

## **The Joy of the Gospel: B.A.A. Weekend**

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 16, 2020

Fr. Tony Davis

“The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come.” This is the opening paragraph to Pope Francis’ 2013 inspirational document, which takes its title from the very first line: ‘The Joy of the Gospel.’

This weekend is our Bishop’s Annual Appeal kick-off. Each year, we are given the opportunity to support the Bishop of Columbus and the Diocese of Columbus so that we can continue to work together to build up the Body of Christ throughout our 23 counties in central Ohio. This year, Bishop Brennan, perhaps taking the lead of Pope Francis, has chosen the theme of ‘Living the Joy of the Gospel’ for this appeal. Even though we are in a time of pandemic and many of us may be struggling physically, mentally, and even financially, we are still asked to support this cause.

I realize we ask for your contributions a lot. On top of our Sunday offertory, we have had a Mission Appeal recently. We ask for your contributions not because we like to, but because we are Christians and Christians share. Please know that I contribute, too. As Pope Francis puts it, “for if we have received the love which restores

meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others.”  
(8)

As we know, there are many forces in the world working against Christianity and the church. Religion doesn't seem to be as important as it once was. But we can't control this. What we can control are our own actions. What we can control is our own joy or lack of joy. Our lack of joy might in fact be part of the problem. Two little memorable quotes from Pope Francis that may challenge us are: 'some Christians live Lent without Easter' and 'an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!'

As a Church, there are many challenges before us. One of the challenges is a lack of priests. We are all on the brink of experiencing this reality more directly, as many of our priests plan on retiring in the near future. Appropriately, then, the highest percentage of contributions to the B.A.A. (21%) goes to the priest, deacon, and seminarian education. Knowing that an individual will have financial support and scholarships to help them can make the difference between them praying about a vocation to ministry and actually having the courage to step forward and pursue it. This is just one way that our B.A.A. contributions will be used.

As you leave mass today, I encourage you to take a B.A.A. envelope with you. After you decide what you are able to do, you may bring it back and place it in the collection basket. We will separate them from the normal collection and process your information.

The Gospel has brought joy to our lives. May our support help chart out new paths for the Church's journey in the years to come.