

State of the Parish Report – 2021

Dear Parishioners,

It's time again to share with you the yearly "State of the Parish", something I have done every year since I became pastor 9 years ago. It has been a very good year for Gesu on many fronts, COVID notwithstanding, but of course there are always some challenges to be addressed and concerns to bring to your attention.

Let me begin with our parish finances.

Overall, Gesu remains in a good financial position. We continue to have no net debt and have adequate cash on hand at this time to meet any significant expenses that we may encounter. COVID continues to impact all of our lives and, as it relates to our parish, we see the impact in lower attendance and fewer parish-wide events, which has impacted our parish finances too. For our fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2021, our parish generated an operating loss of approximately \$42,000. This amount reflects the net results of the normal operations of the parish and school before we consider other items, such as changes in the market value of our endowments, bequests and memorials and the recognition of the government Payroll Protection Program (the PPP) money we received in 2020. I'll discuss these items in a minute.

As it relates to the church's offertory collections, they ended up coming in a little bit above our budget and the prior year. I want to sincerely thank you all very much for continuing your contributions through such a difficult period. However, we have noticed a decline in collections during the first three months of the current fiscal year so we continue to ask for your generosity as you are able to contribute. As I've previously mentioned, please consider converting your weekly giving to electronic on-line giving. It assures a steady source of income to the parish and may be more convenient for you. There is a form in this week's bulletin for you to consider signing up as an electronic contributor. I'll also have some forms on the tables at the back of church after Mass that you're welcome to take with you today.

I am pleased to report that the school's enrollment remained strong again last fiscal year and the parish did not have to subsidize the school – something that's now been accomplished for the last four years. As I've said before, that's an amazing accomplishment and there probably aren't too many other parishes in the diocese, if any, that are in a similar favorable position as it relates to their school as we are at this time. And, our enrollment is again strong for the current school year.

With the return to more normalcy last spring, we took on some additional maintenance projects that had been put on hold when the COVID crisis began. We did some renovations to the church sacristy, the rectory office and the school front office. We also repaired some of the concrete sidewalks and steps that needed to be improved for safety reasons. And of course, just as the summer weather rolled in last May, our church air conditioning went out. It took a while to find all the problems and then find a couple of new compressors to install but we got it done. The AC project was unexpected and cost us about \$20,000.

Also, since we were not able to put a new electronic sign at the corner of Parkside and Bancroft, we decided to use those funds to spruce up the landscaping around the church and the Sullivan Center. Another major project that we started last fiscal year was the purchase of materials for the renovation of the Sullivan Center's carpeting and flooring. It's been nearly 25 years since we've done any major work in the Sullivan Center, so our plan is to have all of the flooring installed and the walls re-painted this year.

In addition to the normal operations of the parish last year, we also had a number of special items that had a big impact on our total net income. The biggest of these was a \$370,000 increase in the market value of the endowments that we are so very blessed to have. As I think I've mentioned before, our endowments distribute 4% of their value each year to help us operate the church and school. Another unusual and extremely helpful item we recognized last year was approximately \$332,000 of Payroll Protection Program funds that were received in April 2020. This was a loan by the federal government during the past year which was forgiven and therefore we were able to recognize it as a one-time gain in our financial statements.

So, in total, once you add together our ordinary operating loss, the increase in the market value of our endowments, the recognition of the PPP grant and some other items, Gesu parish and school had a total net income of – are you sitting down? - approximately \$614,000 last year.

This was a very unusual situation and the finance council doesn't budget for these unusual items, so we are trying to get the parish back to something closer to break-even from a normal, operating perspective for our current fiscal year. This was a banner year for the parish financially that's for sure, but one that almost certainly won't happen again.

We have included a copy of our profit and loss and balance sheet in this week's bulletin, so please take a look at these at your convenience. Of course, please let me know if you have any questions.

This past July was a benchmark in the life of Gesu as we twinned with the other Oblate parish in Toledo, St. Pius X. The purpose of the twinning of the two parishes was to maintain a strong Oblate presence at both parishes and enable us to share our Salesian Spirituality even amid the declining numbers of Oblate priests in our Province. Having fewer Oblates in the area has presented some challenges however, especially covering all the Masses celebrated at each parish church, especially on the weekends. In time we need to address this situation and get a more practical Mass schedule between both parish churches. I am confident however that with the addition of Deacon Bill Petro to our parish staff, his additional ministry will make a big difference.

COVID has also resulted a decline of not only those attending Mass on a regular basis, but also a decline in lectors, communion distributors, altar servers, Masters of Ceremonies, ushers and cantors. Really every ministry has been affected. I encourage you to think about your talents and give back to the parish in a personal way to enhance the celebration of our weekend liturgy.

Fortunately we have excellent Pastoral and Finance Councils who take their responsibilities very seriously and keep the parish "on track" with their respective roles.

Over the past year I have come to realize again and again how blessed Gesu is with our parish and school staff. The office staff in the rectory is “the best” and always looking for ways and opportunities to help each other out to get things accomplished in a timely and efficient manner. Our school is blessed with an excellent principal and top-notch teachers and support staff. And our maintenance crew keep things in great shape, and with some of our buildings approaching 100 years in age, that’s no small accomplishment! All of these people helped Gesu to negotiate through COVID much easier.

Finally, YOU, our faithful Gesu parishioners, have been extremely supportive of me throughout the COVID pandemic and now with the twinning process in full gear. So many have shown your concern by asking how I’m doing, am I getting enough sleep, still taking the day off and so forth. I do appreciate your concern. Truthfully, some days are longer than others, but manageable. I still have the energy for the twinning, that’s why we are doing it now.

In our twinning prayer we prayed, “Lord, increase our faith in you and in each other”, “May we be a sign of unity and charity to all...and...”May nothing separate us or those we love from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This prayer was good as we began our twinning process but is also good as we move into the future..

May we not only believe in God but in the good will of each other

May we be a sign of God’s love to the world

And may we stay united to each other and to Our Lord Jesus, now and always.

Thank you.

Thank you for being part of Gesu Parish.

May God bless you

and May God Bless Gesu.