
From the Pastor's Desk.....
18 January 2015

Last year, in its reviews of the Parish Pastoral Plan, the Parish Council attended to the pastoral needs of our parish. One suggestion was to review the way in which we celebrate the Anointing of the Sick within Mass. Up until now this has been celebrated on the first Saturday of the month. However, in order to target those parishioners who are in most need of this healing ministry we are proposing to celebrate this sacrament less frequently but with greater pastoral benefit.

Prior to Vatican II this sacrament was reserved for the 'last rites' and was called 'extreme unction'. Vatican II has properly restored this as a 'sacrament of the sick'. Nevertheless, it is still reserved for serious need, as we read in church's ritual *Pastoral Care of the Sick*: "The sacrament of anointing is the proper sacrament for those Christians whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age."

In our parish community there are parishioners, largely housebound or in nursing care, who would benefit from being brought to Mass by willing volunteers. It would also be a wonderful opportunity for these parishioners to join in a parish celebration from time to time and enjoy a time of fellowship over morning tea following Mass.

It would also be an opportunity to celebrate this sacrament in a way which more faithfully follows the rite – for example, the inclusion of the laying on of hands, which is such a beautiful and integral part of the celebration, and the inclusion of song.

During 2015 there will be two or three Anointing Masses organized. The first Anointing Mass for this year will take place on Friday, 13 March at 9.30am. It will involve teamwork. We will need parishioners to help with transport, morning tea, and the liturgy.

Apart for this special Mass of Anointing, the sacrament of the sick is offered to parishioners at all times simply by contacting the parish office or asking one of the priests. It is strongly advised that parishioners request this sacrament whenever they feel the need for this healing sacrament, for example, before an operation.

It is also very helpful when parishioners keep the parish office informed of any parishioners they know of who require pastoral care.

***Peace and blessings,
Gerard***