

September 2, 2018

*From Fr. Jim . . .*

**St. Leo Food Pantry and Community Service Building:** The Lord has been blessing the work of our hands at St. Leo Parish in so many ways and now it is time to celebrate. **Please join us on September 9, 2018 for Mass at 10:30am and following Mass a blessing and dedication of our Food Pantry. Bishop Joseph Binzer, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, will preside at the Eucharist and offer the blessing for the dedication of the Food Pantry.**



The program for the blessing, dedication and Open House of the Food Pantry will begin right after Mass in church. As soon as Mass and the program are finished, we will process right down the street to the Food Pantry to begin the Open House.

Although our food pantry has been operating in this new location for several years now, we have never formally dedicated it and thanked the Lord for the many wonderful volunteers for the generosity of their time, talent and treasure. The Food Pantry has a little more than half the space of the building and the other half is now remodeled into offices and meeting rooms that are ready to use. The parish can certainly use this space but it can also be used by other groups for meetings and by businesses that may want to have a satellite office in the neighborhood to offer social services of some kind.

A program will be explained that will help the parish pay the rent on this building and perhaps serve the need for more volunteers. We are inviting any interested group or company to donate one month's rent and also to invite their staffs and co-workers to volunteer in the pantry.

We are celebrating the hard work of many volunteers – parishioners, friends and professionals – who want to help us do the good work that the Lord wants us to do. Cleaning the building from ceiling to floor and wall to wall, pulling up the old carpet, stripping the floor of carpet glue, refinishing the floor, painting the entire space, building the food pantry area and the office spaces and meeting rooms plus the supplies, tools, equipment and materials such as refrigeration, doors, trim, paint, electric, drywall, partitions, cubicles, chairs, blueprints, gondolas, shopping carts, installation of HVAC were either donated or discounted labor and materials.

We are so grateful to every volunteer, company, business, friend or parishioner who volunteered the generosity of their time, talent, and treasure. There are special plaques in the pantry that honor the generosity of their devotion to this project. I especially want to thank Jim Kokenge who is my right hand for the move and remodeling of the Food Pantry. Jim organized all of the donors for the labor and materials and also helped with the physical labor. He truly was the “brains” behind this operation and his support, guidance, knowledge, leadership, and perseverance were invaluable to our success and completion of the project. We are also very grateful to Catholic Charities of Southwest Ohio who first came to us with the idea of moving and redeveloping our food pantry and who sponsored the move and acquired the building for us and who helped us get started in the new building and helped us serve and feed our clients. God has truly blessed us through the work of the hands of all of our volunteers and donors. Please come and celebrate with us on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

**I ask for your prayers:** I have been invited to attend a retreat for priests from around our country that is sponsored by an ecumenical group, Faith In Public Life and the Catholic Diocese of El Paso, Texas in El Paso, Sept. 4 to Sept 7. The idea is to meet Jesus at the border and in the immigrants that are being detained there in camps and buildings set up by our government. We will meet the immigrants and learn about their experience and then learn how to talk to the media about their stories and experiences. I will be back for Mass on Saturday and Mass and the Dedication on Sunday. I am going with two other priests from Cincinnati but please keep all of us in your prayers as we will remember you in our prayers. Thanks.