

May 11, 2020

Good afternoon my very dear Parishioners,

Yesterday, wearing my mask, I was picking up some Canada Dry Seltzer Water at Giant (3 for \$10) and met a parishioner with whom I had a wonderful conversation. He had just come from praying in our church. After talking about our resumption of Masses in public he asked me about our finances with rather a concerned look. After discussing the matter with him I thought that I should take the opportunity this morning to write you about our parish stewardship during the COVID crisis we are living through together.

To begin with, you have been *so* faithful. That's the good news, and there is no bad news! The number of our parishioners who are mailing their offertory envelopes, dropping them off at the Parish Office, or putting them in the wooden boxes in the church is amazing. Thank you. The parishioner I spoke with at Giant told me he was putting his offering in our wooden boxes. By the way, he paid for my groceries!

On Saturday I received a note from another parishioner that began: "Just a note to let you know how important you and our church are to us." She went on to tell me how thankful she was that she and her husband were able to keep on working. What's more, she wrote that her husband had recently gotten a promotion and pay raise, and, therefore, they had decided to increase their monthly donation to the church! When I phoned her later on to thank and commend her for doing that, she replied, "That's the way it's supposed to be."

Please know that, thanks to your care and fidelity, our end of the month checking account balance for April 30 was only \$16,000 less than our balance of March 31. We anticipated this difference to be as large as \$68,000. Our electric bill was \$1,000 less this month.

We continue to pay ALL of our church and school employees, even those who are unable to work due to current COVID restrictions, such as our organist, RE staff, school front office staff, and extended care staff. Without their pay, many of these employees would have experienced serious hardships. At the same time, since we were forced to close our School buildings, it was only fair we issue tuition refunds for those families who use our Pre-School (3 & 4 year olds) as a fulltime day care so they'd have access to these monies.

Neal Armstrong, our Finance Manager, is doing everything he can to make ends meet. To save us money, last month he successfully renegotiated our contract with Jani King, who clean our church, school and parish offices. Neal and I will continue to scrutinize every expense, as we always have, as you have a right to expect us to.

Now, with kindest regards, I send you my blessing through the air, remaining, as always

Your grateful pastor,

Father DeMartino