

## Scott's Corner

I hope that everyone will enjoy a HAPPY THANKSGIVING this coming Thursday. If you are traveling over the holiday to be with family and loved ones, we wish you a safe return. Let us please remember those who go without this Thanksgiving. There was a food drive this past week to help replenish the St. Vincent De Paul food pantry. Bags were distributed at Mass last weekend to be returned this weekend. If you forgot your bag or wish to make a donation of food, you may bring your food items to Mass on Thanksgiving. The entire Thanksgiving Day collection has been designated for St. Vincent de Paul to help those in need within our parish boundaries. Over five families per week need financial assistance for rent, mortgages and utilities. St. Vincent de Paul also provides bags of food and gift cards for food and gasoline. An envelope has been included in your quarterly packet for use on Thanksgiving or anytime during the year. Please be generous and assist those in need. Remember that the individual(s) you are helping could be sitting right next to you at Mass.

Although we have experienced unseasonably cold weather here in "paradise" over the course of the past week, our conditions pale in comparison to what many are experiencing up north. These miserable conditions are usually "just what the doctor ordered" to chase the remaining seasonal residents out of their residences up north and bring them down to southwest Florida. There used to be a very clear pattern with the seasonal travel habits of our winter residents. Many that have dual residences would come down in late October/early November and open up their winter homes. They would then stay with us until the week before Thanksgiving and head back up north to spend the holidays, returning in the middle of January. Over the past couple of years, this pattern has changed. Many of our winter residents are foregoing their fall visit and instead arriving after the first of the year. Easter also plays a major role in the length of time our seasonal residents remain in Southwest Florida, especially for those that rent versus own. I am overly optimistic that the current poor state of our economy will not prevent those that rent from making their annual trek to Southwest Florida for the winter months. This past Easter was one of the earliest in recent memory falling on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Many that rent do so on a month by month basis and will generally stay in Naples until Easter. This means that many of our winter residents were gone by the end of March this past year. Easter falls on April 12<sup>th</sup> in 2009 which would suggest that we will have an additional month of season this coming year. Why am I discussing the seasonal travel patterns of our winter residents? Because these travel patterns have a substantial effect on our local economy. As we are all aware, the Naples economy is heavily based in tourism. Many of our workforce are employed in the service industry and count on our seasonal residents to survive. If our seasonal residents arrive one month later or depart even one month early, this will have dramatic effect on the ability for many that rely on their economic influx to survive. This is certainly the case here at St. John the Evangelist. As I have stated before, we generally operate "in the red" 7 out of 12 months. Our seasonal parishioners are crucial in allowing us to build a surplus in the winter so that we may sustain during the very lean summer months. Let us pray that the local and nationwide economy improves in short order and that we have long and prosperous winter season.

If you are a physician that would be willing to assist in the event of an emergency, we would like to ask that you check in prior to Mass with the head usher. It is safe to say that our parish population is not necessarily young and medical emergencies seem to be more frequent every year. If we were able to locate a physician immediately in the event of an emergency, we could possibly save a life or lessen complications that could arise without immediate care.

As of this past Tuesday, we are only \$71,137.75 shy of reaching our Catholic Faith Appeal goal. Only \$71,137.75; Can you believe that? This is our best effort since we last attained and exceeded our goal nine years ago in 1999. Our goal at that time was substantially lower at \$316,000.00. That same year, we used the excess funds to pay down our remaining mortgage on the Parish Life Center. As always, thank you so much for your continued support of the Catholic Faith Appeal.

Thank you so much for supporting St. John the Evangelist.

In His work together,

Scott Schlossberg, MBA  
General Manager