

October 30, 2022

Dear friends,

Over the last several months, Saint Mark parish has experienced many blessings and exciting developments. With the full return of in-person Masses (mask-free!), singing at Mass, and regular liturgical ministry, our community is newly able to gather for prayer & worship.

Moreover, the end of summer has seen the start of sacramental preparation classes for our youth, the formation of a new young adult group, several new study groups ('Pivotal Players', Mariology, and Scripture study of Wisdom literature, to name a few!), and a renewal among our various fraternal groups (Mother's Group, Queen of Heaven Guild, Lion's Den, Knights of Columbus). We also have key ministries starting anew!

So now what? While it might be tempting to conclude that all is well, our community is still in a vulnerable position. As I shared in June, our parish is anticipating a significant deficit in our budget by the end of our fiscal year (June 30, 2023). Through restructuring and some cuts, that deficit has been reduced to \$136,000. *But what if we didn't have a deficit at all?*

This is where you come in. Although I never (and I do mean *never*) track any individual's giving, I occasionally review the overall trends. Here's what we have: 779 registered households at Saint Mark, about 500 people coming to Mass each weekend (including children) – of that, 367 households give in a trackable way (ie, envelopes or checks). Do you notice the disparity? Of the registered households, 47% of the community gives. The average donation is \$35.00 per week.

I know that folks give simply by putting cash in the basket. Practically speaking, that means that there are more folks giving than those numbers reflect. And yet, there **IS** a gap to be filled – and a significant one at that.

You can help! Foremost, if you're already giving regularly to the parish: **THANK YOU!** Regardless of the size of your gift, know that it makes a difference – and I, and the whole parish, am grateful for your generosity.

Whether you've given in the past or are a new giver, here's my pitch: **If every person who currently gives gave a one-time extra gift of \$400** – above and beyond their regular monthly or weekly gift – **we would eliminate our deficit AND have about a \$10,000 surplus.** Check my math: 367 [track-ably] giving households time \$400 equals \$146,800! That's \$11.76 extra per week if you started now and continued to the end our fiscal year (October 30th, 2022 - June 30, 2023, or 34 weeks).

For the cost of a subscription to a streaming service, Saint Mark parish could be placed on solid footing, with a small buffer to boot.

This won't work for everyone. If money is tight, consider how you might give within your means. If you are doing well, please consider how you might give a little more to help make up the difference! And if you're not currently giving at all, consider how the Lord is calling you to do so.

Every gift counts. Jesus teaches us this most explicitly in the story of the widow's mite. Though she only gave two coins, her relatively small gift (compared to others) was more treasured for being all she had to give! Your gift matters, and we are grateful for it – and for you!

Please prayerfully consider how you might commit – or re-commit – to our parish finances. You can make a pledge by returning the enclosed commitment card by mail, collection basket or using our online pledge form at www.saintmarkshoreline.org

Thank you for your support. Please be assured of my gratitude & prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Father Maurer, pastor