

**Pastor's Comments after Communion:
Kick-off Weekend, October 30/31, 2021**

Since our foundation as a parish, this time of year has been a traditional opportunity to raise money to offset parish expenses. In more recent years, since my arrival we have identified specific causes which benefit from our *Annual Stewardship Campaign Appeal*. Despite the many challenges over our history, I have been nothing but awestruck and impressed by your faithfulness, sacrifice, and generosity to our parish and to so many other charities.

Once again this year I appeal to you so that we will be able to support more than 40 parish ministries, committees, organizations, services, and charities which we offer on a regular basis, in and out of season, no matter what the climate: physically, spiritually, economically, socially. What a year and a half we have experienced as we have faced yet more challenges and expenses caused by the Covid-19 Virus! Our *Annual Appeal* enables us to continue to live our vision of **“being a vibrant, welcoming parish family, dedicated to growing disciples and making Church matter”** even throughout the pandemic. I am confident that with your support we will be able to continue to not merely survive, but rather thrive and flourish as we face the future. This is what we like to refer to as the **OLG Difference!**

Our parish recently embarked on a new initiative along with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to bring back people actively and physically to Mass entitled, *Nothing Compares to Being There*. We all know instinctively that nothing compares to “being there” in person regarding events and gatherings within our families and communities. We discovered this during the pandemic lockdowns and quarantines, when we were almost completely separated and isolated from one another. If this is true on the level of our human relationships, how much more so with Jesus, who comes to be Sacramentally present to us, truly and really, in the Holy Eucharist at every Mass. While Facetiming and Zooming became a common practice, and still serve a very good purpose, even now, I don’t know about you, but I am just tired of it.

I take this opportunity to personally invite you and your family to help me by inviting your family and neighbors, who do not attend Mass on a regular basis, back to the in-person celebration of the Eucharist. I realize that some of you are unable or just not ready to attend Mass in person. Please be assured that we will continue to livestream Mass and other liturgies so you can continue to feel connected to our parish family. This past year, because of your generosity, we have been able to invest more monies into our live streaming in order to offer a quality viewing experience. With your help we will continue to fulfill our plan for the use of technology.

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

- Evangelization:
 - Continued out-reach to and inclusion of the Spanish speaking families into our parish community.
 - Continued out-reach to members of our community 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 engaging programs for our young adults, youth, and children. A major initiative has been our online PREP.
 - Funding for our ministries, committees, services, and parish activities to support them.

- Technology:
 - As mentioned before, in light of the pandemic includes continued growth and expansion of our live streaming.
 - Expansion of our safety and security system.

- 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. A Financial Report Summary is available in the bulletin and on the website as to how we spent the monies last year.

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. For your information, last year we raised more than \$200,000. With your support once again, I believe we can achieve and even surpass our goal. 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.

Be assured of a remembrance in prayer for you and your loved ones that you remain healthy and safe during these difficult and challenging times, and I humbly ask that you do the same for me. May Mary, Our Blessed Mother watch over you and keep you in the mantel of her care.

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