Dear Good People of Saint Bede

Grace, peace and love to you. The events of 2020-21, in particular Covid 19 and the social and political upheaval in our country, forced us to reflect individually and together about what is important. Stay at home directives, safety precautions, curfews and curtailing travel outside the country and even within our Commonwealth greatly changed the ways we live, move and interact. We missed the Eucharist. We missed seeing and being together. We missed being part of the pastoral and social activities of the parish and larger community. We missed our visitors who bring so much life to our worship and prayer. Thanks be to God, we are returning to those activities but clearly things are different.

In spite of the odds, we have remained strong. Your generosity and that of other families in the parish has seen to that.

So, what were we able to do this past year?

- Livestream Masses and important sacramental/liturgical events for those not able to attend in person
- Expand our electronic communications and redesign our website (It has a whole new look and feel).
- Provide for Children's Faith Formation at no cost to our families
- Tended to some deferred maintenance on our facilities and properties (On Ironbound and at the Shrine).
- Reduced income projections and spending - without effecting our ministries
- Discussed and determined a policy for parish gifts/ bequests to help with maintenance and reducing our debt

What are some priorities going forward?

- Increase involvement in our liturgical, formation, and service ministries
- Invest in systems to better communicate with and within the parish
- Further reduce our parish debt (let's retire it as soon as possible).
- Plan for maintenance and replacement of infrastructure (build up reserves)

How you can help?

- Pray for our parish, our community and the world
- Study the financial report from our last fiscal year and our projected budget for the one we’re in
- Reflect on your ability to steward the parish: what can you share from a time, talent and treasure perspective?

One other request, if you have not already done so, you could really help by moving your gifts online if you are comfortable, it helps us to better manage our operations. Enclosed is information on how to get started with Faith Direct. This new eGiving option offers you added convenience — you'll never have to worry about writing checks or finding envelopes on Sunday morning. When you use Faith Direct, your Sundays are simpler so there's more time to focus on Mass, prayers, and God’s message that day.

Every parishioner using Faith Direct means one less package of envelopes to print and mail out, and fewer paper checks for our volunteers and staff to process. If you have already setup an account, thank you. It is really the most effective and efficient way for you to support the parish. God has blessed us with this technology that makes giving easier for you, and that allows your gift to have an even greater impact for St. Bede. I am grateful for your generous support and hope you will join me in enrolling with Faith Direct.
Lastly, bring your Annual Parish Appeal Response card to Mass or complete it online by November 7, 2021. Knowing what we have to work with can help us make the good decisions that will need to be made. Thankfully, we are in this together and God is with us!

Pace e bene (Peace and good),

(Rev. Msgr.) Joseph P. Lehman
Pastor

PS: Visit faith.direct/VA1130 or, simply scan this code with your smartphone camera to go directly to our parish enrollment page.