

July 14, 2019

From Fr. Jim . . .



Culture Festival, 2019: I want to thank all our parishioners and our staff who worked so hard to make this year's Culture Fest such a wonderful success. This year's theme was: We Are All One in Christ. Our Festival is not so much about making money for our parish as it is about bringing our prayer to our parking lot and then onto the streets and neighborhood. It is about inviting others to come and give thanks with us as we share our cultures with them. One person remarked that "this is not your typical Catholic Festival. There is no beer and gambling but we don't need beer and gambling when we have each other and we are singing and praising God together. We are all one in Christ." I thank all of the different music groups, the cooks and food attendants and especially all of our parishioners, guests, pilgrims, friends and neighbors who joined us for the event. I thank our youth for organizing some games and for face painting. I thank the Cincinnati Police Officer who came and spent some time with us. She mingled with the crowd and she enjoyed some of the food. The weather was good, and I believe the crowd enjoyed itself despite the hot weather. **Many, many thanks to all.**

Safety and Respect: I think it is always good to share, now and then, this parish's concerns for the safety of our children during parish meetings and liturgies and respect for parish property and reverence for our prayer and liturgical art and objects. **Children of all ages are most welcome to come with their parents to our liturgies and events and are encouraged to do so.**

For their safety do not leave them in your cars alone without an adult. An adult is someone 18 years and older. Especially in this hot weather, even if the windows are down, do not leave them in a car without an adult. Also, when inside our buildings, children must be with a parent or an adult at all times.

Parents, please, always accompany your children to the restrooms. If they need to play or crawl during our liturgies, it is best to do this in the back of church or in the room where the restroom is located. Please do not let them do this alone. Go with them and watch them.

Unaccompanied children play on the front Church steps or in the stairwell to the church basement and sometimes slide down the rail for the chair lift. Children can hurt themselves playing on our steps and there is danger being so close to Baltimore Avenue.

Children can really hurt themselves playing on the rail of the chair lift. And by sliding down the rail they damage the rail and it keeps the chair lift from working. The chair lift is the only way that we have to get some of our parishioners to the restrooms or parish functions in our basement. It needs to be in good working condition all the time. Also, we just do not have the funds to keep fixing it.

Unaccompanied children can leave our rooms extra dirty and messy or damaged especially in the restrooms. We have had to replace toilets, to unclog sinks of paper towels and remove "spit-balls" from the ceiling. Here at St. Leo, we pride ourselves on hospitality and welcome. Keeping our facilities clean and respect for our property is good stewardship and a continuing gesture of welcome for all.

Also unaccompanied children do not always understand that religious objects and furniture are not toys to play with, especially our baptismal font. We need to keep our things for worship in good shape, dignified and worthy for worship.

It is Archdiocesan policy that if you are watching more children than just your own on parish property, you need to be VIRTUS trained.

Lastly, it is our hope that as children grow they will need to play less and pray more with us. **I trust that parents will invite their children to stay with them in the pews and pray with us as they are able.** Always encourage them to participate as fully as they can with us in the liturgy - singing and giving the responses.

Also watch for any interest and skills to participate in the liturgical ministries as they get older such as usher, lector, communion distributor, server, children's liturgy of the word, music ministry. **Always encourage them to share their gifts and talents with the community.**

As always, I appreciate your cooperation with these important concerns for the care and safety of our children. We are continuing to grow as a parish. **To those of you who are new to St. Leo's, WELCOME! Let us know how we can help you.**