

A Proposal
Father Frank Matera
Ordinary 2C 2013

For the past several weeks, since the beginning of December, we have experienced one of the richest periods in the church's liturgical year: the time of Advent and Christmas. In a few more weeks, we will enter another rich liturgical season, the time of Lent and Easter. In doing so, we will have celebrated the two mysteries that are most central to our faith: the Incarnation and the Resurrection. Before we enter into the time of Lent and Easter, however, we return to what the church calls her Ordinary Time: that period during which we focus on living the Christian life, living the mysteries of the incarnation and the resurrection.

Although we call this period "ordinary time," there is nothing ordinary about it. In fact, it is a time of extraordinary grace. It is a time when we reflect and meditate on the life of our Lord and Savior. It is a time when we live the mystery that we celebrate. It is a time that reminds us that the ordinary moments of our life are extraordinary moments of God's grace.

This ordinary time is the time when we exercise the many gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows on each one of us for building up the community of the church. This ordinary time is a time when we enjoy the new wine of the kingdom of God that Jesus lavishly bestows on us, as we heard into today's Gospel. This ordinary time is a time when we do those ordinary things that are necessary if we are to build up the community of church.

One of those ordinary tasks is the need to grow our community. When I first came here, you may recall, I spoke about the need to strengthen our parish and reach out to others, especially to those who no longer participate in our community life. For the past several months, I have been asking myself how we might do this, how we might grow our parish and make this vibrant community even more vibrant. And so, for the past several weeks I have been formulating a proposal that I have shared with several groups, and which I now share with you.

The proposal has three parts. First, I propose that the religious education program that currently meets at Squadron Line School on Sunday mornings meet at St. Mary's School on Sunday mornings in two sessions: one at 8:15—9:20, and the other at 10:40—11:45.

Second, I propose that we add a 9:30 mass to our present schedule of 5:00, 8:00 and 11:00. This extra mass will provide you and others with another option for attending mass, and it will enable our children to attend mass with their parents either before or after attending religious instruction classes.

Third, I propose that while our children are attending class we offer adult enrichments program in the Parish Center for their parents and for all interested parishioners. Finally, I propose we set up a coffee bar in the parish center where people can meet and talk every week, even if they do not attend the adult enrichment programs that will be offered.

I presented this proposal to about 175 parents at Squadron Line School last Sunday, and it received enthusiastic support. But I now need to know what you think. And so, I am inviting you to the Parish Center after this mass so that you can ask question and make suggestions.

This proposal is not without its challenges. First, for the proposal to work, we will need an even distribution of children in the two sessions. Second, parking is will be our greatest challenge, and if we go forward with this proposal, we will need professional guidance about the best and safest way to implement it. Third, this proposal will require more lectors, collectors, Eucharistic ministers, and altar servers. In a word, it cannot work without you.

I have said a great deal here, and you undoubtedly questions and suggestions that you would like to make. This is why I am inviting you to come to the parish center after mass to ask questions and provide me with your guidance and insight. In the few months that I have been here, I have learned what a vibrant parish this is. It is my hope that this proposal will contribute to building up of this very good community.