



My dear friends in Christ,

Just a little over three years ago, on October 1, 2023, the Feast of St. Thérèse, the Little Flower, I stood before you for the first time as your pastor and shared with you as I have tried to do

every day since, the extraordinarily good news of Jesus Christ. The joyful reality, even in the midst of some pretty dark times, that we have come from God and are in the process of returning to God. In that inaugural homily, I challenged you to set out with me on an Adventure in Fidelity, to see our faith not just as hoops to jump through or things we have to do to please God but as an adventure, as a response of hope in God's love for us, something joyful, something exciting, even fun, while at the same time we're invited by God to live a life worthy of this call we have received, not sanctimony or pious drivel, but a life of true holiness, filled with joy and hope.

And I have spent the last three years learning and listening and seeing how you as individuals and we as a community live this call to holiness. I've been so impressed with what I have witnessed, how we reach out, how we share the Good News, take care of one another, and seek to live the Gospel. Just this past week I saw our community spring into action as we celebrated the funeral of Dr. Annalisa Overstreet. With the help of the Knights of Columbus, Exodus 90 participants, That Man Is You, our Parish Staff, men's group, we welcomed (and parked!) almost 500 people. We mourned together, prayed and worshipped together to return Annalisa back to God, her (and our) heavenly Father. Then we, with the Hideaway Restaurant, fed those same people aware of the call of Jesus to "Give them something to eat." So many of them commented to me and thanked us on the warmth and the blessing of our community. To us, though, it was simply supporting Mike, Joey, Timmy and their whole family

because they are an integral part of this community. This is the active community I have come to know and love.

During these past three years, as I was listening and learning, we were also making necessary changes in Mission Support areas, some behind the scenes and some more obvious. We started an early additional daily Mass so that those for whom 8:30 is too late can still celebrate. We increased opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration and instituted our monthly first Fridays with dinner and community time, with a special Holy Hour, Confession and all day and night Adoration. We were audited by the Archdiocese, and while the examination revealed that we are financially strong, we were also called to make some changes, to put in place some new policies, both fiscal and organizational, to be better stewards of the resources you have entrusted to us and also to be more transparent. We spent some time cleaning up and simplifying some spaces, like the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, to allow Christ to shine forth (literally and figuratively). We sought to become a staff and a parish that tried to say "Yes!" to new ideas rather than "No."

We got a new Associate Pastor in Fr. Ron Howard, who we share part time with Archbishop Spalding High School. In serving this dual role, Fr. Ron became the pied piper of young people, sharing the joy and excitement of our faith so well that we received 13 young people into the Church through the sacraments of baptism and Confirmation. We've served record number of those interested in becoming Catholic and this year seems par for that course as well. We've served thousands of children through our faith formation programs, and we've begun adapting our whole formation process to be more family friendly for the new required age of Confirmation in fourth grade.

We built up our parish staff, refining some staff roles and hiring some new people. We also built parish leadership by having the Ministry Fair, resulting in a host of new volunteers in all areas, groups and ministries, AND a greater relationship with and new willingness among leaders to work together. We've also spent a good part of

the last year working with our parish leaders to provide ongoing training and discussions about leading from and focused on Mission. We reinvigorated and continue to expand the pastoral council, tasking and preparing them with leading the efforts for our pastoral plan. We added some new members to the Finance Council, so they could have a bigger role in helping me understand the finances of this parish and making sure we are bold in our outreach but still realistic and grounded. I'm working with a leadership team of clergy, staff, and volunteers that helps me to make important decisions for the parish that are neither arbitrary nor misguided. These efforts will continue but they are part of a much bigger picture.

Also in that inaugural homily, I sought to remind you that this Adventure in Fidelity, which springs from and leads to the Eucharist, presents us with two towering challenges. The first is to put aside fear. Have you ever noticed that we have a God who repeats Himself? Over and over throughout the sacred saga of our salvation, we hear in one way or another, "Do not be afraid." From Moses to Mary to the Apostles right down to our own day, God has called the disciple beyond his or her fear, not to ignore the challenges and difficulties of life but to recognize His Presence, "Behold, I am with you. I will lead you; I will guide you." And God continues that right down to our own day: "Be not afraid, Robbie. I will help you serve my people." And to all of you, "Be not afraid, Lady of the Fields, I will shepherd you as you set out with your new pastor on this adventure in fidelity."

And last year I shared with you one of my most significant fears, that our finances were not keeping up with our responsibility. Throughout the month of October, we focused on stewardship, on a proper sense of ownership, on recognizing all we have and all we are as a blessing, how we as a community were not covering our operating expenses dipping into savings as we addressed delayed maintenance and long overdue parish needs. And you listened and provided. Offertory went up almost 10% and giving to worthy causes such as pro-life, outreach, and

Catholic education increased almost 30%. Those numbers are reflected in the chart on the last page of this handout. Unfortunately, we still closed out the year in the red.

But even here, there is still a sliver lining. Every parish is assessed 5% of offertory income from three years ago for a tax on Catholic Education. Whatever we spend on tuition assistance for our families or give to the local Catholic schools around us, is deducted from the amount we send to the Archdiocese. Don't get me wrong, I am very willing and encouraged to pay our cathedraticum, the money that covers all of the services we get from the Archdiocese, but I think our Catholic education dollars should be spent locally to assist our people. To that end, we have paid the full amount of what we will owe in three years and will continue this process. While putting us in the red this year, we are well positioned for a zero balance due for Catholic education in 3 years. Without that payment, we would have been about \$43,000 in the black. We have also done work and research on the organ project to determine how we can fit that into the over-arching context of all our parish needs. And most recently, we have established our welcome desk in the back of the church. This is part of our ongoing efforts to reach out to, to invite, and to welcome new members. We've got cards in the pews and a staff committed to contact everyone, new member or longtime parishioner who indicates a question or a concern. Already this is bearing fruit as the number of applications to join our parish has increased considerably.

And that brings us to today. Everything that has come before is only a start, a preparation for launching out on our Adventure in Fidelity because the second towering challenge, after, "Do not be afraid." is "Put out into the deep. Luke 5:4)" Jesus is challenging us to go beyond where we have been (and done pretty well) to leave the safety of the shore and set out for new waters. This challenge forces us to shift from simply maintaining what we've done in the past (as good as that may be) to focusing on the Mission given to us by Christ to go and make disciples.

Each one of us has someone that we know and love, someone close to our someone God has placed on our hearts, someone who we want to know Jesus better, who we want to share the blessings of our community and of the Church, someone who is struggling with God's love and mercy, struggling to understand how God delights in him or her, doesn't understand or isn't convinced how faith is relevant and can also be helpful. Perhaps it's a child or grandchild, perhaps a spouse or partner, perhaps a parent or relative, perhaps a best friend whatever the relationship, you know that they could benefit from an encounter with Christ and closer, deeper relationship with Him. These are the people we seek to reach towards along with those who do not yet know Jesus or have been hurt by the Church. These are the people we seek to share the Good News of a God who loves us and loves and loves us and never stops loving us. Indeed, this is at the very heart of our mission to provide the opportunity for people to encounter Christ and be changed by that encounter. I look forward to sharing with you in the days ahead how we have made this happen for some and how exciting it can be for our future.

Indeed, in many ways we have already put out into the deep and started our Adventure in Fidelity. Through the kindness of a singular donor, we have hired an excellent Director of Communications. Audrey Rhoads starts this week and will be immediately tasked with reviewing where we are and how we can improve communications. We have also requested and received permission from the Archdiocese to conduct a strategic plan to help us determine our needs and a priority listing of how best we can meet them. This will involve widespread discussion and consultation to work in tandem with and support of our pastoral plan. We have requested and received permission to reevaluate how we provide space to our choir. Alex has done such a great job in recruiting and making disciples willing to share their talents and gifts that we have run out of room in the sanctuary. We also are in

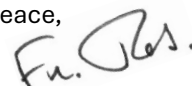
the process of requesting permission to expand our columbarium to meet the increased demand.

Perhaps, most excitedly, we are faced with a challenge from Divine Providence. The Archdiocese will ordain 13 men in June, 2027 (including our own Deacon Andrew Chase). This great abundance allows us the possibility to have a third priest assigned here. This would be an extraordinary help in reaching out and in meeting the needs of our growing community. I am working every angle to see what we can do but it will require some work in the rectory which now is only able to house two priests. More on this in the future.

I encourage you to look at the end of the year numbers presented here. More than that, I ask you to reflect prayerfully on how God is calling you to take part in this adventure in fidelity. Look at all that has been possible, even in just the last two years, because of the generosity of our people, who see the good and know the relevance of Jesus Christ active and alive in our community. Even in these challenging times, I encourage you to see how you can participate financially in this Adventure in Fidelity.

If you're not giving anything at all, start by making a gift today. If you're only giving occasionally from excess, start giving regularly, a return for God's many blessings. Consider your gift to God and to our community as a priority, like the mortgage or tuition and give on a regular basis, weekly or monthly. If you're already giving regularly consider making your gift a percentage of your income. Start low perhaps but increase the percentage to the tithe or 10% that God asks for in the Bible. See your gift as a return to God, a chance to show trust and gratitude in the God who has given so much, rather than giving out of obligation or simply because our parish needs it. You will not be sorry for God loves a cheerful giver and will never be outdone in generosity. I look forward to being with you at the Masses this weekend and next to share more on God's blessings in and through our community.

Peace,



Financial Report to the Parish at the end of Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026)			
Description	FY 26	FY 25	FY 24
Offertory / Holy Days Collections ¹	1,716,599	1,588,032	1,550,928
Donations, Gifts, Bequests & Rebates ¹	68,080	54,086	173,654
Charity & Diocesan Collections ²	161,048	123,654	115,114
Faith Formation & Youth Income	112,131	100,219	91,681
Church Event Income	24,149	3,354	2,587
Interest Income	12,128	16,564	18,093
Facility Income	11,520	13,850	11,200
Administrative Income	6,887	4,454	3,726
Total Operating Revenue	2,112,542	1,904,213	1,966,983
Description	FY26	FY 25	FY 24
Appeals, Grants, & Specific Gifts ³	88,331	155,532	251,309
Cemetery Income	70,620	63,965	107,935
Gain/Loss on Endowments	112,574	85,149	79,986
Total Non-Operating Income	271,525	304,646	439,230
Description	FY 26	FY 25	FY 24
Facilities Expense ⁴	414,896	346,421	343,176
Administrative Expenses	914,833	831,833	862,022
Charitable & Diocesan Dist.	131,429	151,254	141,915
Faith Formation & Youth Expense	135,943	117,633	96,264
Worship & Clergy Expense	182,892	207,583	212,599
Church Event Expense	32,121	6,720	5,349
School & Diocesan Support ⁵	380,218	343,284	358,024
Total Operating Expenses	2,192,333	2,004,728	2,019,349
Description	FY26	FY25	FY24
Capital Expenditures ⁶	0	83,538	200,315
Large Repairs	51,614	9,348	0
Cemetery Expenses	4,560	3,784	19,886
Appeal Distribution	10,000	25,000	20,000
Total Non-Operating Expenses	66,174	121,670	240,201
Total Operating Income	2,112,542	1,904,213	1,966,983
Total Operating Expenses	2,192,333	2,004,728	2,019,349
Total Operating Surplus / Deficit	-79,792	-100,515	-52,366
Total Operating Income w/Cemetery	2,183,162	1,968,178	2,074,918
Total Operating Expenses w/Cemetery	2,196,893	2,008,512	2,039,235
Total Operating Surplus / Deficit	-13,732	-40,334	35,683

¹ offertory increased by almost 10% after preaching on Stewardship

² Giving to charitable causes increased by almost 30% after preaching on stewardship.

³ Grants and Specific Gifts Decreasing as Organ pledges are finished.

⁴ Increased costs due to skyrocketing electricity and repairs to the HVAC system.

⁵ Increased support of education to prevent payment in 3 years.

⁶ Delaying possible capitol improvements until the Strategi Plan can help us prioritize.