

*Pastors Comments after Communion – Kick off weekend, October 24/25,
2020*

Each year at this time, it has become a tradition to kick off our annual Stewardship Campaign Appeal. The last five years have proven to be a huge success. In the last four of those years we have been able to raise over 150,000 thousand dollars per year! What can I say to such generosity but wow! So here we are in this fifth year; and in collaboration with our Finance Council and Pastoral Council, the goal has been set to remain once again at 150,000 thousand dollars!

Now I know, some of you might be thinking, the old Monsignor has gone mad! And if you are not thinking that, well you should be! Because I am mad...madly in love with our Catholic Faith and all of you! Hear me out though. We are coming up to “legal age” as a parish. What haven’t we been through? Separation from our beloved mother parish, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, scandals within the church, persecution from outside the church, economic down turns with regards to the stock market, real estate and unemployment. And as if that were not enough, now the Coronavirus 19 pandemic, with all its implications on the economy and our own personal health and safety. What a mess; and “you stand there Monsignor asking again.” Without self-abasement, but certainly most humbly, I do.

Saint Paul in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, chapters 11 and 12 reflected on his sufferings and the sacrifices he made on behalf of Christ: beatings, shipwrecks, storms, his own shortcomings, and on and on. How he tried to avoid some of them, but the Lord said to him, “My grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection.” Paul went on to boast of his weaknesses so as to let the power of Christ rest upon him, for when he was powerless, it was then that he was strong, through the power of Christ Jesus.

Like gold tested in fire, so our faith as a community has been strengthened. It has been in her most difficult times of struggle and pain that our 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, persecution nor pandemic can blot out?

About a month ago 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, completion of the courtyard, and working toward fiscal responsibility with regard to operating expenses. While we still have some real challenges that lie ahead regarding our weekly collections, we seem every year to pull through and work toward our goal. (Presently you may be interested to know that our collections are up 6.5% over last year.) Thank you for hearing and responding to the message, as you always have done so faithfully, but especially during this pandemic. Because of your example and commitment, we continue to be a vibrant, welcoming parish family. Your witness to our Catholic Faith and commitment to family life and our parish, continues to be a source of inspiration to the priestly ministry and service of Father Ianelli, Deacon Brady and myself.

The revitalization of our annual Stewardship Campaign Appeal over the last five years, through thick and thin, was part of our strategic plan to emphasize our mission to grow disciples and make Church matter. In a phrase traditionally known as, "to put 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 participate personally in the call to discipleship, just as Jesus has commanded us to do.

In this regard, I need your help. The annual Stewardship Campaign Appeal 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 continued growth and expansion of media and technology along with our 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.

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.

As always, I am most grateful and humbled for all you do for one another as a parish family. Over the next few days you will receive a letter, if you have not already, from me asking for your help to achieve our goal of \$150,000 thousand dollars. Last year we far surpassed that amount (\$187,000 to be more accurate), so let's go for the gusto, and "just do it." ... 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!