

May 7-8, 2016

Thoughts from the pastors,

The month of May filled with graduations. We are proud of the student's achievements and continue to pray for them with each step as they move forward. The "we" that I am referring to is Fr. Tom and me. As pastors we truly feel much of the worry and excitement as we watch the parish family develop and change. With the end of the year activities we thought that this would be a good time to summarize the financial plan that our two parishes share in helping to pass on our faith in Jesus Christ through our P.R.E. program, our adult education program, and St. James/Seton School.

The budget for this effort in evangelizing our own family comes to an estimated total of \$2,684,600 for 2016/2017. Fr. Tom and our Parish/Pastoral Councils have asked me to summarize how this budget works. The easiest is the Adult Education Budget. That cost is approximately \$22,300 and is divided evenly between the two parishes. The next biggest cost is the Parish Religious Education or P.R.E. program. That cost will run about \$60,600 and is divided according to the percentage of students from each parish in the program. Right now St. James has just under 60% and so St. Elizabeth Ann Seton has just over 40%.

The St. James/Seton School budget takes up the biggest share of the budget or approximately \$2,600,000. Of course Fr. Tom and I spend a fair amount of time dealing with this budget but we are blessed in that Deacon Rich Hopkins gets to do most of the number crunching from day-to-day. About 57% of this is covered by tuition and fees. The other 42% is picked up by the parishes. I wish parish budgets were strong enough to handle more of that cost but it is just not the case. The two parishes do not simply split the cost 50/50. The main personnel costs are split according to the percentage of students from each parish. Lately St. James has had just under 60% and SEAS has had just over 40%. The rest of the budget is divided 50/50. This includes things like fixed staff, like the principal which you need no matter what the percentage of students per parish runs, and then supplies and utilities, etc. Salaries run over \$2,000,000 so are obviously the biggest percentage of the budget.

Tuition costs have been a renewed topic of interest since the Archdiocese has been promoting a tuition reduction for students who are transferring into Catholic Schools from the public School system. The idea is to reduce their tuition to encourage families, who are less familiar with our Catholic School product, to try it. If they like it they will work into the same tuition costs as everyone else. For SJS this is a bonus since we currently have our classrooms running under capacity. So bringing in a few more families adds students to the classroom without adding the cost of more personnel. Some parents, who have been faithful to the Catholic School system, have felt that this bonus should go to them for their faithfulness. If we did it that way we would not be getting new students into the school and tuition and parish subsidies would keep increasing. By encouraging more families into the school we are actually increasing the revenue without adding to the costs and so tuition and subsidy levels ease off.

The cost per student at SJS is currently \$5,290. But tuition for SJS students is not equal. Non-parish students have a tuition of \$4,220 per student. For parish families with one student in the school the tuition will be \$3010. The tuition cost per family in one of the parishes when they have two students would be \$5420. The tuition cost per SJ or SEAS family when they have three or more students at SJS is \$7,225. We believe in helping out large families. But most of all we believe in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our parishes work together very well and our mission of evangelizing is happening because you are generous. I hope this is helpful in understanding how we try to be good stewards of those generous gifts.

God bless you,
Fr. Tom & Fr. Frank