

St. Amelia Catholic Church

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October, 2021

*“You can do something I cannot do. I can do something you cannot do.
Together let us do something beautiful for God.”*

Dear Parishioner,

St. Teresa of Calcutta wrote the above words. In so doing she showed she understood the intrinsic nature of a parish or other spiritual community. She knew it took people with many varied gifts to successfully make a community work.

While the response to the pandemic has dashed many plans and delayed others, along with causing a number of other adjustments in our lives, it provided us all with a time of quiet to think and reflect on what is important to us.

Not surprisingly, I have been reflecting a lot, as St. Teresa did, on our own spiritual community, our parish – who we are and how we work together to do something beautiful for God. As your pastor, I needed to ask myself the question, “Where do we go from here?” How, I wondered, would we be able to return to the full ministries which had been so much a part of our parish life. Would we ever return to pre-pandemic operations? More importantly, even if we could, should we? Is the Holy Spirit perhaps leading us in a new direction – to a smaller, but hopefully stronger church.

I must tell you; I don’t have the answer. We’re still working our way through pandemic issues. While the vaccines we’ve developed have helped, we are dealing with variants that are causing illness.

There are several things I know for sure. We must continue to offer the sacraments and the liturgy of the Church. We need to continue with our outreach to the less fortunate through our St. Vincent de Paul and Outreach Office programs. We need to continue to educate our young in the faith, so both our school and religious education programs are critical. Beyond that, at this point, we need to put our faith in the Holy Spirit to guide us.

Most of us would agree with what I’ve laid out above. But only a relative few of us realize the extremely significant annual cost of providing just these services. Our annual expenses for the parish, including our school, currently run more than \$4,000,000 a year. Sad to say, our parish membership as with all Catholic parishes, has been declining, so we have fewer people to ask to share the financial load.

That we’ve been able to do as well as we have is a real tribute to you and our other parishioners. As this decline has been happening, we’ve been judiciously reducing our expenses to more nearly match our income. We’ve done almost all of the easy cutting and we want to avoid cutting into the real meat.

For example, during the past year in our school, Covid forced the total loss of our Bingo revenue at the same time the Diocese ceased its program of providing us with a grant for each out-of-parish student to enable us to offer them the same tuition as our in-parish children. The net result was a loss of some \$300,000 annually.

Further, within the past two years, our two largest buildings – our church and our school – needed new roofs. The total for both jobs was over \$1.1 million. Due to our parish endowment, we were able to sustain this expense without a capital drive. But for the future, the funds must be repaid.

I would like to ask you, during this annual Stewardship of Treasure appeal, to seriously pray and consider what you can offer to enable us to continue our ministries. We need to answer the question of how we as a parish community generate the funds necessary to carry out the good works, we know God treasures.

Stewardship traditionally has meant devoting 10% of our income to works of charity. We've always suggested that half of that, 5%, go to St. Amelia's with the remaining amount being used for your gifts to other worthy spiritual causes.

I'd like to ask you to seriously consider increasing your Stewardship gift this year. I realize that for some that will be impossible. But I'm hoping that for many, you will be able to stretch to provide an expanded amount to our parish. I might also suggest, if you would like to give 5% of your income to St. Amelia's but you're still a ways away from that, that you begin a personal 2- or 3-year program to achieve that goal. This would be a good year to start.

Whatever the amount of your gift, if it is regular and sacrificial, it will be greatly appreciated. Know that I offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God every day for you and your generosity.

Please fill out the enclosed card and bring it with you to Mass this coming weekend. We are going to reinstitute our procession of faith as we bring our commitment cards to the altar.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration and your generous response. Let us work together to "do something beautiful for God."

With God's Blessings and Love,



Rev. Sebastian Pierro, Pastor

P.S. There are just a couple of mechanical details to note. First, if you could arrange to have your offertory giving taken monthly from a bank account (EFT giving), or charged to a credit card, it would be especially helpful. Just mark your response form that you'd like to begin EFT contributions and we'll be in touch.

Further, if you're already an EFT contributor and you'd like to raise what you give, that can simply be done with the pledge form. In any event if you give automatically already, please note that on the form. Many thanks.