

STEWARDSHIP AND FAITH SHARING

This time last year we were still reeling from the effect of the corona-virus. Most recently, more than thirty parish families suffered from the tornados spawned by Hurricane Ida suffering damage to homes vehicles and property. Last weekend we began a Tornado Relief Fund for those parishioners and already we have raised almost \$10,000. My gracious thanks. Through it all, Our Lord has sustained us. That is the Psalm refrain for today. The Lord has sustained us--as families, individuals and parish despite these onslaughts of disease and devastation. By God's grace and your prayers, your steadfast resolve, your generous support and your personal fidelity we will continue to weather these storms.

Today is Stewardship Sunday which originated as a special collection to cover heating and then air-conditioning costs. Typically, it raises about \$40,000. Last year I made a special appeal to help dig us out from and catch up from the shortage of funds due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Your response was way over the top. Raising over \$200,000. This Stewardship Sunday I ask you to give what you can. At the same time, we are launching an Increased Offertory effort which will unfold over the next six weeks.

Today in the Paduan is a report on parish finances. It will show a large surplus for last fiscal year. Not typical for Saint Anthony's. Usually we finish in the black or break even for the year. But last year we received \$242,000 from the Federal Government, \$100,000 from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and about \$20,000 from Montgomery County. Those funds accounted for almost all of our surplus. They will not be forthcoming in this fiscal year. And that is why we are asking each homeowner to assess your financial support of the parish and increase where you can—weekly or monthly.

As God's stewards, we understand that our lives, our talents and abilities, our financial resources, everything we value, all is given to us by God in trust to further His kingdom in this world. We are asked to make a return to Him in ministry and mission. With this in mind, **I invite you to respond to St. Anthony Parish's new stewardship program: "God's Love Unites Us."** Please review the contents of the brochure mailed to your home and prayerfully consider how you and your family can play an active role in continuing the work of Jesus Christ through our parish community.

Our goal is to increase our Sunday offertory contributions **in order to bring Jesus Christ to as many people as possible.** This is no easy task in today's climate, but I am confident that our dedicated parishioners are up to the challenge.

There is another, more important need we face, Our parish needs **YOU**. You are Saint Anthony's, the Body of Christ here in Ambler. We need each other and to reconnect with each other. God's love truly unites us. It is for trying times just such as these that our world needs God's Holy Church. Come to St. Anthony's to be fed by Christ's Body and Word. Please encourage others to come back—family members, neighbors, co-workers, friends, long-time parishioners whom you haven't seen. Please take the time to reach out to those you have not seen in quite a while. This is our home. This is a truly safe place. Nothing compares to what happens to us here at Saint Anthony's. Many have been missing this. We have been missing them. Please invite and encourage at least one other person to return.

On October 2nd and 3rd, the parish will be holding a special Commitment Weekend, inviting members of our community to connect with one another and to make a financial commitment that will allow St. Anthony Parish to continue its important work. **We are counting on you!** Please participate in our "God's Love Unites Us" Program and help us respond to God's great gift of love by loving one another with the heart of His Son.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.