From the Desk of the Pastor...

Today, we hear about the unrolling of two scrolls. The scroll contained the Law of the Lord in a written form. When it was unrolled and read, the people of Israel heard the "Will of God".

This was the defining moment for Ezra with the historical task to rebuild the people into one family of God after the Babylonian exile. The Israelites were expected to come together as one people of God, as one community and as if one body, and listen to God’s Call. The people bowed down in reverence to the proclamation of the "Will of God";

- The people acknowledged their sinfulness and
- Expressed their sorrow for their sins with signs of repentance,

Having come to realize that they have deviated from God and not lived in accordance with God’s Law.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus enters the synagogue in his native village of Nazareth. He opens the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and makes the astounding announcement, as He speaks to them, here and now, that its prophecy is being fulfilled in Him. To make us again the ‘New People of God’.

The Church challenges us today to listen to the second reading, and ask ourselves if the ideals contained there reflect our understanding of what it means to live as the Body of Christ.

PARISH COMMUNITY NEWS

Fixing God’s House

This Campaign Fund money is classified as ‘Restricted Income’ to be used only to pay for the projects mentioned in the “Fixing God’s House” brochure.

If you have not yet made your pledge and wish to do so, you may send in your donations, designating in the memo of your check as “Fixing God’s House”. There are several options available for you to give to this campaign:

- you can drop your check at the Parish Office, or mail it
- you may give "On-Line"
- you may also put in the Sunday collection in an envelope, marked as “Fixing God’s House”

Thank you for continuing the legacy of St. John the Evangelist

THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

The Parish invites you to come and celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, this Saturday, February 2, at the 9am Mass. Please bring along candles for a special blessing for the ‘candle lit procession’ at the beginning of the Feast Mass. These blessed candles are traditionally used to bless our throats on February 3, the Feast day of St. Blaise. However, this year since February 3 falls on a Sunday, the observation of St. Blaise’s feast gets skipped.

The St. Vincent de Paul Conference of St. John the Evangelist is sponsoring a clothing drive for the weekend of February 2nd & 3rd. All donated items will be given to homeless individuals at the Multi Service Center of St. Vincent de Paul. The following items are desperately needed for men:
- Shirts (medium & large)
- Jeans (waist size 32 to 36)
- Sneakers (medium & large)
- Jackets, knitted caps, mittens, scarves

All items should be placed in the barrel found in the vestibule of the church.

Thank you and God bless!

History of the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord...According to Jewish law, the firstborn male child belonged to God, and the parents had to "buy him back" on the 40th day after his birth, by offering a sacrifice of "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons", in the temple (thus the "presentation" of the child). On that same day, the mother would be ritually purified (thus the "purification"). Mary and Saint Joseph kept this law, even though, Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Christ, she would have had to go through ritual purification. When Christ was presented in the temple, "there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel" When Mary and Saint Joseph brought Christ to the temple, Simeon embraced the Child and prayed "Lord, now you let your servant go in peace; your word has been fulfilled: my own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel." Saturday feast of the Presentation is a day for the blessing of candles. In the first years of the church, worship was often at night, and candles and torches were carried from place to place within the worship space as needed. Candles were also a mark of festivity and hospitality when people gathered for prayer in homes. Candles are a good sign of the partnership of God and creation: wax made by bees, gathered and fashioned by human hands into something beautiful and useful. Let us all be bright lights for others.