank you to Mary Moomey, Kaylie Willoughby, Shavonne Shanteau, Geri Clark, and Bev Kalmar for all their hard work and dedication to the youth of our parish.

Happy New Year!

It's that time of year for New Year's Resolutions. I have a little newspaper article I clipped out of the Detroit Free Press on January 1, 2001 written by Ann Landers, a national advice giver of her time. She wrote: "Let this coming year be better than all the others. Vow to do things you've always wanted to do, but couldn't find the time. Call up a forgotten friend. Drop an old grudge, and replace it with some pleasant memories. Share a funny story with someone whose spirits are dragging. A good laugh can be very good medicine. Vow not to make a promise you don't think you can keep. Pay a debt. Give a soft answer. Free yourself of envy and malice. Encourage a youth to do his or her best. Share your experiences and offer support. Make a genuine effort to stay in touch with family and good friends. Resolve to stop magnifying small problems and shooting from the lip. Words you have to eat can be hard to digest. Apologize when you are wrong. An apology never diminishes a person. It elevates him. Don't blow your own horn. If you've done something praiseworthy, someone will notice eventually. Try to understand a point of view that is different from your own. Few things are 100% one way or another. Examine the demands you make on others. Lighten up. When you feel like blowing your top, ask yourself, "Will it matter a week from today?" Laugh the loudest when the joke is on you. The sure way to have a friend is be one. We are all connected by our humanity, and we need each other. Avoid malcontents and pessimists because they drag you down and contribute nothing. Don't discourage a beginner from trying something risky. Nothing ventured means nothing gained. Be optimistic. Go to war against animosity and complacency. Express your gratitude. Give credit when it's due—and even when it isn't. Read something uplifting. You wouldn't eat garbage, so why put negativity in your head? Don't abandon your old-fashioned principles because they never go out of style. When courage is needed, ask yourself, "If not me who? If not now, when?" Take better care of yourself. Don't put up with secondhand smoke. Nobody has the right to pollute your air or give you cancer. If someone says, "This is a free country," remind him or her that the country might be free, but no person is free if he has a habit he can't control. Return those books you borrowed. Reschedule that missed dental appointment. Clean out your closet. Take those photos out of the drawer and put them in an album. Give yourself a reality check. Phoniness is transparent and tiresome. Take pleasure in the beauty and the wonders of nature. Walk tall and smile more. Don't be afraid to say, "I love you." If you have love in your life, consider yourself blessed, and vow to make this the best year ever." Don't forget to tell God you love him, and need his help constantly. I recently noticed a couple of postings on Facebook that I really liked, and I'll try to follow them this year as best as I can: 1) "Before you speak, let your words pass through three gates... Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?" 2) "The world is changed by your example, not by your opinion." 3) "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." I hope you have a blessed year ahead!