

Jan. 25-26, 2014

Thoughts from the pastor,

This letter is not coming to you from the cruise ship that I hope I am on. I wrote this before I left. By now you should have received your letter from the Archbishop concerning his *Ignite the Faith* campaign. If you haven't received one it is probably because you are not registered in the parish, but I am sure the Archbishop would be willing to accept your donation. Call the parish office to get registered. And contact the Stewardship & Development Office at 402-557-5650 to donate.

This campaign will make a big difference for the Archdiocese but it will not solve all of the problems we face. That has to do with one of the questions that are often asked about the campaign, "Why doesn't it try to help with ...." When the Archbishop started the process for this campaign he really worked hard to get input on what were the most urgent needs of the Archdiocese. There was really a wonderful list but the price tag for dealing with even a few more priorities was \$70,000,000 instead of the \$40,000,000 that we believed we could achieve. So we will not be directly helping out Catholic Charities, or teacher's wages, or the high cost of Catholic high school tuition, or evangelizing the many Catholics who are barely connected with the Sacraments at this point, etc. That doesn't mean these are not important. But the planning showed us that we could not do it all at once, or we would have to find less expensive ways of working with some issues.

With Pope Francis' call to focus more on the poor, the added question of helping them more has come up. I did smile when the Archbishop recently told a group of people that the campaign goals were set before we had Francis as pope. But he also reminded us that the goal of helping out the inner-city schools is one of the more effective long term methods of ending poverty. Giving a person an education and a set of values will help them out of poverty better than a handout.

One other aspect of this campaign is that 10% of all donations will be sent back to the parish of origin. This will help with a question that came up in the last Finance Committee meeting. "How well are we watching out for major needed that might come up as our buildings age?" That 10% from the campaign is earmarked for projects that will help with those issues. Members of different committees in the parish might remember me asking about what things they thought are needed in that respect. The first two priorities that came up were redoing the restrooms connected with the church and replacing the lighting in the church which has been causing problems. Hopefully that second thing would also save us some money in the future as we pay utility bills.

I hope the information in these letters has helped you to understand what the Archbishop has in mind and hopefully you can be of help to him with your contributions. In case you are wondering how much I believe in it, I have already sent him \$7,000 and will send at least \$3,000 more. But I am also keeping on top of my other charities, like Catholic Charities who I sent \$1,000. I know I have been blessed and I thank the Lord for it as much as I can.

One of the next topics I will be working on in my next letters has to do with setting goals for the parish. I have met with the Parish Council and the deacons and we are starting the goal setting process. Some of the ideas that have come up already are:

1. Promote the strengthening of the community by working on ways of meeting each other after Masses.
2. Setting up plot maps that would let people know how many fellow parishioners they have next door.
3. Bringing in Totus Tuus to supplement Vacation Bible School as an opportunity for our young people.
4. Start this Lent to have a goal of reading the Bible in one year so we can get to know Jesus better.
5. Create an effective sign so people going down Fort Street will notice we are here.

Stay tuned and God bless you,  
Fr. Frank