

APastors Comments after Communion – Kick off weekend, October 29/30, 2022

As the Fall Season approaches, it has been our tradition to kick off our annual Stewardship Campaign Appeal. The past has always proven to be a huge success, even as we worked our way through the Coronavirus Pandemic, always surpassing our goal. I continue to be astonished and humbled by your sacrifice and generosity. So here we are in this seventh 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, our parish and all of you! And as you may already know, love makes you do sometimes strange things!

Despite the many hardships and struggles we have faced as a parish, since our foundation in the year 2,000, we have not merely survived, but rather we have flourished. Those struggles and hardships have included being separated from our beloved mother parish, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, finding land to build upon, the scheduling of Masses in school auditoriums, the fall outs of both the economy and real estate markets, the church scandals, the almost insurmountable tasks of building our beautiful campus, and if all of that were not enough, the onslaught of the pandemic! These are to name but a few of the challenges we have faced both as a parish, not to mention your own personal challenges and difficulties within your families. However, might I say, 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 you and I 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 good news with regard to the huge hurdles we have been able to overcome regarding debt reduction, major projects to help maintain our beautiful campus, 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. Thank you for hearing and responding to the message, as you always have done so faithfully. Because of your sacrifice 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 my priestly ministry and service.

The annual Stewardship Campaign Appeal is a part of our strategic plan to emphasize our mission to grow disciples and make Church matter. In a traditional phrase, we strive 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, 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. In the near future you will receive a letter from me, if you have not already, asking for your help to achieve our goal of \$150,000 thousand dollars. Last year we far surpassed that amount (\$186,000 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!