

Bridging Parishes



by Deacon Jim DeShane
Transition & Leadership
Coordinating Committee Chair

Over the next few weekends the parishioners from Most Holy Trinity and Our Lady of Grace will be officially welcoming each other to Mass and a reception at each other's worship space. The process of getting to know one another is underway! Our primary source of unity is the Eucharist. In the Body and Blood of Christ we are already one faith community. Worshipping together will deepen our unity and build bonds of love among us. Please extend a warm welcome to our brothers and sisters at the 10:30 Mass, March 6th. Please stay after Mass and join in our reception in their honor. Greet our visitors. Offer to show them around. Invite them to visit your home or to go out for coffee. One of the hardest things about becoming a new church is the fear of not knowing anyone.

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Bonds of friendship

We have come a long way in building bonds of friendship between our two parishes – soon to be one. Fr. Bob has presided at all of the weekend Masses at Most Holy Trinity twice. Fr. Brian has preside at three weekend Masses at Our Lady of Grace.

Members of Most Holy Trinity, Mary Pease and Cindy Walsh, are seated on the Our Lady of Grace Parish Council; MHT members Orvin Visaya, Peter Dahm and Tracy O'Kane are seated on the OLG Finance

Council. OLG's Business Administrator, Deacon Bob Durham and one of their parish trustees (Dick Ward or Martha Allen) will be at the Most Holy Trinity Finance Council. Dr. Joe Gryskiewicz, and Fr. Bob represent Our Lady of Grace at the Most Holy Trinity Parish Council. They have already attended one another's meetings.

Staffing The joint Merger Committee (TLCC) has been meeting since December and is chaired by Deacon Jim DeShane. Mike Sexton from Our Lady of Grace is vice chair. There are six members of each parish on the Merger Committee along with both pastors. We are currently working on redefining and refining staff job descriptions so that we can finalize staff needs, positions and staff personnel by April 1. It is a big and very sensitive responsibility that is proceeding very smoothly.

Budgets The Pastors, Business Administrators and Finance Councils of both parishes are working together to plan a coordinated budget for the fiscal year beginning on July 1. The 2011-2012 budget will be administered as appropriate by each of the existing parish civil corporations for the first half of the fiscal year. On January 1, 2012, the Our Lady of Grace civil corporation will administer the remainder of the fiscal year budget alone, as the Most Holy Trinity corporation is merged into Our Lady of Grace. Both parishes are working together in formulating the budget for the coming year allowing both parishes to have input into budget decisions for the entire year.

Ministries

Both parishes have been involved in inviting their counterparts in ministry to meetings in both parishes. We are slowly and surely learning to work together and to trust one another. We should all be very encouraged by the progress that has been made. We have not begun to discuss our facility needs. We are blessed with an abundance of buildings and property on two campuses. The hope is that by January 1 we will have a studied analysis of our facility needs.

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The human bridges that we build between our two parish communities lie at the heart of our merger efforts. We need to know in our heads as well as our hearts that the people of Most Holy Trinity and Our Lady of Grace will welcome one another as brothers and sisters in one parish community to solidify the foundation on which our merger plan rests.

During this time of change, let us turn to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, trusting in His wisdom as the Master Builder to guide us, his workers, to grow as the body of Christ.