

St. Mary's Newsletter

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Pastor's Corner

By Father Jim

Recently I read two articles about people and church attendance. The first article is from the Columbia magazine of the Knights of Columbus. Bishop Lori writes, "Not long ago, a parishioner said to me that she just didn't see the need to go to Mass every Sunday. 'I go to Mass once in a while, when I think it will help me,' she said. Unfortunately, many people who consider themselves faithful Catholics share this attitude, an attitude that is not proportionate to the gift and mystery of the Eucharist.

The *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers a brief summary of this great mystery of faith: 'The Eucharist is the very sacrifice of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus...' It is not merely a reminder that Christ offered his Body and blood for our sake; rather, it is that offering."

Fr. Rolheiser wrote a column in The Witness to those who don't go to church. He wrote, "Know this first of all: We miss you at church. There's not a Sunday that goes by when your absence isn't felt. You're missed. Join us."

He goes to point out that the church is not perfect and that he does criticize it but he also loves it. "You have made me suffer more than anyone and yet I owe more to you than to anyone".

He writes this little dialogue: "No, I cannot be free of you, for I am one with you, even if not completely you.

Then too where would I go? To build another church?

But I could not build one without the same defects, for they are my defects.

And again, if I were to build another church, it would be my church, not Christ's church."

Fr. Rolheiser concludes by stating: "Come back! Try us again! Or, if you have never belonged to the church, try us! Maybe this time, you will find life in the church and be able to drink in some of its graces. Maybe this time, you will find it in you to forgive the church for its faults, see those faults are your own faults and see why Jesus picked such an imperfect vehicle to carry on his presence. Maybe this time, you will be able

to see in the church what Jesus saw in it—an imperfect body made up of men and women like you and me, full of sin, full of ourselves, petty, small-hearted, less-than-sincere, miserly and tainted, but also full of grace, full of Christ, big-hearted, sincere, generous and pure, a group of men and women worth dying for—and belonging to."

Do come and pray with us. Come to a daily Mass once in a while if your schedule permits. It was amazing for me to celebrate Mass on Ash Wednesday with a noisy, squirming, standing room only crowd in the evening to a quiet four adults on Thursday morning. Isn't it marvelous to think that Jesus was there at each Mass! Come and celebrate with us.

I BELIEVE

By Dennis Zmolek

'I believe'. We Catholics start many of our prayers with these words. They relate to our religious beliefs as well as to the truths we see around us, in our community, culture and church.

Unlike other denominations, Catholics believe in the Eucharist and witness the creation of God's body and blood each time we attend mass. It is a blessed thing, much like a new born baby so still and asleep.

We hear a great deal about the threat to the continuation of our mass and the celebration of the Eucharist due to the shortage of priests. These threats are real and can be substantiated by numbers and trends. There is another threat that exist at parishes across the country and St Mary Parish. That is our ability to meet the financial obligations of the parish. We have direct control of this threat. One way to meet this threat would be through a large bequest like that which was received by our local 'Community Y' a few years ago. While it would be nice and welcomed, we cannot count on such a bequest. Instead, we can all join together and look at the assets and resources we have and through the Endowment Initiative make St Mary Parish a part of our estate now and after we leave this earth as well.

The leadership of the Hispanic community, MAPAS, pledged a gift of \$5,000 in 2008. They are well on their way to meeting this pledge and should achieve it in 2010. In

December of 2009 a family of the parish bequest a gift of \$8,000 in recognition of past and present priest, religious and friends that have or are currently serves the parish. The key is pulling together, through an endowment gift that keeps producing over the long term. Individual gifts and bequest have been a large part of our current fund which stands at \$74,897.

Charitable Gift Annuity

One option available to us that we've not discussed is the Charitable Gift Annuity. This is a way to make a gift to St Mary Parish and still receive an annual income for yourself or others. It is a contract under which St Mary Parish, in return for a transfer of cash or other property, agrees to pay a fixed sum for a period measured by one or two lives. Incomes from a Charitable Gift Annuity are fixed from the outset. They neither increase or decrease, independent of whatever happens to the stock market or interest rates. St Mary parish is contractually obligated to make the payments.

Most gift annuity donors are retired, want to increase the cash flow, seek the security of guaranteed payments, and would like to save on their taxes. A Charitable Gift Annuity could be right for people in any of the following circumstances:

1. The interest rates on their CDs and other fixed-income investments have declined, and they would like to increase their cash flow.
2. They own appreciated stock or mutual fund shares and have considered selling some of the shares and reinvesting the proceeds to generate more income, but have hesitated because they don't want to pay tax on the capital gain.
3. They would like to count on fixed payments, which are unaffected by interest rates and stock prices and which they cannot outlive.
4. They want to assure continuation of payments to a surviving spouse without the delay of probate proceedings.
5. They would like to provide financial assistance to an elderly parent, a sibling, or other person in a tax-advantaged manner.

SOMETHING FOR LOVERS

An Adapted Version of 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

By Dick Schrad

Yesterday, January 31, 2010, I was touched as our Lector, Sharon Witty, proclaimed in such a beautiful manner, that familiar reading from Corinthians that tells us about love being patient, kind, etc. My mind went back two years to February 3, 2007. One of my sons had recently re-married. He and his new bride were on the front end of their new lives together, their hearts filled with that special joy that only true lovers know. (I knew this woman was something special when my son exclaimed to me in a conversation, "Dad!! We even pray together! It's AWESOME!") I wanted to give them something special as they began their new and daunting journey together. In my own 40+ years of marriage to Dorothy, I had referred to this beautiful biblical passage many times and always drew special grace and guidance from it.

I believe the Holy Spirit kind of sneaks up behind me at times and puts things in my heart & head when I least expect it! Suddenly, on that day two years ago, there was the urge and inspiration to write this "adapted version" of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. I felt compelled to go to the computer and this just spilled out. I certainly mean no disrespect to the original author and I humbly beg his indulgence. Paul's teaching here is already perfect and needs no improvement. I'm simply expanding on it with examples of some "lessons learned" with my dear wife as we have taken our own love affair ahead for over 42 years now. What was originally written as a special gift for our son and his new bride has been passed to our other three beloved children and their mates as well. I now offer it for others in my St. Mary family in the hope that it will bring blessings in some manner to you also.

"LOVE learns how to become patient,
Through repeated trials;

LOVE learns how to become and remain kind,
And learns that jealousy and mistrust are deadly to relationships.

LOVE does not brag and is not arrogant,
But rather learns that humility and putting the other first is foremost;

LOVE does not seek its own well-being,
But learns that "we" is the beginning of well-being for both.

LOVE is not provoked,
But learns to calmly and respectfully listen to the other's perspective;

LOVE does not take into account a wrong suffered,
But learns the deep and healing value of forgiveness and letting go.

LOVE does not rejoice in unrighteousness,
But comes to realize and rejoice in the values of honor and truth;

LOVE bears all things,
After learning one can't change some things.

LOVE believes all things,
After coming to learn that loss of faith and Hardness of heart extinguish one's own spirit.

LOVE hopes all things,
After learning that loss of hope results in bitterness, sadness, and death.

LOVE endures all things,
Because it is the strongest force in the universe and draws its strength from God, the source of all love.

LOVE never fails,
Even though we, as human beings, fail often. **WE** can, however, make it the best possible, By calling on God's help and constantly renewing our decision to **LOVE**, While seeking to practice all of the above to the very best of our ability, **UNTIL OUR FINAL BREATH!!!**

I BELIEVE

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The rate of return is in most cases significantly higher than one might expect when compared to rates being paid on Certificates of Deposit or savings accounts. As an example, a person 75 years of age would receive a yearly return of 6.3% until the day they die. In a like manner, a person 85 years old would receive a 8.1% return on a Gift Annuity.

In a sense, we have a chance to 'have our cake and eat it too'.

The table below represents the current guaranteed return one could expect from a Charitable Gift Annuity as a function of the age of the participant.

Age	Rate %
50	4.4
55	4.8
60	5.0
65	5.3
70	5.7
75	6.3
80	7.1
85	8.1
90+	9.5

Yes, 'I Believe.' I believe that by pulling together we at St Mary can set aside enough resources to provide for the financial health of the future. Join your "Friends of St Mary".

If you would like to explore this Endowment opportunity further please call the parish office 753-6278 or contact any Endowment committee member.

Committee members are:

Mike Horn	752-4519
George Baitinger	488-2966
Kileen Rezac	752-2041
Doug Husak	366-3423
Jim Lowrance	754-5622
Sarah Hesmer	753-9006
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