

Dear Parishioners;

As you know, last July we were faced with a severe financial situation. In October at our All-Parish meeting, we reported a deficit of **\$441,499** for the 2015-2016 fiscal year, and the potential for a similar deficit for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Since that information was shared, a lot has been happening:

- A challenge grant from CSCOE was received and met, raising \$100,000 for the school
- An Alumni challenge was received and met, raising an additional \$20,000 for the school
- Expenses have decreased due in part to several positions moving to part-time versus full-time
- Tuition billing and collection is working well, and on-track
- Weekly giving has increased, allowing us to more readily meet our expenses
- The \$200,000 line of credit opened as an emergency stop-gap, has remained unused.
- 23 New families joined Presentation for the year of 2016.

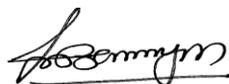
As a result of all of the above, our projected deficit for the current fiscal year has been reduced to **\$54,450**. While we still have our debt to the Archdiocese and Premier Bank owing, we are significantly closer to a balanced budget.

This is the first time in several years that actual envelope collections have exceeded projected amounts, which is a true testament to your ongoing and increasing stewardship of our parish family. New governance efforts, like engaging the services of the Parish Accounting Services Center (PASC) to handle bookkeeping and the move to transition open positions to part-time rather than full-time hires to save costs are the other positive steps on the part of the parish. We haven't stopped there. There are other things going on in the parish as well, such as the Catholic Schools Raffle (all money raised stays with PBVM school), Angel Fund program and the Parish Festival in May. In addition, we are exploring additional grant requests for the school, and brainstorming with Leadership, Stewardship and SAC around increasing student count and our parishioner base. Much hard work remains for our parish. But know that we have the full support and prayers of the Archdiocese behind us. It is disheartening to hear negative rumors swirling around the future viability of Presentation School and Parish. But, let me assure you that they are just that - rumors. I am encouraged by all the positive signs coming from our community. If you hear rumors or negative news second hand, I would encourage you to reach out to me, Mrs. Giel, or others within parish leadership to get the full story.

We all are committed to doing everything possible to maintain our terrific culture of outreach and Catholic education at our beloved parish. This means working as hard as necessary to stabilize and grow all ministries, especially the school ministry. We can achieve a balanced budget by fiscal year 2019, possibly sooner in fiscal year 2018, if everyone pulls together across all ministries. From there we can grow as a vibrant Catholic community.

All of you are in my prayers and I ask for all of you to pray that God will bless our efforts as we strive to build His kingdom here in Maplewood. Let Jesus, present in the Blessed Sacrament, be our source of inspiration and strength to continue this great mission. I am asking all parishioners and non-parish school families to embrace our potential and join whole heartedly in our mission

Yours in Jesus, through Mary and Joseph;



Fr. Benny Mekkatt CFIC  
Pastor