

## Scott's Corner

**Thank you** so much to everyone for listening intently as Bill Wright and I took time away from your Mass this past weekend to discuss the "State of St. John the Evangelist." As we clearly stated, the current economy is having a significant effect on our parish. The purpose of our presentation was to inform everyone as to what has been happening over the past 12 – 24 months with regards to revenue and expenses. We will post the financial data that was provided in last week's bulletin on our website. We will also post a copy of our speech on the website for those that were not in attendance or for those that would like to review the details. In summary, we stated that in the last eleven years, Fr. Glackin has never once asked our parishioners to increase their weekly, monthly or annual giving outside of participation in a capital campaign. We finished our presentation by asking that all of our parishioners prayerfully consider the possibility of increasing their regular giving.

I must say that I was completely exhausted after speaking at all seven Masses over the weekend. I commented to Bill Wright that I have more energy following the completion of a marathon than I did after the 5:00 pm Mass on Sunday. Although it was uncomfortable at best to stand in front of all of you and explain our financial predicament, it was necessary so that everyone understands that we are in a very precarious position. Oddly enough, as Bill and I answered questions following Mass, there was not one negative comment regarding the financial aspects of our speech.

On behalf of St. John the Evangelist Church, I would like to thank Bill Wright for all of his hard work on the finance committee and in assisting me with our presentation. Bill is the definition of living stewardship giving of his time, talent and treasure to ensure that our parish is all that it can be. I am sure you will agree that Bill is a very intelligent individual and not a bad speaker either!

It was not until after our speech at the 5:00 pm Mass that I included the following information which I gathered during the course of the weekend that truly summarizes a misconception that has been around for quite some time. While answering questions and polling our parishioners following the Masses, many that we spoke with were shocked at our financial position. They simply claimed that they had no idea. One man told me that he never paid attention to the financial information or the collection summary. It seems that many in our parish felt that we were flush with cash and had no financial concerns to speak of. Believe it or not, this misconception not only exists here but throughout the Diocese as well. Because of the amazing works of kindness we have performed over the years for Habitat for Humanity and the Jamaica Outreach Program, many felt that we must have no financial issues of our own. Believe it or not, when Bill, Deacon Al Groh and I attended last years International Catholic Stewardship Conference in Miami, we were asked on more than one occasion why we were attending due to the fact that our Naples parish was incredibly wealthy. Now we all know that this is not the case! Fr. Glackin has always chosen to help others before we take care of ourselves and it has been incredibly successful. We must now take a close look at ourselves so that we may get "back on track."

If you have not done so, please take a close look at the collection summary from this past weekend. THANK YOU very much for your support in response to our plea for increased offertory giving. The weekly collection was \$23,654.00 or an increase of over 33% compared to the same weekend last year. This was also an increase of nearly 40% compared to the prior week. In addition, this past weekend was the fourth or last weekend of the month, which is historically the worst as far as the offertory, is considered. Considering that many of you write your offertory checks prior to leaving for Mass, this was an amazing accomplishment. With your continued assistance, I am optimistic that as we move through the first few months of fall, we can work our way out of this financial crisis. I am also optimistic that our federal government will find a resolution to the nationwide financial crisis. As I write my column on Tuesday morning, the House of Representatives failed to pass the \$700 billion bailout package and the stock market has recognized its worst single day decline in history. Perhaps this would be an ideal time to put our faith in action and pray that our leaders can come to an amicable resolution that will benefit our country and not the special interests of a few.

After Bill and I answered questions from inquiring parishioners following each Mass this past weekend, we would meet and discuss the numerous comments made and compare notes. As I mentioned previously, many

had questions about our financial situation. Oddly enough, many more had questions about Bill's comment regarding the fact that there will be no more concerts held in the sanctuary of the church. We received notification on June 18<sup>th</sup> from the Diocese of Venice that we would no longer be able to utilize the sanctuary for the purposes of concerts. This declaration of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments was sent to the presidents of the national conferences of bishops and through them to commissions on Liturgy and sacred art. Any future concerts at St. John the Evangelist will be held in the ballroom of our beautiful Parish Life Center. Although this is disappointing to many that enjoy attending Paul Todd concerts, we should consider ourselves blessed that we have an alternate location to enjoy these events.

As you glanced at the collection summary from this past week, you may have also noticed that we have broken the \$100,000 threshold regarding our balance due to satisfy our 2008 Catholic Faith Appeal goal. We are currently less than \$98,000.00 shy of our goal. We are certainly in a true "catch 22" situation with regards to the CFA since we have now found ourselves in a financial crisis. Please continue to support the Catholic Faith Appeal. If we reach our goal this year, this will have a profound effect on our bottom line due to the fact that we will not be responsible for paying the shortage out of our already depleted operating income.

### **Renovation update:**

I gave a brief update on the church improvements this past weekend prior to some of the Masses. For those that did not hear my comments, here is an update on what has been done and what remains to be done. All of the air conditioning units in the church have been replaced and are operating incredibly efficiently. Although some have said the sanctuary feels like a "meat locker," the majority is comfortable with the new units. We have already seen a decrease in our monthly utility bill for the church. Our last billing, which does not recognize a full month with all of the new units operating, was \$500 less than the prior month. This was recognized in the hottest portion of the year. All of the pews have been refinished, including the celebrant's chair, choir pit and many ancillary tables. Due to a delay in the carpet installation, the new cushions and fabric for the pews will not be completed until this weekend. The new fabric is incredibly stain resistant. You can actually pour liquid on the fabric and it will not stain, although I don't recommend doing so. The broken ceramic flooring tiles have been replaced and the grout cleaned as well as we could. The original grout was never sealed and the discoloration over the years will not come out because the dirt has seeped into the porous grout. The carpet in the main sanctuary has been replaced. We are planning on replacing the remaining carpeted areas within the next two weeks. This will include the nursery, sacristy, altar server's room, confessionals and the area outside of the restrooms. The lower portion of the inside of the sanctuary has also received a fresh coat of paint. The roof of the church has been pressure cleaned and looks great. In addition, the leak at the highest portion of the roof has been repaired and the lights illuminating the cross at the same point of the roof have been repaired. We hope you enjoy the improvements made in order to keep our church looking great. As previously stated, the repairs and renovations were to have taken place last year however we ran out of time to complete the work during the summer months. The cash required for these capital improvements had been set aside in our Saving Account and the expenditure is reflected in the Repairs Budget Account. Monies spent in 2007 /2008 are reflected in the prior year Repairs Account.

Thank you to all that made a contribution to my fundraising efforts through "Team for Kids" so that I may participate in the New York City Marathon on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. As of this past Tuesday, I have exceeded my goal of \$2,500.00.

Contrary to rumor, second night ticket sales are still available for the dinner/dance honoring Father Glackin. A second night has been required because the first night was sold out in a matter of hours. Many of you have often commented to me that St. John's is a very special parish. I think we all agree it is that very special parish we brag about to our friends up north because of the vision, leadership and example of Father Glackin. It is a tribute to our pastor that so many of you want to attend this very special event. Tickets are still available for Thursday, Oct. 16.

The website will be down from this coming Monday until Friday. We are in the process of renovating our website.

In His work together,

Scott Schlossberg, MBA  
General Manager