

*Annual Stewardship Appeal Campaign
Pastors Comments after Communion – Kick off weekend
November 3 and 4, 2018*

Each year at this time, it has become a tradition to kick off our annual Stewardship Appeal Campaign. The last three years have proven to be a huge success. As you may recall, we have been able to raise, because of your outstanding generosity each year, over 125,000 thousand dollars! What can I say to such generosity but wow! So here we are in this fourth year; and in collaboration with our Finance Council and Pastoral Council, the goal has been set to 150,000 thousand dollars! Now I know, some of you might be thinking that the old Monsignor is off his rocker, he is crazy...and to that I say, you may be right! But to that I respond, I am crazy in love with all of you and this parish. I am confident in your ability to rise to the occasion. And you may respond, “But this year, with all of the scandal and in this tumultuous time?” ...to which I respond, if not now, then when? And if not you, then who?

It might interest you to know that scandal from within and persecution from without are not new phenomena to the Church. It has been in her most difficult times of struggle and pain that holy mother Church, through God’s grace and intervention, has been able to raise up from within some of her finest saints who witness boldly by committing themselves to our true Catholic Faith, authentic reform and renewal. Might we be called to make a difference at this time to that authentic witness, which no scandal can blot out?

Just last week in our Fiscal Report you heard some really good news with regard to the huge hurdles we have been able to overcome regarding debt reduction, the building of our PLC, completing the courtyard, and working toward fiscal responsibility with regard to operating expenses. While we still have some real challenges which lie ahead with regard to our weekly collection, I am confident that we will meet and exceed that challenge like all the other ones we have faced since our foundation as a parish in the year 2000. I say thank you to all who have made this possible, you the contributors and volunteers. Because of your example and commitment we continue to be a vibrant, welcoming parish family.

The revitalization of our annual Stewardship Appeal Campaign over the last three years was part of our strategic plan to emphasize our mission to grow disciples and make Church matter. Why? Because this parish helps us to encounter Jesus Christ in very pastoral and practical ways....in a phrase, as we heard in the Gospel today, “to love your neighbor as yourself.” You can show then in practical ways how much you love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength by putting into practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, comfort those who are mourning, bury the dead, to educate and catechize, and evangelize, as well as pray and support each other. Through our experiences and encounters, nourished on this campus on Sundays and throughout the week, we can go out and make disciples, just as Jesus has commanded us to do.

In this regard, I need your help. The annual Stewardship Appeal Campaign helps us to create resources for our ever growing and successful pastoral efforts as described in our strategic plan namely:

- Evangelization –
 - A major initiative includes the use of media and technology along with a safety and security system,
 - Out-reach to our Spanish speaking communities,
 - Out-reach to members who do not attend Mass at all or only on an occasional basis,
 - Innovative Adult Faith Formation programs throughout the year to nourish and enrich our faith,
 - Creative and interesting programs for our young adults, the youth and our children.
- Funding for our ministries, services and activities.
- Support to the infrastructure of our artistic and environmental enhancements.
- A contingency resource for unexpected costs, which surely come up every year, as they do in your own homes. Let us pray for a mild winter, just like our mild summer and fall, so far!

Monies donated for these causes allow us to use regular collections toward the loan and other operating expenses. All monies stay here within the parish. You may have noticed in our bulletin some of the programs highlighted from time to time, which were helped by the Stewardship monies this past year. We will continue to feature those ministries, committees, organizations and activities that benefit from this campaign. A more detailed report will be available in the near future.

Today, as you already know we are celebrating our Ministry Fair Weekend along with welcoming our new families since our last fair in June. We are now just over 2,700 families! Make sure you stop to see just some of the ways which the parish serves our community, and maybe if the Holy Spirit prompts you, please consider signing up. Enjoy the refreshments and the opportunity to meet others in our parish family.

As always, I am most grateful and humbled for all you do for one another as a parish family. Your generosity, kindness and witness to our Catholic Faith are all a source of inspiration to me as your pastor. In the next few days, you will receive a letter from me asking for your help to achieve our goal of \$150,000 thousand dollars. Last year we surpassed that amount, so let's go for the gusto, and "just do it." ... providing for the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in very practical and pastoral ways. You can be a part of a parish community that holds itself to accountability, transparency and action. Members of the Finance Council and Pastoral Council will be in the back of the Church to answer any questions you may have. God bless you all. Be assured of my continued prayers for you and your intentions, and please, please pray for me.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of the Americas, Pray for us!