

## A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parishioners,

On October 10, 2021, we will celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of St. James Church. In preparation for that wonderful milestone in the life of our parish we will be offering a number of programs and special events throughout the coming year. Each event will be our way of ***“Honoring our Past. . .Building for our Future.”*** Part of our planning is to invite everyone to take stock in who we are and the resources we have at our disposal to support the mission and ministries of our parish. These resources enable us to offer a variety of programs and services to the members of our parish family and others coming to us for advice, instruction or assistance.

**UPDATE THE PARISH CENSUS:** It has become apparent that updating our parish census is important so that we can have an accurate listing of all those who identify themselves as members of St. James. Plans are in the making to invite everyone to update their registration card information while offering others the opportunity to register with our parish.

**OUR PARISH STEWARDSHIP:** As parishioners and intentional disciples we are called to use our talents and skills for the benefit of our parish community while supporting the mission and ministries of the parish through our financial support. I would like to share with you:

- 1) The impact that the pandemic has had on our finances,***
- 2) An Invitation to everyone to give a one-time “Recovery Gift,”***
- 3) A request that each of our parishioners prayerfully consider raising your weekly contributions to St. James,***
- 4) Encourage everyone to move to giving on-line: weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.***

**1) THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON OUR FINANCES:** I am concerned about the impact that the coronavirus has had on all of our parishioners: your health and the level of your income needed to pay your bills and buy food and medicine. Thankfully, wearing masks while in public, keeping social distance and washing our hands has made a real difference in stopping the spread of this virus. It has been comforting to hear people are now visiting family and friends. We are also seeing many people return to the public celebration of Mass. Hopefully, more people will join us for Mass soon.

Since mid-March we have experienced a significant decrease in the weekly contributions to

St. James. I am grateful to all of our parishioners who have continued making your regular contributions to the church, either at Mass, mailing them in or by giving on-line. If the present trend continues, we believe that we will experience a shortfall of between \$150,000.00 and \$220,000.00 in the present fiscal year, which runs from September 2020 through August 2021.

**2) ONE-TIME “RECOVERY GIFT:”** I invite everyone to consider giving a one-time “Recovery Gift” to St. James at this time. I extend this special request to those who haven’t been able to send in your usual contributions to St. James since this past March and to those who aren’t regular contributors to our parish. This appeal can have a positive impact on our financial picture. Contributions can be mailed in or placed in the basket as you leave church after the weekend Masses using the enclosed envelope. Please consider making this one-time contribution on-line. Just follow the simple instructions on our parish website: [www.stjamesrcchurch.org](http://www.stjamesrcchurch.org) and click on the direct link to WeShare.

**3) INCREASING YOUR REGULAR OFFERTORY:** As we begin our year-long celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our parish, I invite you to prayerfully consider increasing your regular (weekly, monthly) financial support to our parish. As good stewards we are called to use our personal and financial resources for the good of the parish in support of our mission and our many ministries. I am asking that you consider making a sacrificial increase in your present level of support. Hopefully, many will be able to do this. Others may not be able to increase their present level of support due to their present financial situation. Whatever you decide, do this with a grateful heart and a desire to make a return to the Lord a portion of the gifts and blessings he has given to you and your loved ones.

**4) ON-LINE GIVING:** Thankfully, we have seen an increase in the amount of households who are now giving on-line. While there are some doing this since they are not ready to return to church at this time due to concerns about Covid 19, there are others who have opted for this means of making their contributions. I invite you to join me and become one of our on-line givers. Giving on-line establishes a regular and consistent level of financial support to St. James. That’s how I give my financial support to the church. Would you please consider doing the same? It would help substantially as it eliminates the necessity of our counters to handle money and checks, which is helpful at this time.

**NOT ABLE TO ARRANGE ON-LINE GIVING AT THIS TIME:** Should your only option at the moment be to continue using paper money, might you be able to use a check to make your contribution?

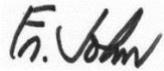
**MONEY SAVING SUGGESTIONS FROM OUR FINANCE COMMITTEE:** I am so grateful for the assistance of Eileen McMahan, our parish bookkeeper, and the members of our Finance Committee for their on-going assistance and good advice. Thanks to Eileen we were able to secure a PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) Loan, which allowed us to cover payroll and utilities over an eight-week period. We are now in the process of applying for the loan to be reclassified as a grant. The Finance Committee has advised me to cut back on all but necessary expenditures for the foreseeable future. Certainly, there are some emergency costs that we have from time to time demanding immediate action, such as, repairs due to storms or wind damage. Thankfully, Tom Galvin, our Facility Manager, has an excellent handle on these

expenditures. Tom has saved us thousands of dollars on several regular expenses through the renegotiation of contracts and agreements with several of our vendors.

**SOME FINAL THOUGHTS:** I am truly grateful for the ten years that I have had the privilege of serving as your pastor. Please God another five! We are a parish with many wonderful and generous people. We can address our present needs with the same generous spirit of the founding members of our parish who made many sacrifices for the good of St. James Parish. In following their example, we truly are, ***“Honoring our Past. . .Building for Our Future.”***

Please join me as we pray for a generous response by all members of St. James Parish to the requests that I am making in this special appeal. Will you do your part? Let me thank you in advance. God bless you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. John". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rev. John M. Derasmo, Pastor