

## LITURGY MATTERS

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### Neighbors

Parishes exist in neighborhoods and, when we think about the instability of today's modern life, churches often are the only abiding and structuring institution in their neighborhood. As such, they play a role in how people think of their neighborhoods – a role of helping surrounding neighbors identify with their locale in personal and social ways. Even if people do not care one bit about church, they can often identify with “the big church on Fremont” or the “pretty church that has a preschool.” These forms of identification help modern people organize their life around human and recognizable patterns;

our parishes provide oases in the midst of endless highways with clusters of suburban houses or anonymous high-rises with boxlike apartments.

Yet, our parishes often shrink from neighborhood roles. So often are parishes wrapped up with their own agenda that only a major crisis jolts them into doing something in and with the neighborhood – a problem with drugs, gangs, theft or some such thing. That our parishes can actually be giving leadership in and with our neighborhoods, dawns on only a few of the clergy and active laypeople.

There is a whole ministry to neighborhoods and to neighbors that can often lead to the enriching of the lives of others; it can also be the seedbed for drawing people to Christ and his Church.

*. . . Let's walk together as disciples in the footsteps of the Lord.*

