



## From the Pastor's Desk:

I want to utilize this week's Pastor's Desk to begin to share with you the affect of the financial struggle that you have read about in the newspapers and in a recent letter from Bishop Murphy published here in our bulletin on January 24, 2010. At

OLPH we are in the process of the Volunteer Separation Program for two purposes: to give those eligible to retire an opportunity to accept a package that could not be matched again and to use this method to right-size our staff to become more operationally and economically efficient. Here is some of the background to understand the underlying issues.

For years good stewardship has been a keyword used to develop active participation in parish life through the use of "Time, Talent and Treasure." Volunteers have been the backbone of the history of OLPH parish, but as time has passed it becomes more difficult to get new people to step forward to volunteer for ministries, teaching, fundraising, and membership in parish organizations designed to develop individual spiritual and social life. These are the time and talent parts of the stewardship equation. But the third and toughest part is "treasure." Treasure, in this equation is the financial support to maintain the daily operation of a parish comprised of the Church, Rectory and Offices, School, Religious Education and all Faith Formation. While many volunteer to teach and minister, there must be paid staffs for positions of certain work, development, teaching and operational support (office staff and maintenance staff, as examples).

In different economic times (perhaps 30 or more years ago) it was deemed good to hire individuals rather than count on volunteers. Parish staff grew. And with the passing of time cost and all expenses (as you all know) have risen but INCOME has not kept up with EXPENSES.

For parishes, I can go back 33 years when I first began to be involved with the affects of parish finances on parish life and operations. Then and now, **[excluding all individuals and families with legitimate financial struggles]** this is the formula for the giving habits of Catholics: **ONE THIRD of active parishioners [those who come to Mass] regularly and substantially contribute to the financial support of the parish and diocese through weekly and special collections, Capital Campaign, fundraising and the Catholic Ministries Appeal. Included in this group are many who sacrifice for the support of the Church they love and those who send notes of apology for being sick or unable to give and send what they can "to make up."**

*The SECOND THIRD of active parishioners [also those who come to Mass] give a minimal amount ranging from coins to one or two dollars in support of the finances of their parish Church. This is not those who are unable to give more than this at this time in their life finances.*

The THIRD THIRD of active parishioners [again, those who come to Mass] give nothing in support of the financial needs of their parish Church.

The Capital Campaign "Restoring God's Glory" raised almost One Million dollars from just over 450 families and individual who are parishioners. Most are those of the FIRST ONE-THIRD. Please note that, as stated in the campaign and by necessity, this money is exclusively dedicated to the Capital Expenses outlined during the campaign. This is **my first attempt** to address the need for the **SECOND-THIRD and THIRD-THIRD to face the reality of their obligation** to realize that we NEED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE ONGOING FINANCIAL STABILITY OF OLPH PARISH.

We must and will cut down staff and operational expenses wherever necessary to reach and maintain a balanced budget. The "Parish Reserves" are no longer present and available to draw from to "pay bills" both for the Church and the School. The parish must operate from the income received on Sundays and Holy Days and parish fund raisers; and the School must operate from tuition, the parish subsidy (only 22-25% maximum of the weekly offerings), Diocesan grants and State reimbursement for mandated services and fundraising.

As of Saturday, March 26, 2010 we will begin with reduced office business hours and a staff reduction of 12 employees who have accepted the Volunteer Separation Package. **With God All Things are possible, and God is on our side and will help us grow more effectively to do His work on earth here at OLPH Church. Keep praying as I meet with our Financial Committee to address the present and future finances of the parish. God is good and so is OLPH. AMEN.**

May God +bless you, and yours, now and forever.

*Father Anthony*