

Senior Ministry 2017 Facing Life's Transitions as We Age

The Senior Ministry program is in its third year of service to all the older adults at St. Catherine and Sebastian. Committee members are excited to join our efforts with our fellow parish cluster members at Mother of Good Counsel Parish.

To increase our outreach to more parish members, we will focus on two priorities this year.

Our first priority is to expand our efforts to bring the Eucharist to our home-bound members. We will continue to encourage parish volunteers at our three parishes to take Eucharist to the home bound. Fr Larry summed it up for St. Sebastian's and St Catherine's:

“Let me offer the little piece I'm aware of. I don't know how many requests come in or how the response may be tracked. I do know that when those taking Communion home are invited to stand for an Encouraging Blessing at the end of Sunday Mass, there are anywhere from two to zero at most Seb's Masses, and about six to eight at Catherine's. I also know that occasionally, especially at the 6:00 Mass, there may be one person who chooses not to stand—doesn't want to be the only one doing so. Also, at any one time there are one to three persons at Seb's borrowing a pix to take Communion to a family member in rehabilitation or short-term illness.”

Father Larry continues:

“I strongly support and applaud any effort you may make toward inviting parishioners to consider being Communion Ministers to the Home-bound, even if that is very short term and for someone in their own family or neighborhood only. Certainly to have a few persons available to do so more generally in the name of the whole parish would also be great. It does not take special designation to do this; that's one of the reasons we have the Blessing at Mass. Another reason is to get people thinking themselves about doing this!”

The Committee is committed to offering a prayer sheet that parishioners can use when taking Eucharist home to a loved one or to the home-bound. It will be available with the pix, the sacred vessel for carrying Eucharist to others who may not be able to attend a liturgy.

Our second priority: Develop a Senior Resource Card. Committee members will work on a resource list. We will start with the card that is promoted by Greater Tosa and Sherman Park/Northwest Interfaith. Our goal is to have it available at each parish and at all our presentations this year. We will consider mailing this to those on our parish lists who we know are older adults. We will also place the cards in our church lobbies and kiosks.

Now onto the presentations for 2017! We have enjoyed well-informed speakers during the last two years. The discussions have been thoughtful and at the same time thought provoking. Our presentations are focused on assisting our older adults to face life's transitions. We also will

branch out in our first presentation to include all members of the three parishes, not just the older adults.

First Presentation: *Is Your House in Order?*

We start 2017 with repeating our presentation by Attorney E. John Conforti who specializes in estate planning.

Some questions to be addressed:

- Do you have a will? Is it up to date?
- Do you have a medical power of attorney?
- Have you offered your doctor and your hospital a copy of your medical power of attorney document?
- Do you have a financial power of attorney?
- Do all your family members have copies of these documents?
- Do you have all your records in a place accessible to the people who need them?
- Do you have your list of beneficiaries up-to-date?

This presentation will be offered twice. Our morning meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 27th at 10 AM, at MGC; the evening meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 2nd at 7 PM at St. Sebastian's.

New this year is the fact that the presentations will be offered to all members of the parishes—stressing the need for all members to be aware of the legal issues that impact all members of their family

Second Presentation: *Making positive choices when living on your own is becoming a challenge.*

Thursday, May 25th at St. Catherine's: 10:00 AM in the Community Room.

Some questions to be addressed:

- What are signs that you should consider making a move?
- How do we know when it's time for a move?
- How do you make a clear independent decision on that subject?
- How does a person really prepare for such a move? Downsizing? What to keep? What to give away?

What do we need to consider when evaluating a "new home" after we've decided to leave our present home?

- The financial elements
- Convenience of location
- Your activity level

- Staff morale at the facility
- Ambiance
- Levels of independence offered
- Faith support at the institution

Overall goal: We wish to look at the financial implications to growing old.

Third Presentation: *More in-depth exploration of hospice care and choices about healthcare at the end-of-life; a tour of the Zilber Hospice facility*

We have had in-depth discussions about end-of-life issues and the decisions that go with these difficult life choices. We would like to tour a hospice facility and meet with care providers at the facility. The Zilber facility is close to all three of our cluster parishes. We will schedule the tours in September.

- RSVP—so that we can establish a date(s)

Fourth Presentation: *First Annual Senior Social with a speaker*

- Celebration of all our older adults who serve in the community
- An annual birthday event
- Fellowships with older adults from the three parishes
- Brunch event—catered? Or pot-luck?

Presentation:

- **Presentation topic will be “*avoiding becoming a senior scam victim*”.**
- We will invite participants to bring in a poem or prayer related to becoming a sage (wiser person) rather than simply aging.
- And, we will host our first adult art show.

Everyone participating would encourage community within the three parishes.

We would hold this at St. Seb’s—most accessible facility.

Date: Thursday, October 26th at 10:00 AM.

We will continue the monthly blogs by Adele Lund. They will be printed in the weekly bulletins.

How about having a monthly birthday party for seniors celebrating birthdays that month? After the 10:30AM Mass in the Multi-Purpose room at Seb's, the monthly pancake breakfast at St. Catherine's and MGC—what would work?

We need to continue developing ideas for building community among our seniors. We could search our parish rosters for birthdays—cards and invitation to the gathering with the children making the cards that we would send to the older adults.

We will make the book from Fr. Jack—Henri Nouwen's—“***Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Dying and Caring***” available—we will sell the book. Price to be determined!