

FROM THE PASTOR SUNDAY, OCT. 29th

(Due to the amount of information provided in last week's "From the Pastor", Fr. Mark wanted to publish it a 2nd time so everyone had the opportunity to be informed)

Three months have passed since my appointment as pastor began on July 3, 2017. We are now preparing for the annual Bucktown Seafood Festival (Nov. 3rd, 4th, 5th) to which all of you, and everyone you know, are invited.

November and December are busy months, so, before they begin, I wish to provide you an accountability statement, of changes made because you asked for them in the Parish Survey completed in preparation for the Synod.

Communication:

- (1) A redesigned bulletin with complete contact information on the cover, which is also sent electronically to all school families;
- (2) A new parish website, which includes the weekly bulletin, for those who prefer electronic access;
- (3) A new phone system, which allows you to contact and/or leave messages for each individual at the rectory, with a policy of responding to all messages by the end of next business day;
- (4) This "From the Pastor" message placed in bulletins, and on the website, as needed to keep you updated.

CCD/PSR, religious education outside of the parochial school:

- (1) Re-started the CCD program for 1st Communion and 1st Reconciliation, after many years of offering none; currently we have nine registered in this program.
- (2) Continuing our Confirmation preparation program, by archdiocesan policy for eleventh grade students; this year with twenty-nine registered, consisting of many former students of SLKF school.

Sacramental Life:

- (1) Confessions are now offered seven days a week, before every mass; in addition, anyone may call the rectory for an appointment with myself or Father Suvakin.
- (2) While retaining our regular Baptism time after the 10:30 am mass on the 3rd Sunday of the month, Father Suvakin, myself, and Deacon Glenn are open to scheduling special baptismal times to accommodate family needs.

SLKF School, continues to grow after the Hurricane Katrina disaster. We now have four-hundred children enrolled in our nursery, pre-school, and elementary school.

Adult Education Program: *Oremus* is currently meeting weekly. Next will be *Unlocking the Mysteries of the Bible*. In 2018, we plan to begin with the *Bible Timeline Series*. I am open to alternate ideas, but we will continue to offer such adult faith formation opportunities, because you asked for it.

Synod & Parish Council:

Reports have been made in previous messages about implementing the Archdiocesan Synod. That is an ongoing process, which will culminate in the re-creation of a Parish Council, with the addition of a Building Committee; to prioritize the needs of the physical plant...along with a Stewardship & Development committee, to address finance needs to be detailed below.

Finance Committee, has been re-created, and had its first meeting on 12th October 2017, to approve our response to the audit conducted in August, and to come to terms with our financial condition.

We are blessed that the school is growing, and able to cover all expenses, as well as make capital improvements. According to archdiocesan policy, this is the responsibility of the parish, since the parish owns all school buildings and the school is a ministry of the parish; but parish finances are not in a position to absorb such costs, and have not been such in several years.

To summarize the bottom-line, from this past fiscal year (2016-17), the parish has a deficit of \$58,828.00, which, if not paid, becomes a debt to which interest will be attached. A few examples will clarify how such a state of affairs exists.

- One-year of the *Clarion Herald* = \$3,598.10
- One-year of sanctuary expenses (missalettes, hosts, candles, etc) = \$6,321.02
- One-year of utilities/phone system = \$25,992.26
- One year of the Parish Share of Archdiocesan Ministries = \$36,516.00.
- One-year of Flood Insurance = \$51,779.00;
- One-year of Property/Casualty/Workers Comp Insurance = \$78,334.00;
- One-year of Personnel costs (salaries, social security, health, etc) = \$175,552.81

It goes on and on, but, to put it another way, in order to meet our operating costs (not including any emergencies or major physical plant needs), our weekly collections must rise to \$8,740. This will henceforth be published in the bulletin, along with the weekly collections, so that we can track progress until this fiscal year ends.

As the above report summarizes, we are making changes in accord with the wishes you expressed in the parish survey. We are striving to restore SLKF to what one of you described as, "The Soul of Bucktown". Our goal is to return SLKF to being the center of the distinctive and historic Bucktown community.

We need your help to accomplish this. More details will follow, but for now, I close by asking you to prayerfully consider what you can do to help us with everything outlined in this message; using your time, talent, and treasure to bring SLKF to where you want it to be. Feel free to contact me using the email or numbers on the cover of this bulletin.

St. Louis King of France, pray for us. Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us.