



# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

## DEAR PARISH FAMILY

I was talking to some of our students, and mentioned that six-letter word starting with S-C-H and ending with O-O-L. They reminded me that I wasn't supposed to use that sort of language in front of children. Yet, here we are, more than halfway through the summer.

It's a good point to remind our school families that their "fair share" contributions are counted on every week. This is because we pay our teachers every month, as well as compensate them through health insurance monthly. Please don't forget us on the weekends you are away.

Having said that, with people away, our weekend collections are a bit on the thin side. If you are away on vacation during the summer, please consider electronic giving, or else you can drop your contribution off at the parish / school office before you go away.

You can use the debt retirement spot on your collection envelope to help us make up the shortfall so we can pay our bills and our employees.

Thank you for your generosity and stewardship!

## DIOCESAN YOUTH RALLY

Next weekend is the diocesan youth rally at Saginaw Valley State

University. Youth who register through their parish youth minister can go for free. Contact Jeanne or Bonnie for details. Please don't miss out on this valuable opportunity!

## CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

We are nearing the end of our front driveway paving and handicapped access project. The concrete should be set up enough to drive on in a week or so, and hopefully the asphalt has firmed up a bit.

We are still just under our goal of \$50,000. So, please consider giving if you already haven't. There were some issues discovered during construction that needed to be dealt with as well. So any further contributions you can make toward the project or the building fund would be extremely helpful.

Thank you to Dick and Kathie Lenhard for all their hard work outside taking care of the loose ends on the construction.

## PRAYERS AND REMEMBRANCE

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Arlene Brechtelsbauer. Her memorial Mass was the last day of July. We offer our condolences to her family, and our prayers for her repose and for her family's needs.

## SUMMER MASS SCHEDULE

On August 9, we will have our last 7:00 am early Sunday Mass for the

summer. Our usual Masses are: Saturday 5:00 pm and Sunday 10:00 am.

During the week, we have 8:30 am Mass on both Wednesday and Thursday. And in September, we will return to our usual three 8:30 am weekday Masses on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

## AIR CONDITIONER

Last Sunday the church air conditioner froze up part-way through Mass. After a brief rest, it was back doing it's job. It seems that fate may have chosen our next capital project for us. Please help if you are able by contributing to buildings and grounds.

## EUCCHARISTIC MINISTRY

The diocese is sponsoring opportunities for formation for those involved as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion – whether on weekend or weekday liturgies, or bringing Communion to the sick.

If you haven't received the schedule of formation sessions, please contact the parish office.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER

Don't take a vacation from God. Prayer and Mass are meant to foster your relationship with God and with each other! Please pray for our parish, for each other, and for me! God bless you, always!

*Fr. David*



# GENEROSITY AND STEWARDSHIP: A REFLECTION

What's the difference between "stewardship" and "generosity"? What comes to mind when you hear those words? For what distinctive purposes are they best suited? How do people respond to those terms?

We are stewards of the earth. We are stewards of those things entrusted to us, inherited by us, and earned by us. We are stewards of our wealth and possessions and physical bodies. Stewards are those people in ancient times who were trustees, who had responsibilities, who cared for things owned by someone else. Today you don't hear much about stewards and stewardship outside the church; it's a language derived from our biblical roots and our church heritage. It risks becoming insider language, not easily accessible or immediately understandable by those new to the church. There is something slightly weighty, heavy, dutiful, and legal sounding about the word. Growing up we heard about stewardship, stewardship campaigns, and committees on stewardship. The language focused our attention on supporting our parish church financially.

Generosity is an aspect of character. It is an attractive quality which people aspire to and desire to see cultivated in their children. The opposite of generosity is selfishness, self-centeredness, greed, and self-absorption. Generosity extends beyond just the use of money, although it most definitely includes that. There are generous spirits; generous souls; people who are generous with their time, with their teaching, with their love. Generosity finds many biblical sources, and is a fruit of the Spirit (*Gal 5:22-23*). It sounds more organic, more generative, less legalistic, less formal than stewardship. We may have to explain what stewardship means. But everyone knows generosity when they see it.

We admire and respect people who are generous, and we want to become like them. Generosity is not a spiritual attribute someone acquires apart from the actual practice of giving. It becomes discernible through action. We never describe people as generous who keep everything for themselves and only serve themselves.

Generosity focuses on the spiritual qualities of the giver, derived from the generosity of God, rather than on the church's need for money. One of these terms is not superior to the other. Perhaps there are

shades of difference in how they are perceived by young and old, those new to the faith from those long-established in our churches. Maybe using both wisely helps us reach people at different places on the journey of faith.

Whatever term we use, the bottom line is that churches must emphasize parishioners' need to give more than a church's need for money.

*When I was in the Navy, I made roughly \$10K annually. Sure, I had a roof over my head and food and clothes. It wasn't the lap of luxury, but it was enough. My practice in those lean years was to give the biggest bill in my wallet when the collection plate came around at Mass. That wasn't difficult, because most of the time there wasn't very much in my wallet. One Christmas, my aunt sent me a card with \$100 cash in it. On purpose, I put it in my wallet on Monday, figuring I'd spend it before the next weekend. But I forgot that Christmas wasn't on the weekend. When the collection plate came around on Christmas Day, I opened my wallet figuring I'd put in \$1 or \$5, when good old Benjamin Franklin smiled up at me from my wallet. The choice I faced that day was the difference between mere stewardship and Christian generosity. And let's just say that I ate at the Mess Hall for Christmas dinner, and watched TV in the enlisted lounge that night.*

*In my time with the auto industry, my practice was to pay 10% of my gross income twice a year to the parish church. That was easier than remembering to prepare an envelope, and there was no electronic giving in those days. But considering that my salary ranged from \$52K on up, that meant a contribution of at least \$100 per week. I was a single man who sang in the choir and served at the altar. I taught in the evening catechism program, and worked with youth during the week. I didn't have any children in the parish school, so from a consumer mentality, I wasn't getting anything in exchange for my contributions.*

*These days, as your pastor, and making roughly \$27K each year, my financial contribution to the parish consists in living lean. My thermostat is always a bit on the uncomfortable side during both winter and summer. Despite my special dietary needs, I manage to stay one or two Benjamins below my monthly allowance. Whatever I save stays with the parish.*

*Please reflect on what you are giving and what you could be giving. Also, please consider making an additional offering of time and talent to the parish. Thank you for your generosity and stewardship.* — Fr. David