

Parish Council Chair Address – Elizabeth Oddone Paolucci

Your Excellency Bishop Henry, invited priests and special guests, and fellow parishioners, welcome to the Thanksgiving Mass in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Our Lady of Grace Italian and English Parish. My name is Elizabeth Oddone Paolucci, and I am the Chair of the Parish Council of Our Lady of Grace.

This is a joyful day for us because we stand as one FAMILY, united to Thank God for the many blessings he has bestowed upon us over the first 25 years of our journey together. It is true that the union between the Italian community of Sant Andrea and the English community of St. Clements grew out of necessity. However, through the mysterious works of the Lord, the communities were fit together ... and at some point "need" was replaced by "want". Today, ours is not a marriage of convenience, but rather one of love and diversity. We are rich in our blessings, for each group has maintained its unique traditions and values, while respecting that of the others. And with great excitement, have creatively given birth to a generation of parishioners who now radiate, a fabric uniquely Italo-English.

These colorful strands of who we are as a community are evident everywhere you look. We thank all those, visibly offering their talents to enrich our 25th Anniversary Celebration - both our Liturgical and Social Reception to follow today. We thank those less visible, but equally instrumental, in ensuring our celebration and day -to-day life at OLOG is characterized by compassion, love, patience, and faithful service.

I pray that you recognize that to thank only a few key people or ministries today would be a gross oversight. I ask you to keep in your thoughts and prayers today, every individual who has helped and touched us in our journey over 25 years. From those who helped with the initial conception and design of our beautiful church, to those who made our Church a spiritual refuge and welcoming HOME for worship. From the eldest parishioners who serve as our stable pillars and foundation, right through to the newest and youngest parishioners who inject a spirit of new life, creativity, and energy. We thank you for your unique contributions and service to God through our Community.

For all this and more, we offer this liturgical celebration. In thanks for our past - for those who helped shape who we are as a community and today are rejoicing with the Lord in Heaven. For our present - for those who faithfully inspire us to keep building and serving. And for our future - for those who will become a part of our future life at OLOG parish ... that the Lord continue to guide us through His Word and the leaders He presents to us, so we may remain united and focused on His commandments of love and service to others. May we continue to be Instruments, and like Jesus, respond faithfully to God with: "Not mine, but Your Will be Done."