

St. Mary

CATHOLIC CHURCH

A Letter From Our Pastor

A Steward's Response to the Ultimate Christmas Gift

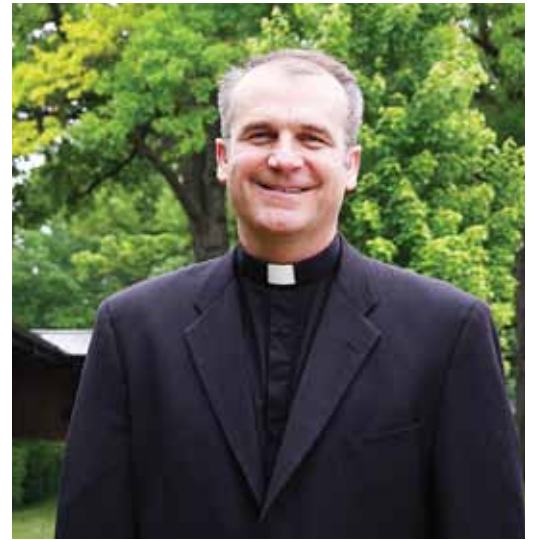
My Dear Parishioners,

Christmas is America's favorite holiday. The amount of effort we put into decorating our homes and churches – the money we spend to buy presents for family members, friends and coworkers – the hours we devote to addressing Christmas cards and attending seasonal get-togethers – all taken together stagger the imagination. Whatever holiday ranks below Christmas – Valentine's Day or Thanksgiving or the Fourth of July – can't hold a candle to our investment in Christmas.

Don't get me wrong. I love Christmas, too. But, as has been said by countless others, I'm afraid that many of us somehow miss the main reason for our Christmas celebrations.

I've sometimes heard people say things like, "Getting everything ready for Christmas is so hectic, I can't believe it's already here again this year. But, you know, Christmas is really for the children." And occasionally I've heard or read in a letter to the editor that Christmas is about the hope that a newborn baby brings to the world. Even in the early winter, when the days are short, we can celebrate babyhood, a new human life.

Both of those sentiments miss the mark because they're too limited. Christ-



mas is really for adults! Of course, it's true that many of our Christmas customs are for the children. We hang our stockings, watch Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer and plan for the onslaught of school festivities in December. And it's true that the birth of a baby, any baby, brings joy and hope to all those around. Yes, many of our Christmas celebrations are centered on the children, and the birth of a child offers a promise for the future.

But I'll still maintain that Christmas is for adults because, at Christmas, we celebrate not just any baby, but a particular baby. And we celebrate his birth not

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December 8: The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

When it comes to Catholic trivia, there is one simple question that often evokes an incorrect response: "What is the Immaculate Conception?"

More often than not, this term is believed to designate Christ's conception within Mary, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The term "Immaculate Conception" describes the state of Mary's soul within the womb of her mother, St. Anne. It has nothing to do with a special type of generative conception by her parents; Mary's body was formed in the usual manner by her mother and father.

Rather, the term "Immaculate Conception" describes how Mary received the fruits of Christ's redemptive work that we receive in baptism and was preserved from the stain of original sin from the first moment of her existence.

Every man since Adam and Eve has been born with the stain of original sin, which can be washed away in the cleansing waters of Baptism. Yet this fallen state never touched the soul of Mary, the new Eve. She was conceived with original sanctity and innocence; however she was not exempt from the temporal penalties of Adam, which include sorrow, physical illness, and death.

The belief in Mary's Immaculate Conception has been held by the Church throughout history, though only officially declared a dogma in 1854 by Pope Pius IX. Highly devoted to the Blessed Virgin, Pius IX hoped the official definition would draw emphasis to the already existing belief, thereby inspiring deeper devotion to Mary. This dogma finds its roots in

both Scripture and Tradition, and remains consistent with reason and the teachings of our early Church fathers.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated every year on Dec. 8 and is one of the few declared Holy Days of Obligation on the Church calendar. All Catholics are obligated to attend Mass on this day.

Why not make this liturgical feast a special day of devotion?

Bring a rose to place before an image of the Blessed Virgin in the church sanctuary, or arrange a little altar at home for your children to decorate. Recite the Magnificat and discuss the Church's teaching on the Immaculate Conception.

In the words of our current Holy Father during his homily on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in 2005: "On this feast day, let us thank the Lord for the great sign of his goodness which he has given us in Mary, his Mother and the Mother of the Church. Mary thus stands before us as a sign of comfort, encouragement, and hope."

Once this beautiful feast is brought alive in our hearts and in our homes, we will never again mistakenly answer that "tricky" question: "What is the Immaculate Conception?"



2011 Advent and Christmas Schedule

Advent Confession Schedule

Saturday, Dec. 3, 3:30-4:45 p.m.
 Sunday, Dec. 4, 9:15-9:45 a.m.
 Wednesday, Dec. 7, 5:00-6:00 p.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 10, 3:30-4:45 p.m.
 Sunday, Dec. 11, 9:15-9:45 a.m.
 Wednesday, Dec. 14, 5:00-6:00 p.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 17, 3:30-4:45 p.m.
 Sunday, Dec. 18, 9:15-9:45 a.m.
 Wednesday, Dec. 21, 5:00-6:00 p.m.
 Thursday, Dec. 22, 11:00-12:30 p.m.
 Sunday, Dec. 25, 9:15-9:45 a.m.
 Saturday, Dec. 31, 4:00-4:45 p.m.

**Or by appointment with one of the priests*

Holy Day of Obligation Wednesday, Dec. 8 Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

6:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.
 (Main Church)

Christmas Schedule

Saturday, Dec. 24
 8:00 a.m. Daily Mass
 5:00 p.m. Vigil Children's Mass
 10:00 p.m. Midnight Mass

Sunday, Dec. 25

8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.,
 but **NO** 6:00 p.m. Mass

Holy Day (No Obligation) Monday, Jan. 1

Mary Mother of God
 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. (Main
 Church), **NO** 6:00 p.m.

The Spirituality of Stewardship

Following in the Footsteps of the Saints

The word “stewardship” has long carried with it the negative stereotype of a financial obligation to the Church. For many, stewardship means “giving my time and money to the Church in support of its work, lest it is unable to survive and thrive.”

Indeed, stewardship does often require sacrifice of some kind. But the reality is that stewardship is not simply some guilt-laden obligation or “bill.” Stewardship is in no way comparable to a tax payment or a charitable networking opportunity at work. Instead, stewardship is a spiritual way of life – an active response to Christ’s invitation to unreservedly “come after me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19). Stewardship is about how we respond to God’s call to discipleship, and there are many different ways we can respond to the call. Because of this, we can live the stewardship way of life simply by making small choices in our daily lives, under normal, everyday circumstances.

Nowhere in Christian history is there a more archetypal example of the variety of ways we can respond to God’s call than in the lives of the saints. The saints represent a wide cross-section of individuals – old and young, rich and poor – living in different times in human history. Some were called to the religious life, living lives focused on spirituality and material simplicity, and spending their days peacefully praying and helping to form the tenets of the Faith. Others were individuals focused on charitable outreach, dedicating their lives to feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Still others faced great adversity and challenges to their faith, and

ultimately suffered death and martyrdom in loyalty to Christ and His Church.

In spite of their differences, the one thing that all of these individuals share is that they responded to God’s call to discipleship by utilizing the unique talents that God had given them in ways that were conducive to their individual personalities, and actively influencing the circumstances presented to them in their respective days and times. Contemplative spirituality, charitable giving, great courage – all of these roads have led to canonization and, ultimately, eternal life with God in His glory. We are all called to do the same.

When thinking about the spirituality of stewardship, take some time to discern your talents, and how you can best respond to God’s call by naturally and effectively using the gifts He has given you. If you are a gregarious person, this might mean reaching out to a co-worker you don’t know very well in kindness to help create a hospitable work environment. If you are an individual who is often “on the go,” perhaps this means praying the Rosary while you are driving from place to place. If you’ve recently experienced a financial windfall or unexpected increase in income, this might mean sponsoring a little league team in your community by paying for their uniforms.

God has provided many roads to the Kingdom of Heaven, and in the saints, we see examples of the many roads that have been taken. By choosing the one that is best for us, we can live stewardship as a spiritual practice and a way of life, and answer His call to discipleship.





Spreading the C *The Justice and P*



(Images top to bottom) Volunteers help to serve beverages, dinner and desserts to patrons at the Day Center for the Homeless.

Throughout the year, the Church of St. Mary's Justice and Peace Committee helps the less fortunate in our community with food, clothing, and financial assistance – bringing to light matters of Catholic Social Teaching and lovingly following Christ's instructions to care for those who are in need. And at Christmas-time, the Justice and Peace Committee serves as a wonderful example of what true Christmas giving is all about.

On Friday, Dec. 16, the Justice and Peace Committee will host its **annual Christmas luncheon at the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless**. The meal, fashioned after a traditional Christmas dinner, will include ham, turkey, and delicious pies and cakes baked by St. Mary's parishioners. Approximately 15 parish volunteers will travel to the day center to help serve the food and spend time with the patrons.

"I think people are very appreciative on that day because they don't usually get hot meals," says Hilary Elias, coordinator of the Justice and Peace Committee. "We're just hoping to give them some dignity and call the community into participation. They just don't get the opportunity to go to many events like this, so a few years ago I thought that the Catholic population here could do a lot better than just handing out a cold sandwich for Christmas."

The Justice and Peace Committee also gives aide to the needy in our community through its **Christmas Gift-Giving initiative**. Each November, Hilary obtains approximately 500 names of children and seniors who are in need from local agencies including Children First, Catholic Charities, and Senior Living. Each name includes the individual's age

Christmas Spirit *Peace Committee*

and a special gift or need that he or she would like for Christmas, with a \$50 limit. Hilary and a team of volunteers write down the names on tags, which they place on a table in the church on Thanksgiving weekend. Parishioners are invited to take the tags home, purchase the gifts indicated, gift-wrap them, and return them to the church with the tags attached.

"It's always comforting to know that people care, and I think that when most people realize they have an obligation to help those in need, especially the elderly and children, they are very giving and very thoughtful," Hilary says.

When the gifts are returned, Hilary and a group of about 30 volunteers sort the gifts by agency so that they can be delivered to the various agencies, which distribute them to the individuals in time for Christmas.

Hilary has spent much of her adult life dedicated to outreach, and she says that helping others not only fulfills a mandate from Christ, but it provides her with great perspective.

"When you help other people, you realize how fortunate you are because of the gifts that you've been given," she says. "My clients, the poor, are the ones that teach me. They're very patient, and they teach me to be more Christ-like, and to respect and defend the rights of others. We're supposed to give special consideration for the least in our midst, and we sort of discover our own humanity through our association with other people, particularly those that have less."

If you would like more information about any of the Justice and Peace Committee's activities, or would like to help, please contact Hilary Elias at 918-749-2561.



(Images top to bottom) Vacation Bible School kids helped to collect items for the Justice and Peace ministry this past summer. The food pantry is always in need of staples.





Financial Report

Dear Parishioners:

The purpose of the Parish Finance Council is to use the business expertise and professional knowledge of the members to advise and consult with the Pastor in the cultivation of parish treasure that supports the goals and objectives of the Catholic ministries of the Church of St. Mary. As part of its charter, the Parish Finance Council is to address the parish periodically to provide insight and transparency into how the parish treasure supports the parish ministries. The purpose of this financial report is to inform the parishioners of the Church's financial status and summarize the revenues and expenses of the parish.

Overview of Presentation

The Finance Council is pleased to report the financial results for the Church of St. Mary for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2011 and 2010. The audit has yet to be completed for the 2011 fiscal year, but preliminary results based on the Church's books and records are reported below. The presentation of the financial statements consists of the results of both the Church of St. Mary and the School of St. Mary, including the pre-school, after school care, and the school cafeteria. Not included in the operating results of the parish are the contributions to Catholic Charities, the Diocesan Development Fund, and the many national and diocesan collections that our parishioners so generously support. Also excluded from the operating results are the proceeds from fundraising activities, such as MaryFair, which are not part of the operating budgets of either the Church or the School. The funds raised from these activities are deposited into accounts maintained by the Church and are included in temporarily restricted funds.

Also excluded from the financial presentation are the balances of The School of Saint Mary Education Trust Fund. The Trust is administered exclusively for the benefit of the School of St. Mary and the assets are held by The Catholic Foundation of Eastern Oklahoma. The net assets of the Trust were \$1.656 million and \$1.374 million as of June 30, 2011 and 2010, respectively.

Operating Statement Summary

For the year ending June 30, 2011, revenues totaled \$3.411 million compared to revenues of \$3.234 million in 2010, an increase of \$0.177 million. Parish operating revenues accounted for the majority of the positive variance to the prior year as 2011 offertory collections were \$0.148 million higher

than 2010. School revenues, before the parish subsidy, were \$1.296 million in 2011, which was \$0.043 million higher than 2010 revenues of \$1.253 million. Including the parish subsidy of \$0.236 million, school revenues totaled \$1.532 million. The parish subsidy to the school is equal to 14% of the gross offertory collection for the calendar year preceding the fiscal year (January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010).

| | 2011 | 2010 |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Revenues | | |
| Parish Operating Revenues | \$2,023 | \$1,864 |
| School Revenue | 1,296 | 1,253 |
| Cafeteria Revenue | 92 | 94 |
| Other Receipts | 1 | 23 |
| Total Revenues | \$3,411 | \$3,234 |
| Expenses | | |
| Administration | \$480 | \$534 |
| Plant Operation | 293 | 302 |
| Parish Ministries | 464 | 408 |
| Assessments & Charitable Gifts | 203 | 199 |
| School (incl. Pre-School) | 1,408 | 1,375 |
| School Plant | 123 | 117 |
| Cafeteria Expense | 92 | 94 |
| Other | 5 | 5 |
| Total Expenses | \$3,068 | \$3,034 |
| Net Operating Surplus before | | |
| Capital Expenditures | \$344 | \$200 |
| Capital Expenditures | 21 | 383 |
| Net Operating Surplus | \$323 | (\$183) |

Total expenses for 2011 were \$3.068 million compared to expenses of \$3.034 million in 2010, an increase of \$0.034 million. Parish expenses in 2011 were \$1.440 million compared to \$1.443 million in 2010, a decrease of \$0.003 million. School expenses for the 2011 fiscal year were \$1.531 million or \$0.039 million higher than the \$1.492 million in 2010 fiscal year.

For the year ending June 30, 2011, net operating surplus before capital expenditures was \$0.344 million which was \$0.144 million higher than the 2010 fiscal year-end total of \$0.200 million.

Capital Expenditures

Capital expenditures were \$0.021 million for the year ending June 30, 2011 compared to capital expenditures of

\$0.383 million for the 2010 fiscal year. The 2011 capital expenditures were part of the larger roof replacement and air conditioner project that occurred in 2010.

Balance Sheet

Assets on the balance sheet consist of cash and savings, and the net carrying value of the physical plant of the Church and School. Cash and savings, including temporarily restricted funds, totaled \$1.639 million and \$1.147 million for the years ending June 30, 2011 and 2010 respectively. Temporarily restricted funds totaled \$0.798 million and \$0.572 million for the same time periods leaving unrestricted cash and savings of \$0.841 million and \$0.575 million for the years ending June 30, 2011 and 2010, respectively. The cost of property, plant, and equipment net of accumulated depreciation was approximately \$4.460 million as of June 30, 2011 compared to \$4.663 million in 2010. Total assets were \$6.099 million and \$5.811 million as of the fiscal yearend 2011 and 2010.

Total Net Assets



Outlook and Conclusion

The 2011 – 2012 fiscal year is just beginning to take shape but the Council is pleased to report that for the three months ending September 2011, revenues are higher than the same period last year. Year-to-date expenses are somewhat higher in the first three months of 2011 compared to the first three months of 2010; however, the Church is running an operating surplus year to date. Additionally, MaryFair was once again a great success and the proceeds will be divided between contributions to the Education Trust Fund, Tuition Assistance, and other school needs.

Through your support and generosity, the Church of St. Mary is able to continue its mission to serve the needs of our parish community, provide for those less fortunate through our Justice and Peace Ministry, support the greater Catholic mission of the Diocese of Tulsa, and continue to provide an excellent Catholic education and formation through the School of St. Mary, adult programs and programs for our youth not attending a Catholic School. With your continued support, the Church of St. Mary will remain the vibrant Catholic community that meets our spiritual needs and exceeds our expectations.

Michael Huigens
Chairman
Church of St. Mary Finance Council

| Church of St. Mary | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Balance Sheet | | | |
| June 30, 2011 and 2010 | | | |
| | | <u>2011</u> | <u>2010</u> |
| Assets | (\$000) | | |
| Current Assets | | | |
| Checking and Savings | | \$841 | \$575 |
| Temporary Restricted Funds | | 798 | 572 |
| Fixed Assets Net of Depreciation | | 4,460 | 4,663 |
| Total Assets | | <u>\$6,099</u> | <u>\$5,811</u> |
| Liabilities and Net Assets | | | |
| Current Liabilities | | \$4 | \$3 |
| Deferred Tuition | | 63 | 61 |
| Total Current Liabilities | | <u>67</u> | <u>64</u> |
| Net Assets | | | |
| Unrestricted | | 5,234 | 5,174 |
| Temporarily Restricted | | 798 | 572 |
| Total Net Assets | | <u>6,032</u> | <u>5,746</u> |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets | | <u>\$6,099</u> | <u>\$5,811</u> |

Liabilities consist of accounts payable and deferred tuition revenue totaling \$0.067 million in 2011 and \$0.064 million in 2010. The Church does not have any term debt.

Net unrestricted assets for the parish were \$5.234 million and \$5.174 million as of the fiscal yearend 2011 and 2010.



Church of St. Mary

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Weekend Liturgy

Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m.

Weekday Liturgy

Monday, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday-Friday, 6:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, 8:00 a.m.

Holy Days

6:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., or as announced

A Steward's Response to the Ultimate Christmas Gift

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because it's cute to see a baby in a manger filled with hay and surrounded by farm animals. Instead, we celebrate this birth because of who this baby is and what he did as an adult, and only those with an adult faith can fully appreciate the significance of this birth.

A human baby is certainly a wonderful creation, made in the image of God. But Jesus is more than that, not less, for he is God the Son who took on human nature in order to redeem us from the results of the sin into which we had fallen. He didn't stay a baby. He grew up and taught and preached and healed. Finally he was put to death "for our sake" as the Creed affirms and rose from the dead. That's why we celebrate his birth more than two thousand years later. That's why normal routines are suspended for a few joyful days each year.

Yes, Christmas is for adults. Of course, it's for children as well, for people of all ages benefited from this birth. And in response to the gift the Father gave us with the birth of his Son, we joyfully exchange gifts with each other and share with the poor and offer our gifts of time, talent, and treasure to the Church. God gives to us; as stewards, we do our best to faithfully use those gifts.

A joyful and blessed Christmas to all of you, whatever age you are!

In Christ,

Fr. Jack Gleason
Pastor

