

FROM THE PASTOR'S



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time –February 4, 2007 C

NEXT SUNDAY IS CATHOLIC APPEAL SUNDAY IN OUR DIOCESE

Next weekend is our annual **Catholic Appeal** in our Diocese. **Catholic Appeal** is the way that the 90 parishes in our Diocese work together to fund the ministries and administration of our central office.

Those of you who are registered in our parish should have received the beautiful brochure from the Diocese outlining the ministries of the Diocese and how the *Appeal* monies are spent.

Each parish is assessed 15% of their total *Offertory income* for the previous fiscal year. 2005-2006. Because our offertory income increased 5% during that fiscal year, our assessment this year has only increased by 5%. So we are *not* assessed on any other parish income e.g. bingo, Faith in Our Future etc.

Five Levels of Giving in 2006

Newcomers to our parish who are in a position to participate in our *Catholic Appeal* sometimes wonder what kind of gift to give to our *Catholic Appeal*. A general guideline is to “*give as the Lord has given to you.*” “*We desire not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice.*” In our parish we received gifts ranging from \$5 to \$5,000.

If you are in a position to be a *major donor*, by giving a gift of a \$2,000 or more, please consider doing so. If you cannot be a major donor, give at a level that you can and makes you feel good about your gift.

- Last year parishioners gave gifts of \$1,000 or more to our **Catholic Appeal** totaling \$70,940.
- Parishioners gave gifts between \$500 and \$999 totaling \$61,476.
- Parishioners gave gifts between \$250 and \$499 totaling \$66,158.
- Parishioners gave gifts between \$100 and \$249 totaling \$51,801.
- Parishioners gave gifts between \$5 and \$99 totaling \$13,919.

All levels of giving are welcome and appreciated. If you plan to give a gift of let's say \$200 and could easily give \$300, consider doing so. Our goal of **\$242,000** is a huge amount of money to receive pledges for in a few weeks. But we know we can do it when **all** of us pull together.

I am **most grateful** to all of you who year after year give to our *Catholic Appeal* and help us take care of a huge financial responsibility. I know that if your financial situation allows you to participate again this year, you will do so. I am well aware that people's financial situation can dramatically change in a year.

A Word to our non-registered parishioners and to our winter parishioners.

I have come to be aware that some people come to our parish for years and do not register. Registration in a parish is a personal choice that each person must make for him/herself. If we decide not to register because we do not want to participate in the financial responsibilities of the parish, even though we are in a position to do so, then we have made a selfish and greedy decision. If you come to church on a regular basis and enjoy the services offered by the parish, then I would hope you would also take serious your responsibility to help your parish take care of its financial responsibilities. If you write a check to Catholic Appeal, (actually, write checks to Ascension Church) please know that we will *not* register you. You will only become an *official* member of the parish when *you* decide to do so. Envelopes will be in the pews next Sunday to allow you to participate if you choose to do so.

Winter Parishioners. We welcome all of our winter parishioners. I know that many of you are registered and play an active part financially and service wise to our parish while you are here. Thank you. I realize that most of you have some form of **Catholic Appeal** in your home diocese. If you are here six months, perhaps you can give 50% of what you normally set aside for the funding of your diocese. If you are only here three or four months, perhaps you might consider sharing with us 25% of what you set aside to help our diocese.

Something to Think About

In his book *The Treasure Principle—Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving*, Randy Alcorn speaks about six Treasure Principles. The sixth principle states:

**God prospers me not to raise
my standard of living
but to raise my standard of giving**

What a beautiful thought to reflect on and act on. The above saying is the kind of one that motivates me to increase my giving. God blesses us financially so that we can be *more generous* and not *more selfish*. Too often in our world when people are financially blessed they only use their newfound wealth to *raise their standard of living and omit to raise their level of giving*. The above principle reminds us that if God blesses us financially he does so *primarily* to give us the opportunity (and joy) to raise our level of giving. Sure we may raise our standard of living a bit, but God's generosity to us is primarily intended to make us more generous and not greedier. When we use God's financial blessings to *primarily* raise our standard of living we place ourselves in a poor position to raise our level of giving.

In Alcorn's book, *Treasure Principle #5* states: "Giving is the only antidote to materialism." Another way of stating this principle might be: 'giving and sharing is God's medicine for our greedy tendencies'. My assumption is most, if not all of us, have greedy tendencies and if these are not kept in check we will become greedy people — people who use God's blessing *not* as a wonderful opportunity to bless others but only as an opportunity to bless ourselves and our families. How sad that would be. I believe the only way to keep our greedy or materialistic tendencies in check is to be *consistent* in setting aside a portion of our income to support our church family and the poor.

PRAYER OF GOOD STEWARD

*God our Father,
we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ,
the Saviour of all people.
Help us to take every talent and gift,
which we possess and to lay them on the altar
of your service,
that we too may be used to bring others to you.
Help us to be ready to give,
and even to sacrifice, our time,
our energy, our money,*

*to spread Christ's message
wherever we live and to share with
others the life of Christ, which is in us.
Help us so to live that by our word
and our lives many more may be moved
to give their minds and heart to you.
God our Father,
hear this prayer through our Saviour
Jesus Christ. Amen*

VOCATIONS PRAYER

*O Jesus, Good and Gentle Shepherd grant that
the men and women from our community, may
have the grace and the courage to hear and
answer your call to priesthood and religious life.*

*Give them the wisdom to realize that life is a
gift. Let them realize their life is part of YOUR
plan. Call forth those you have chosen to spread
the gospel message, and help them to freely
respond to a life of service in the church.*

*May the parents and families of our parish,
support and encourage our young men and
women to search for, follow and answer the call
of God in their lives.*

Amen

Have a Blessed week,

Le Paron