

Our Parish Visitor

Our Lady of the Visitation Parish Newsletter

Christmas Pageant

Make your Christmas celebration more joyful and holy this year by attending the third OLVP Christmas Pageant. Here's an opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of the Christmas season and the significance of the Birth of Our Lord. Students from Faith Formation and our parish school will participate.

**This special event will be held on:
Sunday, 18 December 2011
5:00 p.m. in the Church**

Please contact Michele Olewack at 301/948-5536 x107 or watch the bulletin for further details. Please join us.



Christmas Mass Schedule

CHRISTMAS VIGIL
Saturday, 24 December

***4:00 p.m. – Church**

***Passes Needed**

7:00 p.m. – Church

11:00 p.m. - Church

Midnight Mass/Special Music

CHRISTMAS DAY
Sunday, 25 December

9:00 a.m. – Church

11:00 a.m. – Church
Family Liturgy

Forty Years in the Desert/Desserts

I was ordained a priest by Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle at the Cathedral of St. Matthew on Saturday 13 May 1972.

I served four years as an assistant pastor at St. Bartholomew Parish in Bethesda (1972-1976). I taught religion once a week at the parish school for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades, and in the CCD program for high school. One of the students I taught in the school was future OLVP parishioner Janet Korol. Encouraged by William Cardinal Baum, I began my doctoral studies at the Catholic University of America as a part-time student.

My second assignment was at Christ the King Parish in Silver Spring (1976-1980). I served as the Director of Religious Education, and as a chaplain at two nursing homes located in the parish. Cardinal Baum appointed me to serve on his doctrinal commission. Future OLVP parishioner Ed Gonzalez helped me with annual Boy Scout retreats for the Archdiocese of Washington.

I served at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Gaithersburg as an associate pastor (1980-1983) and as parochial administrator (1983-1984). I completed my Doctorate in Ministry, was appointed Archdiocesan Chaplain for the Boy Scouts, and began teaching in the Philosophy Department at Montgomery College where I earned the rank of Adjunct Professor. I presided at the wedding of future OLVP parishioners Thomas and Barbara Moschella.

As associate pastor at St. Jane de Chantal Parish (1984-1988), I taught religion weekly in the parish school's seventh and eighth grades and high school in the CCD program. I was one of several chaplains at three nursing homes in the parish and at Suburban Hospital. James Cardinal Hickey appointed me as chaplain to the police officers of Montgomery County.

While an assistant pastor at Mother Seton Parish (1988-1990), I was asked by James Cardinal Hickey to explore the possibility of establishing a parish in the Darnestown area

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Christmas Tree Sale



**Volunteers Needed
No Experience Needed**

**Unload Trees
Thu Dec 01 at 1:00 p.m.**

Tree Sales
Fri 2 December – Sun 11 December
Weekends: 8:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Weekdays: 4:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The following families have graciously given their time to host sales on the weekdays: Quine, Miller, Young, Toohey, O'Sullivan, and Keegan. Please give them your support.

On the weekends, we ask that you invite your favorite teenager to work with you and then to enjoy a gourmet lunch and a wonderful few hours together during a very hectic season.

Calling All Cooks



We also NEED the wonderful COOKS in our parish to provide food for the workers on the weekends and also for them to sign up for a few hours serving in the kitchen.

**For information or
to volunteer contact:**
Bill Connors
(301) 869-8203

Confirmation

8th Graders: Confirmation has been scheduled for the Fifth Sunday of Easter, 06 May 2012. OLVP is honored to welcome the Most Reverend Francisco Gonzalez, S.F., who will preside at the Confirmation.

The traditional crosses will be presented to the confirmands by Fr. Ray at the 5:00 p.m. mass on the Second Sunday of Lent, 03 March 2012. All sponsors, family members and friends are invited to attend this special mass.

The overnight Confirmation Retreat will be held separately from the special mass and will be held offsite at the Bishop Claggett Center in Buckeystown, MD on 27-28 April 2012. *Confirmands and their parents are asked to please reserve these dates.*

7th graders: The first study day with parents and Confirmands was held on Sunday, 20 November. Future confirmands were presented with their Catholic Youth Bibles. The second study day will be held on 22 January from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. in Founders Hall where the students will be presented with their study book.

Volunteer Opportunities

Parents and those preparing for Confirmation are reminded that they are all expected to volunteer in our parish, as well as in their homes. Confirmands are encouraged to sign up and volunteer for the following parish activities. Simply call the parish office at 301/948-5536 x108 or email krooney@olv.org:



Head Start Food Bag Distribution

Sat, 03 Dec 2011 – 5:00 p.m. mass
Sun, 04 Dec 2011 – 9:00 a.m. mass
Sun, 04 Dec 2011 – 11:00 a.m. mass

Cardinal's Appeal Collection

Sat, 11 Feb 2012 – 5:00 p.m. mass
Sun, 12 Feb 2012 – 9:00 a.m. mass
Sun, 12 Feb 2012 – 11:00 a.m. mass

The Lord's Table Soup Kitchen

St. Martin's Parish, Gaithersburg, MD
29 Dec 2011 – 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
29 March 2012 – 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
31 May 2012 – 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm

40 Years, continued from page 1

I moved to a house in Darnestown in December of 1990. Many of the founding families of OLVP are former parishioners at Mother Seton Parish.

The Parish of Our Lady of the Visitation was canonically established by James Cardinal Hickey on 31 May 1991. I was installed as the first pastor of OLVP by Bishop Alvaro Corrada del Rio, S.J., on 29 June 1991.

It is a privilege to have helped in the establishment of Mary of Nazareth School (1994). As pastor, it was a joy to oversee the building of our Church and to be present at its Solemn Dedication by Theodore Cardinal McCarrick (31 May 2001). In 2004 Cardinal McCarrick asked me to accept the position of a National Catholic Chaplain to advise both the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Boy Scouts of America (2004-2013).

At OLVP I enjoy meeting with and preparing couples for the baptism of their children, teaching confirmands and their parents as they approach Confirmation, interviewing all children preparing for First Eucharist, and hosting bible study for high school students.

I plan to celebrate 40 years with you by holding an evening reception on Friday 11 May 2012, and by presiding at an evening mass on Saturday 12 May 2012. – Fr. Ray

Eucharist/Penance/Reconciliation

Forty-three parish children joined us on Saturday, 5 November for their first Penance and Reconciliation "Getting Ready Day". One of God's greatest gifts to us is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Like a precious heirloom that has been handed down from generation to generation, this sacrament is a gift you've been given that you can now celebrate with your child(ren). The children will receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation on Saturday, 28 January 2012 in a Communal Penance Celebration with their families followed by a reception in Founders Hall.

In the Eucharist, we enter into the mystery that Jesus loves us so much that he offers his actual presence to us in this Blessed Sacrament. We will continue our preparation with the parents and children on Saturday, 25 February at our second "Getting Ready Day".

On the Fourth Sunday of Lent, 18 March 2012 at the 9:00 a.m. mass, Fr. Ray will continue the tradition of giving the children a special pin to wear until their First Eucharist. – Michele Olewack

Stewardship Council



Thank you to Brian Dougherty

Brian Dougherty has served two terms, six years, as Chair of the Facilities Committee of the parish's Stewardship Council. Brian provided counsel to Fr. Ray and the council on many important issues related to maintenance of the Church, Parish Office, Rectory and overall property. Brian performed many of the tasks himself and has worked with numerous contractors on others, including coordination with Mary of Nazareth School and the Victory Youth Center to centralize services. OLVP has been very blessed by the knowledge, insight and careful follow-up he provided, and the many hours of time he devoted during his tenure.

Pastoral Council



Thank you to Lisa Griffin

Lisa Griffin has served as Chair of the Parish Life Committee of the Pastoral Council over the past several years. Lisa helped keep the council informed of the many and varied activities of the Sodality, Holy Name Society, St. Monica Society and the parish's Sacramental Programs. OLVP has been blessed by her service and her dedication.

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Look for more information in our weekly Parish Bulletin or on the Parish website:
www.olv.org

HAITI

As a member of OLVP's Social Concerns Committee, I had the opportunity to meet with Msgr. Suffrard, the new Pastor of Our Lady of the Visitation Parish in Gonaives, Haiti, during a recent visit he made to our area. The message below provides greetings, an update on our sister parish, and an outline of some of their more pressing needs. OLVP parishioners have an opportunity to give support to our sister parish this Christmas through our St. Nicholas catalog, which is included with this newsletter and will be available in the Sunday bulletins during Advent. - Jane Stenson



Beloved sisters and brothers of our sister parish. Good morning, peace be with you. I would especially like to greet all the children of our sister parish. The children of the parish of Notre Dame de la Visitation embrace you and greet you cordially. I have come to render grace unto God with you for the wonders He has accomplished in favor of the American people, for His many blessings and especially for the spiritual and brotherly love between our two parishes.

By living the mystery of charity, this relationship has become an evangelical testimony: "that the strong uphold the weak and that the weak, in their turn, pray for the strong". Despite the suffering inherent to all human life as well as the threat to America brought by the enemies of peace, your families do live in peace and serenity because God is your guide and your protector. Together, let us praise the Lord because His love of those that fear Him, endures from age to age.

Thanks to all the faithful of your parish for your generosity and your sincere wish to support the good works of the parish, Notre Dame de la Visitation, Gonaives. Thank you for proving your compassion and economic support, needed due to our lack of resources, are founded on respect for our dignity.

I have the privilege and immense pleasure to tell you about my parish. We seem to hear nothing but bad news concerning Haiti. However, in many respects, the school of Notre Dame de la Visitation continues to function thanks to the school canteen program. Thanks to this program, we have obtained an excellent result with 100% of students successfully passing the 6th grade official exam.

Students are more awake in class. Thanks to the school canteen, cases of children suffering from diseases due to malnutrition have considerably decreased.

In the name of the poorest children of our sister parish in Haiti, I would ask you as much as you possibly can, to enlarge the scope of this program to include the children of Father Marcel Sainte Marie, which has also come under the responsibility of the parish, so they can benefit equally from this program.

Beloved brothers and sisters, my most immediate concern is the repair of the parish infrastructure. The parish church is in very bad condition. The roof has been repaired with the help of the Koch Foundation.

The rectory of the parish remains unfinished. Still remaining to be done is the plastering of the walls, completion of the masonry, laying of the tiles, painting, completion of the electrical wiring, glazing of the windows, the doors and the electrical appliances. All of this work requires a lot of money. Whatever monetary contribution you could make would help us to advance the project.

I also hope to construct a new building to house the school of Notre Dame de la Visitation, as the old building is badly dilapidated, having been periodically assaulted by floods. Also, the roof is full of rust and holes. I ask you to help your sister parish with your customary and unconditional support.

Beloved sisters and brothers, I give blessings to heaven for you as the United States remains a welcoming land. Without doubt, it is a special grace and benediction from God. I invite you, brothers and sisters, to grow your unconditional love of God, who loves the poor and to spread your faith by persevering in the love of your fellow man.

I am grateful for your benevolent attention. Thank you.

- Msgr. Venel Suffrard Pastor, Notre Dame de la Visitation, Gonaives, Haiti

OLVP PRAYER CHAIN



Recently, questions have been received from parishioners asking, "What is the OLVP prayer chain mentioned in the bulletin each week?". The OLVP prayer chain is group of parishioners who pray every day for the special intentions of parishioners, their families, friends, colleagues and others. When prayer requests are received at the parish office, an email is sent to the members of the prayer group requesting their prayers for the new intention. For a minimum of two weeks, the special intention is remembered by each member of the prayer group in their personal prayers.

Any member of Our Lady of the Visitation Parish can join the prayer group by calling the parish office during regular business hours (see contact information below). You will be placed on the email list to receive all future prayer requests. Members pray for these special intentions through individual prayer, such as the rosary, personal prayer, prayers at mass, or whatever form of prayer they choose. Members of the prayer chain do not meet as a group, so individuals can pray whenever it is convenient for them. Parishioners are encouraged to join this group to add to the number of individuals praying for the very important needs of fellow parishioners.

Anyone can call the parish office with a prayer request for any special intention. The prayer request will immediately be sent out to all the members of the prayer chain. Parishioners should know that for privacy, only the first name of the person is used when sending out prayer requests. If a parishioner prefers, no name will be given, just the nature of the prayer request.

To request prayers for someone or to become a member of the prayer group, please contact Kathleen Rooney at krooney@olvp.org or call 301/948-5536 x108.

IMPORTANT DATES

November

23 Wed Thanksgiving Eve Mass
6:00 p.m., Church
24-25 Parish Office Closed
26-27 First Sunday in Advent

December

07 Wed *Feast of the Immaculate Conception*, Sacred Liturgy,
7:00 p.m., Church
08 Thu *Feast of the Immaculate Conception*, Sacred Liturgy,
12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m.,
Church
18 Sun Christmas Pageant,
5:00 p.m., Church
23 Fri Parish Office Closed at noon
30 Fri Parish Office Closed at noon
31 Sat Sacred Liturgy, 5:00 p.m.

January

01 Sun *Feast of Mary Mother of God*
Sacred Liturgy, 9:00 a.m. and
11:00 a.m.
02 Mon Parish Office Closed
07-08 *Epiphany of the Lord*
9:00 a.m. Family Liturgy

February

10 Fri Volunteer Appreciation Party,
7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.,
Founders Hall
12 Sun Family Bingo, 2:00 p.m. -
4:00 p.m., Founders Hall

Volunteer Party

Mark your calendars! Next year's Volunteer Appreciation Party will be held on Friday, 10 February 2012, 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. in Founders Hall. All parishioners who have volunteered in any capacity are invited to attend. Watch the bulletin for details.



Family Bingo

The Holy Name Society and the Sodality will jointly sponsor a family bingo on Sunday, 12 February 2012, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Founders Hall. Watch the bulletin.

Faith Formation

3rd grade – Saints' Parade - For our children in Faith Formation, November was the month we remembered and learned about our communion of saints. Third graders participated in the annual saints' parade. The four Evangelists were represented, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. When the question was asked, "Who were they and what did the Evangelists do?", one kindergarten student told us, "They were a bunch of old guys who taught people about God!!!!" The saints' parade is always informative and very heart warming.

5th grade – Windows - On a more serious note, the 5th graders presented the saints in our church windows. Thank you to Mr. Tony Glander, who provided a power point presentation of all the windows. This helped the children get a close look at the saints and learn all the symbolism of each window. The windows were designed by our pastor, Fr. Ray and made by Mr. Glander.

Vacation Bible Camp 2012

Our totally Catholic VBC is coming again this summer -- for God all things are possible (Mark 10:27). Titled, "Sky", those attending will discover all that is possible when they trust God. Every kid wonders what it's like to fly...so imagine transforming OLVP into the boundless blue sky! One of the highlights of the summer for children ages 4 through 5th grade, at VBC they will learn about God in a totally exciting way, making memories with friends from school, the parish and our extended community. They will sing, play, act and pray. Our Thursday night Song Fest and Ice Cream Social are a highlight, along with our Friday Fun Day.

We will be looking for Dads, Boy Scouts, and carpenters, to help build the set and Moms to coordinate the different events. Kids who have completed 6 to 8th grade can apply to be Counselors in Training. High School students are needed to lead groups. Registration begins in January, so save the date and come fly with us!

Connecting Kids to Justice

Developed in partnership with Catholic Relief Services and OLVP's Social Concerns Committee, this project focuses on raising children's awareness of Catholic social teaching. This past summer, many faith-filled parish children donated over 100 boxes of crayons to be sent to their Catholic brothers and sisters at our sister parish in Gonaives, Haiti. – *Michele Olewack*

GIVE LESS TO THE IRS

Before the New Year, consider giving a donation to Our Lady of the Visitation Parish through one of three special ways:

1. **Special Christmas Gift**
2. **Donation of Stock to OLVP**
3. **Remembering OLVP in Wills and Bequests**

All 2011 donations to Visitation Parish throughout the year and at Christmas and Easter are tax deductible. All stock donations in 2011 are credited to the donor at full face value on the date of transfer.

There are many repairs and improvements to parish facilities that could be met with special contributions this time of year. Your giving to the church is truly a blessing.

Questions about giving to OLVP should be directed to OLVP's bookkeeper, Kora Perrin, at 301-948-5536 x102 or kperrin@olvp.org.



FAITH DIRECT PARTICIPANTS

Parishioners who make their weekly offertory and/or monthly mortgage contributions through Faith Direct can now use a new payment option to process a one-time transaction to the parish. Parishioners may also use this option to process any missed contributions rather than waiting for the next monthly transaction. This new payment option is available for donations made by credit card only. See the Faith Direct website: www.faithdirect.net or call toll free: 866-507-8757 for further instructions. Reference OLVP code: MD114.

2011 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS:

To receive tax credit in 2011, your contributions must be dated by Saturday, 31 December 2011. If you are mailing a contribution, it must be postmarked by Monday, 02 January 2012 and received in the parish office by Friday, 06 January 2012 to be credited to your 2011 contribution statement.

