



A very happy fall to all! Fall arrived this past Tuesday at 5:18 p.m. although I am sure that no one noticed while we were being pounded by severe thunderstorms at that very time. Our fall in Southwest Florida typically does not begin until late October with the arrival of the first cool front of the season. Until then it will be “status quo” with hot temperatures, humidity and our daily dose of thunderstorms.

It has been exactly one year since Bill Wright and I stood in front of you and gave our “State of St. John the Evangelist” speech. During this speech we outlined the financial difficulties facing the parish and ultimately asked everyone to increase their regular offertory giving if possible so that we could remain solvent. The response to our speech was

very positive and many followed Bill’s advice to forego one glass of wine weekly and gift the equivalent dollar amount to the church. Thank you once again to all those who made the sacrifice and increased their giving! The effects of our speech unfortunately lost long-term momentum due to a plethora of reasons. Only one week after our speech, the financial markets crashed and the DOW had its worst single day decline in history. As previously mentioned, we gave this speech only once. Five weeks after our speech, Fr. John arrived and we did not feel that it would be prudent to have one of his first acts as Pastor be to address our financial crisis. As a result, very few of our seasonal parishioners were made aware of our financial situation. Many of these seasonal parishioners are still under the impression that St. John the Evangelist is “flush with cash” and that we have no worries financially. Due to our benevolent actions with respect to Habitat for Humanity, St. Vincent De Paul, and the Jamaica Outreach Program, many parishioners will give generously to these aforementioned efforts and give nothing to the parish. As much as we enjoy supporting these outreach efforts, we must also support our parish. We have enormous operating expenses monthly in order to keep the campus up and running. This season we plan to address **ALL** of our parishioners to let them know the dilemma that still exists. Over the past twelve months, we have continued to cut expenses wherever possible. In addition, we have reduced payroll through amalgamation of staff and positions. Unfortunately, contributions to the regular offertory continue to decline thereby offsetting the efforts we have made. We have made progress and are no longer “hemorrhaging” however; we are still “bleeding.” We are incredibly optimistic that after addressing our returning seasonal parishioners and fully recognizing the cuts we have made, we have a legitimate chance of finishing this fiscal year “in the black.”

In order to finish this fiscal year “in the black,” it is imperative that we meet our goal for the Catholic Faith Appeal. We are certainly in a true “catch 22” situation with regards to the CFA. 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. We are still \$168,000 shy of our goal for the 2009 appeal and I am now becoming a little concerned. Not reaching our goal will have a detrimental effect on our financial recovery.

Now that I have addressed the gloom and doom, I wish to thank all of our parishioners for your continued generosity. This is an incredibly benevolent parish and you, our parishioners are not thanked enough for giving of your time, talent, and treasure, especially in these trying economic times. Thank you again for all that you do to make our parish wonderful. As an ideal example, I would like to recognize Jack Lucarelli of Lucarelli’s Deli for his donation of time and talent. Jack has personally hand delivered his delicious pizza (at cost) for our Early Learning and Childcare Center every Friday last year and continues to do so this year. Thanks Jack!

Sweetbay Supermarkets will be joining forces with St. John the Evangelist and several other Southwest Florida churches on an upcoming Sunday in October in an effort to feed the hungry in a “Share the Harvest” event. Our parishioners will be invited to donate food needed by Harry Chapin Food Bank, currently feeding 20,000 people each month, up from 12,000 just two years ago. Sweetbay Supermarkets from Naples to Sarasota will stock their store shelves with additional quantities of the foods needed. Sweetbay Supermarkets will contribute an additional 5 percent more than the value of products donated.

In His work together,

Scott Schlossberg, MBA
General Manager