

Our Lord Jesus Christ the King November 21, 2010 C

COMMENTS ON OUR ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT AND BUDGET

I am happy to share with you our Parish Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 and our Budget for the current year. This is the time of year when most parishes in Florida share this Report—so that our winter parishioners can read it.

1. I am most grateful to all of you who financially support the parish, week after week, month after month, year after year. Even though most of you have experienced a decrease in income in the past few years, you have continued to give to the church at the same level that you did prior to the economic downturn. I truly believe our good and generous God blesses you in some tangible or intangible way for your generosity.

2. Personally, I am a fiscal conservative. I try to be the same with parish finances. I take my responsibility to be a good steward of your donations to our parish and school very seriously. Having said that, I am sure I could always do better. This past year, we started emailing the parish newsletter which brings us a savings of about \$4,500. Presently, we are exploring ways to reduce the cost of water consumption in our chiller system.

3. I continue to be most grateful to the volunteers whose gifts of time and talent save the parish a significant amount of money each year. Most parishes our size (3,500 families) have a larger paid staff than we do.

Now for comments on some of the line items of our Report. As I offer specifics on the Report, I am aware that each detail invites the reader to look for further details.

Paid staff. 14 full-time and 14 part-time.

Liturgy, church environment, music. The two big expenses in this area are bread and wine (\$15,000) and environment and flowers (\$11,500).

Parish tithe outreach. At the end of last year's Fiscal Year, we gave a report on how tithe money was used in '08-'09.

Upkeep of facilities and utilities. Repairs and upkeep of our seven facilities and grounds. Utilities: electric, water, sewer, gas, garbage removal, telephone.

Administrative/office expenses. Office supplies, postage, office equipment and leased equipment, copies, advertising, bank fees, casual labor, property taxes and insurance.

Aid to the school. The school, with an enrollment of over 470 students, has a current budget of \$2,730,000. Staff: 32 full-time and 25 part-time. Tuition: 86% of school budget. This year we are giving \$301,400 in tuition assistance. 144 students receive tuition assistance, \$150,000 of school support comes from offertory.

The school also receives help from Bingo, School Support Envelope, Casino Night, Thrift Store, Fall Festival and miscellaneous private donations.

Finance Committee: Catherine Key, CPA (Chairperson), John Nanna, Mary Carney, Bonnie Armstrong, Mary Russo (Parish Bookkeeper), Fr. Eamon Tobin. The Committee meets every other month.

Reflections on the spirituality of money

1. The way we manage and spend our money is a spirituality matter—for the spiritual life has to do with *every aspect* of our lives and not just those times when we pray or are in church. Because the issue of our finances is a very personal matter, we usually do not talk to others about it and maybe not even to God. In his book *Your Money Counts* (a biblical approach to finances), Howard Dayton tells the following story:

2. *Being faithful in small matters counts.* Luke 16:10 states: "He who is faithful or trustworthy in small matters will be faithful in great matters." How do we know if a teenager is going to take care of his first car? Observe how he took care of his bicycle. Someone has said: "Small things are small things, but faithfulness with small things is a big thing." People say that they would give a lot of money away if they won the lottery. This is probably not true if they are not generous with what they *presently* have.

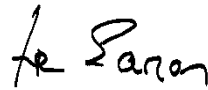
Practical suggestions for your consideration

1. If you live on a *low* fixed income, consider giving to our offertory collection even if it is only a dollar a week. Just as Jesus praised the poor widow for her pennies to the collection, he will praise you.
2. Be an “*intentional or percentage giver.*” In other words, move beyond the practice of doling out “loose change.” If you have not already done so, consider doing the math to see what percentage of your income you set aside for the church and the poor.
3. If you presently have not reached the *biblical ideal of 10%* for the church and the poor, try to move in that direction. This especially should be a goal if we are blessed to be making a very good income.
4. If you presently do not utilize the *school envelope* in your monthly package and are in a position to give, consider doing so. This special collection brings in almost \$5,000 a month. Doing everything we can to keep children in our school is a top priority for me.
5. If you presently make the practice of giving monthly, consider giving *weekly* (even if the other three envelopes are empty). Why? It sets a good example for those around you. In church, our behavior is *contagious*—be it in the area of singing, praying, hospitality or placing a donation in the basket. Whether we realize it or not, we do set a good example for those around us when they see us place our envelope *each week* in the basket. That is why I publicly give my offering at Mass. I, too, wish to be one of those who set a good example.
6. If you presently receive the monthly envelope package but never use them, please ask Teresa at the parish office to stop sending so that we do not continue to incur additional mailing costs.
7. If we do not financially support our parish family and are in a position to do so, or only give “loose change” when we could be much more generous, we should experience what is called *healthy guilt*—the guilt we ought to feel for failing to do what we ought to do. My guess is that God does not look kindly on us if others with a much smaller income than us are more generous than we are. Needless to say, I am well aware that in this economy, many people are helping other family members who are hurting financially. God knows our priorities and practices in this area of our lives. It is to him that we must answer.

I read the following recently: “When you give cheerfully, it is an act of worship. When you give begrudgingly, it is not.” Please know that this pastor will cheerfully accept and appreciate all donations, whether given cheerfully or begrudgingly.

Again, a big **Thank You** to all who support our parish financially.

Have a blessed week,



When the Crusades were being fought during the 12th century, the crusaders employed mercenaries to fight on their behalf. Because it was a religious war, the crusaders insisted that the mercenaries be baptized before fighting. As they were being baptized, the mercenaries would hold their swords out of the water to symbolize the one thing in their life that Jesus Christ did not control. They had the freedom to use the swords in any way they wished.

Today many people handle their money in a similar fashion, though they may not be as obvious about it. They hold their wallet or purse “out of the water,” in effect saying, “God, You can be the Lord of my entire life except for my money. I am perfectly capable of handling that myself.”