

### THE SHEPHERDS WALKING STICK

Before the pandemic lockdowns, Patti Rothenburger, our dynamic parish catechist, had started to prepare our kids, around 25 of them, for First Reconciliation and First Communion. The program obviously had to discontinue due to the restrictions, thus we were not able to have First Communion during the Corpus Christi celebration (June 5, 2021). Recently though a couple of parents approached me about the possibility of letting their children receive the Eucharist for the first time assuring me that they have prepared their children themselves. I must say, I was so glad when they told me this. Having consulted Patti and the parish council about their request, I have decided to do First Communion this year hoping also that this special day for our children will jumpstart back to life our parish activities. God willing, we will no longer experience interruptions in our community programs..... With regards to First Communion celebration, the following must be taken note of: (a) Parents of children who have started the preparation before the lockdowns may enlist their kids. They may contact me for this. (b) However, it must be ascertained that the kids knew by heart / have memorized: (1) THE BASIC PRAYERS - i.e., The Sign of the Cross, the Apostles Creed, the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and Act of Contrition, (2) THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (3) HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION. If any of the kids does not know these basics, it is best that his/her First Communion be deferred until next year. (c) First Communion is tentatively scheduled at the 11 AM Mass on August 15, 2021 which is the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, otherwise it will be held at a later date in the Fall. (d) The kids will have to attend a "mini-Retreat" prior to receiving First Communion wherein they will be catechized further on the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. The retreat will be organized by the parish..... At this point, I would like to make quick shout out thanking Maggie Wall for the St. Joseph prayer cards. Thanks also to Carole Schofield for trimming the ornamental shrubs by our church and to Peter & Dolores Thiessen and Esther Thiessen for the potted plants and cut flowers..... As announced last week, today is the 1<sup>st</sup> World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Do not forget to do something special for Grandpa & Grandma today if you still can. Most importantly, offer a prayer for them. I suggest the following from the Bishops in the Philippines: "God our loving Father, you are the source of life and of all gifts. You lovingly sustain us at every moment of our lives and you bring us to fullness of life in Jesus your Son and our Brother. We thank you for the wonderful gift of our grandparents and the elderly. You have given them to us to be our guide as they share with us the wealth of their

experiences and the wisdom that they have gained through the years. We thank you for making them witnesses to us of your abiding presence and care at every turn and change of life. We pray that you bless all of them with joy and peace, with satisfaction at the fruits of their labor, and with the faithful love of their family. Strengthen their trust in your healing mercy in the face of the mistakes and sins of the past. Grant them the joy of companionship of their loved ones and friends. Protect them from all harm and evil that can obscure their vision of eternal peace and joy in your Kingdom. Give them the patience and courage to bear the cross of sickness and weakness of the body. Help them see their sufferings and discomfort as their sharing in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. Grant us all, their family and friends, the grace of firm conviction and faith in the value and dignity of every human person created in your image and redeemed by the sacrifice of Your Son on the Cross. May this help us to continue to support, respect, and love them. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.”