



ST. LEO THE GREAT PARISH

JANUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER



BENEFITTING FROM THE EXAMPLE OF OUR SENIORS...

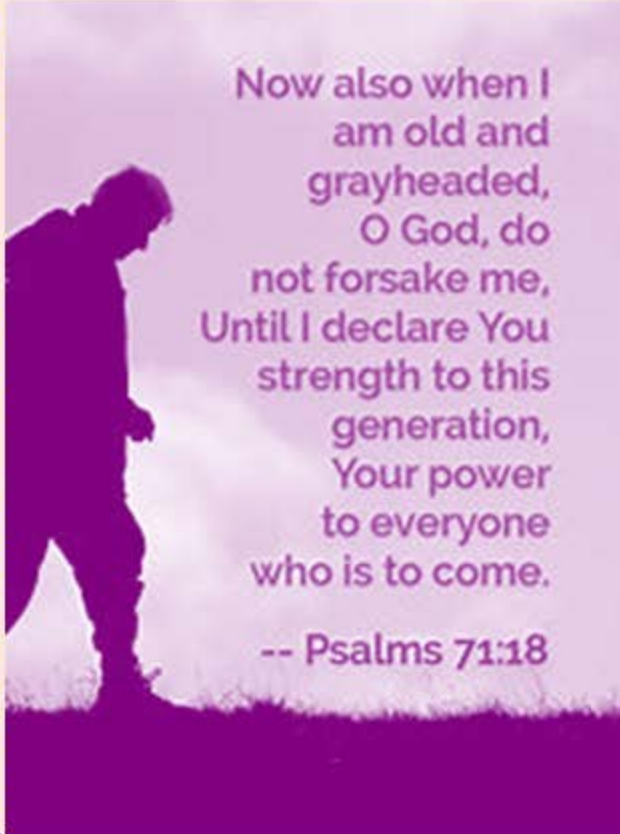
While St. Leo is becoming a younger parish with over 60 baptisms and only one funeral last year, it continues to be grounded in the faith and wisdom of its elders, both past and present.

Though some long-time parishioners may recognize those mentioned names will not be used in order to allow readers to begin to develop their own list of senior "saints" that have impacted their faith journeys both here and in their own families and communities.

Service to the church is often a hallmark of those in their later years and it is usually behind the scenes, humble work like taking care of washing and ironing of cloths needed for Mass and seeing that candles are ready. Others work in ministries of hospitality and being Eucharistic distributors. Still others are involved in music and prison ministry and take communion to the sick. Being at Mass each week is important to them and they come to church in their finest clothes often carrying well-worn prayer books. A woman who was a friend and mentor to many died as she got ready to come to a revival at St. Leo's. Her life was quiet but she touched so many people. Another long time parishioner who had been very active in the parish and is now home bound still is involved from a distance and frequently calls with input and ideas. PTA work when there was a school, craft sales and commitment to being there when things needed to be done marked the life of one who had lived in the neighborhood all of her life.

Refugees from violence and war come with experiences of seeing loved ones killed and loss of everything but their faith that carried them through horrors difficult to imagine. They come with hopes for their future and a desire to see their children and grandchildren have better lives but still stay grounded in the values and relationship with God that continues to sustain them.

Helping others and sharing what they have motivated many of our seniors. One who raised ten children of her own took in children in need and relatives going through hard times—no questions asked. Another who was known for her baked goods and Italian food,



invited a family with less to share Thanksgiving with her family even though she didn't have much herself.

Those who have been in the neighborhood many years share the stories and history of the past when the area was thriving, are getting involved in neighborhood planning, and share visions of what is possible in the future.

There have been parishioners who started and staffed a food co-op in the building that is now Angels' Arms. A man who was known as the St. Joseph of St. Leo's for his ability to repair and build things, as well as his gentle spirit, helped start the food pantry which was managed for many years by a woman who wouldn't go with the EMT's until the food was loaded in the van even after she broke her hip slipping on a wet floor. Another long-time parishioner whose family literally helped build the church made sure to turn in her envelope to Father who visited her as she lay dying. She supported her parish until the end.

Our seniors have been a dedicated group and their labors and example are bearing fruit as young families and youth are taking leadership and following in their footsteps.

