

Extended Announcements -- October 4, 2020

In light of the Diocese filing for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Protection and the concerns about where we go from here, we thought we'd spend a few extra minutes this weekend with some extended announcements on what's been and, what will be, happening in the parish.

1st, there has been a lot of sacramental activity:

Since late June, we have celebrated almost 100 individual baptisms (3 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday every weekend), keeping the services to 1 family at a time for health & safety reasons. In September we had four 1st communion celebrations for 76 children that we weren't able to celebrate in May.

And in October, as you can probably guess from the tapestries, we will celebrate Confirmation - for 115 teens and 11 adults who could not receive confirmation on Pentecost this year. This will be done at three Saturday celebrations and one celebration at our Spanish mass.

While weddings have been minimal this year, we are going to hold a pre-cana marriage preparation session later this month as we have many couples planning weddings for next year. Fr Bala is officially retired but he is sticking around because he can't get home to India. We are having a Mass thanking him for his service on Saturday October 24 (5:00). We also would love it if families would make video messages for him thanking him for his ministry as a priest and wishing him well in retirement.

And with autumn officially here – we do plan to have our 1) All Souls Day mass for the family of loved ones who passed away this year, 2) our usual Thanksgiving Day mass – though we are still working through the logistics of the traditional blessing of food, and 3) we are planning a “Healing” Mass in November as well – time and date will be forthcoming. For safety reasons, instead of the sacrament of anointing of the sick there will be prayers for healing of the emotional, spiritual, and physical pain that this pandemic has brought.

As our celebrations have been slowly picking back up, so have other activities.

We have upcoming adult formation sessions set up, both in-person and virtually. These sessions will be on Eucharistic Adoration – What it is and how you can participate.

Our weekly Video reflections on Sunday's scripture readings will continue twice/week
And look for an upcoming video series on The Sacred Mass – where we've broken the mass into parts and explain the scripture and tradition associated with the words and actions of the different parts of the Mass.

The Diocese has asked that we not hand out papers in Church – which explains why there have been no bulletins or missals. However, we are adapting the bulletin to be on-line and will have it available shortly on our website.

Our Soup Kitchen has been closed for more than 6 months as well but will begin serving pre-packaged meals again next month. And we will be asking for volunteers to assist in different ways.

The relocation of our Parish Outreach has been completed and the new offices are located at the far end of the Parish Center (formerly the elementary school building). As we announced last week, we are expecting a greater need for Outreach services than the past several years. Therefore, we would like to stock up the pantry shelves and are asking for supermarket gift cards and non-perishable donations throughout the month of October, especially peanut butter, jelly, size 5/6 baby diapers and toiletries. In addition, we are asking for your financial assistance in a special collection on Sunday October 11. All proceeds will be used to support our Parish Outreach activities. A table will be set up in the Church vestibule for the non-perishable donations, and we have placed envelopes in the pews for any gift cards or financial support you can offer. Please put these envelopes, along with any donations, in the baskets as you enter and leave the church.

Let's spend a few final thoughts on the Parish from a more concrete and financial perspective. We've relocated outreach from their old offices on Pond Rd, and if you've driven by you have seen the "For Sale" signs up. Our plan is to sell the building and use the proceeds for 2 things: 1st, much needed new air conditioning, and 2) parking lot repairs/replacement. At the same time, we also have a "For Lease" sign up on the old 2 story school. To the extent we can lease

this building (holding onto the gym for our CYO and maybe other activities) we'll have more financial flexibility in the parish finances going forward.

It's been a challenging year – we would have wanted to be further along with selling the outreach building and leasing the old school, but the pandemic and lockdown slowed things up. Weekly Collections were down this year – understandably. But frankly, we thought it could have been worse. We are down 150% from last year – almost \$140,000. Our weekly collection numbers are picking back up and we are running close to \$15k currently. But notably, both Easter and Palm Sunday were down substantially as we just didn't have the usual full Church on those days. Likewise, No Summer party, and a decrease in weddings, funerals, baptisms and candles all contributed to lower donations. We have made some difficult decisions to further reduce expenses, the most visible you may have noticed is a reduction in our rectory hours.

Offsetting this was the fact that we filed for and received a loan from the US Treasury under the PPP – Paycheck Protection Program that allowed us to continue paying employees and utility bills. This is a forgivable loan that is essentially a grant.

What does it all mean? We ran a deficit of about \$40k for the year. We started the year expecting we could be breakeven with the school closing, but frankly it could have been worse. For 2021, we are budgeting to be breakeven, and if we can lease the school, we could be, for the 1st time in a long time, in the black! As I mentioned earlier – any proceeds from the sale of Outreach will go into much needed capital projects.

What about the Monthly Repair & Maintenance collection? It was down as well. We were hoping to average \$6k/month, but it was more like \$4.5k. We like to budget this to cover 50% of our repair & ongoing maintenance – heating & a/c system, landscaping, snow removal and repair projects. It was close to 40% this year. With a new A/C system hopefully we can reduce these costs next year.

I'd like to end in a spirit of hope that St Paul reminds us of in today's 2nd reading:

'Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me.

Then the God of peace will be with you.'

- It's a message of Hope.
- A message of encouragement.
- A message of Perseverance.
- It's the message of Christ.

Challenges are part of our life, and we are guided by St Paul's words to work through them.

Our school closing, the Pandemic, the pain (but justice) of the CVA lawsuits, and the Diocesan bankruptcy filing are realities.

But our Parish Lives on; Christ Lives in our hearts. And the Holy Spirit continues to guide us.

Please join me in our Mission Statement...

By our loving service and works of mercy, we invite every person to know Jesus Christ, present in the Word and the breaking of the Bread, so that all may accept his gift of salvation.

Thank you all for being the Body of Christ for one another – that is building the City of God.