

Sunday, October 2, 2016  
EXPRESSIONS by Father Ed

## Round Table

Last week the parish Round Table met to discuss a number of practical issues. The meeting took longer than expected so another session has been scheduled for Wednesday, October 12 at 6:00 PM in the hall. The Round Table meeting is an opportunity for all parishioners to ask questions, make suggestions, and to express concerns. Some issues, of course, are complicated and often may take time to build a consensus satisfactory to all, but the Round Table facilitates discussion that ultimately leads to policy making. It is a far more democratic approach than leaving all the decisions to the pastor!

The past meeting focused on two central topics: the use of the parish hall and kitchen, and the church grounds. A set of protocols for the use and maintenance of the kitchen was unanimously approved. An ad hoc committee was set up to recommend proposals for use of the hall by non-parish groups, especially those with little direct connection to our fundamental religious mission, and to consider appropriate fees, at least to cover the basic costs. It will present its suggestions at the next meeting.

Questions about the parish grounds also were raised. St. Timothy's has extensive garden areas and some suggested these could be better coordinated. Some wondered about the effects of the drought and the sustainability of the plants. In response, Taylor Newton, our gardener, tried to explain his vision which relied on trees, succulents and little grass. There also was discussion about flower beds, particularly in front of the new addition of the church. People felt these could be more attractive. Taylor mentioned that he was preoccupied with removing the plants in front of the hall because of the renovation and then the re-planting after the construction. Now, he has more time to focus on new planting in other areas. A Gardening group is being formed.

Most of this discussion was accomplished in a positive and friendly way. At the very end, however, one parishioner walked in and dramatically changed the tone of the meeting. In a glowing tribute to the local police department, he accused St. Timothy's, of harboring and abetting criminals because of our outreach to the poor and homeless. Many of us were dismayed by these remarks because they were so out of touch with the kind of parish we obviously are. Everyone, without distinction, is always welcome at St. Timothy's. Furthermore, Jesus explicitly commanded us to take care of the hungry, the thirsty, and the homeless, because they represent him. These "corporal works of mercy," as they are traditionally called, are not an option, then, but a priority of our faith. They also are the surest measure of our love for God because if "we cannot love the poor we see, how can we love the God we do not see" (1John 4:20). I fully support the current direction of our parish and, in fact, am very proud of the courtesy and compassion which is our reputation.