

The readings for this weekend provide a good beginning for the information that Msgr. Tucker is going to share for the next three weeks. The prophet Amos proclaims that the people of Israel have not been engaged, and he says, "Woe to those who are complacent". This is not the case here as I have reflected on the information gathered from the survey that was completed in the spring. There were over 600 surveys completed, and they came from people that are engaged in the Church. They are attending Mass and they want to grow in their faith. Of those who responded, 92% said they feel close to God, and yet 72% said they want to feel closer to God. The thing that they said would help them in their relationship with God can be simply stated as "prayer". People indicated they would like to know how to meditate on the scriptures, examine their conscience, pray the Liturgy of Hours and how to spend an hour of adoration.

The priests at Cathedral will help you in these types of prayer through their homilies, and we are also willing to talk to you individually to help you in your prayer life. I am encouraged by this response as it shows a strong faith and belief in the prayer, and the desire to grow closer to God.

As an immediate response to this desire to have a deeper prayer life, I have invited Matt Simons to come to the Cathedral, beginning October 13th, to give a five week series on prayer. His talks will be given in the Church, during a time of adoration. He will talk for about 30 minutes, and then the group will proceed to one of the halls in the basement to talk practically about how to pray. Matt is a strong spiritual man, and will help you deepen your knowledge and love of God through prayer. Matt's last session will be on prayer and engagement in our faith, in which he will help you to listen to God, and act upon His word.

I also heard the request for other Mass times in the survey responses, but I also heard that the times that we have work. Many have asked for a noon Mass on Holy Days, and we tried it on August 15th and the positive response has encouraged me to continue that time for Holy Days. There were also requests for different types of music, so the decision was made to purchase a new hymnal and subscribe to a new pew missal. This decision was also confirmed by your positive response to purchase a hymnal in memory of a friend or relative. The new Hymnals will be in the pews next week, and the new pew missals will arrive the first of December.

The goal of these short presentations prior to the homily, is to provide information about the survey and important issues at Cathedral parish, and to encourage greater involvement in your faith and the life of the Church. Next weeks' topic will be finances, then education and community life, and finally our buildings and grounds. There are many good things happening in our parish which everyone can be proud of and benefit from. Yet everyone needs to grow in faith and love, rejoice in our gift of faith and God's blessings, and be more engaged in sharing this goodness with others.

Stewardship Letter – 2016-2

Many parishioners indicated that they don't know the Cathedral's annual budget and whether we meet our budgetary goals annually. Many indicated that the best way to communicate is in the bulletin, or by email. I remember one time when I was a young pastor thinking "No one reads the bulletin!" So I decided to test my theory and wrote a paragraph in Greek to see if anyone would ask about it. Only one person asked me what I wrote. So there are two reasons, either they didn't care or they didn't read it. I'm making this introduction to the announcement that there is an insert in the bulletin this weekend outlining our financial situation in the parish. Sometimes it is easier for us to understand these things when we see the numbers in front of us, so I am providing a simple chart in the bulletin showing important financial facts from the last four years.

I believe the people of Cathedral parish are very generous and the Diocese believes this too. I look at the fact that nearly 4 million dollars has been raised over the last three years for a heating and air-conditioning system in the School, to refurbish the stained glass windows (which is almost complete – they are working on the last widow), and 2.9 million that was pledged in the Joy of the Gospel campaign. These are signs of a very generous parish.

The cost of this generosity has come at a price, and this will be clearly apparent when you look at the chart in the bulletin. We have shifted money from the collection basket to supporting necessary capital improvements and to the Diocese in the Joy of the Gospel campaign and we have significantly reduced our savings to cover ordinary expenditures. Our budget has increased by 3% annually during this time, we have completed \$1.3 million dollars of improvements to our buildings and we have contributed \$2.93 million dollars to the Joy of the Gospel campaign. During this period our weekly collections have decreased by 7%, and our budget deficit for this last year was 6.5%. The simple solution to this situation is to right the ship by increasing our weekly gift to our parish.

I like numbers and could easily bore you with more, but what is most important is to remember that generosity is driven by faith and love for God and the Church. As, I mentioned last week, I'm strongly encouraged by the strong faith of our parish and the desire to grow in relationship with God. I'm also confident as I look at the numbers that with an increase in our tithing by \$1/day or \$30/month, that we can quickly jump out of the red numbers of last year's budget into the black numbers for this year. Please look at the numbers presented in the bulletin and you will quickly see that this is a serious situation, and a huge part of the solution is as simple as \$1/day.