

One Spirit - Many Gifts

All St. John's parishioners will soon be invited to participate in a new parish-wide spiritual and financial campaign here at St. John's, called "One Spirit - Many Gifts." It will be different from the Stewardship and Financial campaigns that have occurred here previously, in several significant ways – different in its planning, in its execution, and we hope in its impact.

"One Spirit - Many Gifts" is a campaign:

- That is based on the Church's teachings regarding Stewardship
- That will utilize our own knowledge of St. John's and its parishioners
- That will not rely on a professional fundraiser
- That will be very broad and very ambitious in terms of what it hopes to achieve
- That will also be very broad in terms of the active participation by parishioners in the campaign.

We will share more about the details and mechanics of "One Spirit - Many Gifts" as time goes on. For now we will focus on the background for the campaign, and how it really came about at the intersection of two separate paths or journeys taken by St. John's leadership.

The Path to "Discipleship"

Last year at Father Skluzacek's urging, St. John's Stewardship Committee began a study of the U.S. Bishop's landmark document "Stewardship, A Disciple's Response." Although now 20 years old, the document is as relevant and urgent today in its call to Bishops, priests, and lay leaders as it was when it was written in 1992. Its message is powerful – a message of Jesus' call to us today to be His disciples, and what it means to be a disciple – the joy of discipleship, the urgency of His call, and the sacrifice that comes with discipleship. It is a transformational message - that it is out of gratitude that we give back to the Lord – freely and lovingly and generously, and that this occurs through participation in the life of the local church and our own parish through the offering of our prayers, our personal involvement, and our offerings of temporal goods.

In recent weeks, the leaders of all St. John's committees have been invited by Father Skluzacek to participate with him in a group study of "Stewardship, A Disciple's Response" in order to achieve the alignment around this document that will enable us to carry out the important work that is so urgently needed at St. John's. The study of the Bishop's Document has proven to be a most fruitful, transformational, hopeful, and joyful process.

The Journey of St. John's Finances

Last year, St. John's Finance Council updated its long term financial plan, projecting income and expenses over the upcoming 10 years. This financial plan reflects the impacts of all the "moving parts" – projecting income, identifying what it will take to fund our ministries, retire the debt, and plan for facilities upkeep and enhancement.

Some key findings emerged:

- Sunday Giving – Projecting income and expenses that will be needed to maintain our current level of ministry over the next 10 years indicates that we will need an ongoing and increased level of financial commitment by parishioners toward Sunday Giving.
- Capital Campaign Giving – Projecting current levels of Capital Campaign income and comparing that to our spending on mortgage payments and capital (facilities) needs indicates that we will need an ongoing and increased level of commitment to Capital Campaign giving.

I know - these two needs are not terribly surprising. The questions that naturally follow from them are: At this time in the history of St. John's and given the state of the world and the church today, and also given the history of fundraising here in the parish – what is the best way to fulfill these needs? We know we need to “make the ask,” but what is the most effective way to do that, and the most respectful way, and the way that most reflects the Church's teachings on Stewardship? What sort of campaign is needed?

Should we hire a professional fundraiser? We think not. We have had 4 prior capital campaigns, and many annual “stewardship drives” to support Sunday giving. By now, we should “know the drill.” We have lots of talented parishioners. Besides, campaigns done by professionals come with a big price tag – anywhere from \$40,000 to \$100,000-- money better spent on lots of other things, like paying down our debt.

Should we initiate separate campaigns for prayer, personal service, Sunday Giving, Capital Campaigns and estate planning, as is often done in parishes? We think not. One of the ongoing concerns and I will say complaints at St. John's has been that we “talk too much about money”, we ask for money too often, etc. “One Spirit - Many Gifts” will be a straightforward, comprehensive appeal, based on simple facts, and relying on the gratitude and the Holy Spirit-inspired generosity of parishioners. It will not be based on clever pitches, and it will not be in the form of harassment.

Will it focus on new building initiatives or new facilities needs, newly discovered? No. “One Spirit - Many Gifts” will be based on:

- The Teachings of Jesus Christ and Catholic Church tradition
- The importance of maintaining and strengthening all of our wonderful ministries
- The obvious love that parishioners have for St. John's
- Gratitude for the many gifts that parishioners have been given.

So through “One Spirit - Many Gifts” we will be coming to you (each and every parishioner) with not one “ask”, but five. Yes, we will seek your pledges in five separate areas:

- A pledge of Prayer
- A pledge of Personal Service
- A financial pledge toward Sunday Giving
- A financial pledge toward debt retirement and Capital needs
- A pledge to remember St. John's in your estate planning.

So as we continue to work on “One Spirit - Many Gifts”, now scheduled for around mid-January, we ask you for three things:

- Please begin praying for the success of “One Spirit - Many Gifts.” Success will mean that we will be an even greater parish than we already are!
- Pray also that all St. John's parishioners will be open to the campaign as the time draws near for its implementation.
- Please continue (or even increase) your current level of financial support, both toward Sunday Giving and the Capital Campaign as the campaign moves forward.

Father Michael Skluzacek

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