

From The Pastor

The feast of the Ascension proclaims the hope, the promise, and the potential of the dying and rising of Jesus. What seems like a separation and a departure is the essential action that releases the Holy Spirit upon the world in a new way. Jesus realized and fulfilled his potential and his mission as the Son of God. As followers of Jesus, are we realizing our potential as children of God through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit?

The Ascension celebrates the great hope that is ours as Jesus returns to the Father. In his return, we now are known to heaven in the presence of the Father, through the person of Jesus. Reconciliation between heaven and earth has been accomplished in Christ, and our union with God has been made secure.

The promise of this feast is not only the gift and the life of heaven, but also the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit here and now. In the Spirit lies our potential as the beloved ones of God. By receiving the Spirit, we are commissioned to be the witnesses of Jesus to others. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. The Spirit reveals the mind and the heart of Jesus in all those who seek to know and serve him. The Spirit reveals the will of the Father and the Son, and empowers us to accomplish that will in the world.

It all seems very heady and abstract I am sure. Yet we know the presence of the Spirit in our lives through faith and trust. Jesus promised he would never leave us alone. That promise is fulfilled in the presence and love of the Holy Spirit. How often have you called upon the Lord in times of trouble or pain and found some consolation, if not a solution to your dilemma? Those with eyes of active faith and trust readily and regularly see the action of God in their lives. A deep openness and desire for the Spirit can reveal the infinite possibility of our potential as the beloved of God.

Given the economic tensions of the day, it is an act of faith that we take on the annual Catholic Services Appeal. This annual appeal serves a wide range of services in the Archdiocese that touch thousands of lives in faith and functional assistance. Our participation in this appeal unites us to the larger Body of Christ in the service of God's people. As a parish, we directly and indirectly benefit from these many services. Please take a minute to read my appeal letter and pick up a brochure in Church that outlines the services of this appeal.

A successful CSA drive is also good for the parish. It shows the financial viability of our community, protects our savings, and even increases our income through all dollars collected over our target goal. This year's goal is \$37,769.00. This figure is \$1400 less than last year. We made our goal last year, and I believe we are capable of doing so again.

Financially, it has been a difficult year. Weekly offerings are down from last year. Normal and expected capital improvements demanded that money come from our savings. Waterproofing in the rectory and convent, tree removal and trimming, and boiler\AC maintenance necessitated a twenty thousand dollar withdrawal from saving in this fiscal year. The lawn tractor is on its last leg after many years and needs to be replaced. This is another big-ticket item, along with sealing the parking lot and all large cracks. These are big expenses, but they protect against larger losses. Our snow removal and salting this year was also a major dollar drain.

For many months, we have taken a second collection for the work of St. Vincent DePaul. This collection gains \$900-1200 per month. I fully support this money to help the poor, but please realize this is money taken from our parish income. Evidence clearly shows that most people are giving the same amount divided between the parish and SVDP. The result is that our general income for a year decreases \$10,000-13,000 dollars. New dollars are needed to support increased costs.

In this very tight economy, we are working very hard to maximize every dollar spent. We have been able to save several thousand dollars out of the budget by redoing contracts, smarter spending, and freezing staff wages. Your generous support to the CSA strengthens our finances

as a parish. Please be equally mindful of your weekly giving. New dollars are needed to keep up with inflation and increase costs across the board.

We can sustain financial viability by pulling together as a community. Many hands make light the load. I will continue my tithe to the CSA and to the parish. I ask you to do the same. Please consider a monthly pledge rather than the ten or twenty you may have in your pocket. This giving is from a stance of faith. I trust God will honor your generous giving. Please unite with me in praying for a renter for the school.

God will not be outdone in generosity. Challenge the Lord for your financial needs; I do, and he has yet to fail me. Thank you for your faithful and generous giving.

Father John Esper