

## ***A Word from our Pastor***

First of all, I am deeply grateful for your continued support of the ministries and activities of our parish. I am also grateful for your financial support especially during these difficult times of economic uncertainty .

Now that our seasonal parishioners as well as our year round parishioners are present I must inform you of the increasingly serious financial situation we are confronted with at this time.

On Nov. 30, 2007, the chairman of our parish finance council addressed you concerning the financial condition of our parish. You were provided with an update and asked to prayerfully consider increasing your offering. Your response was gratifying. I know so many of you gave from your hearts. I commend your generous response. Unfortunately, we still were left with a \$93,000.00 operating deficit which depleted almost all of our savings. The offertory did increase, but so did expenses. Despite the fact that so many of you, because of your love of God and your dedication to our parish, have been so generous and increased your giving, we were still faced with some very alarming realities.

As of last March, 2008, our projected budget deficit became \$276,000.00. The finance council worked very intensely to resolve this problem and after much prayerful deliberation made several recommendations which I accepted.

In order to reduce costs, I had to make some very difficult decisions. The Office of Religious Education and the Office of Youth Ministry were merged into what is now the Office of Faith Formation. This necessitated the dismissal of a long time staff member (the hardest thing I ever had to do!). Also, a part-time position was abolished; two full-time positions were made part-time; staff members hours were reduced (leaving them to do the same work in less time and for less pay!). No staff members (myself, included) received even a modest raise nor did we receive Christmas bonuses. In case you haven't noticed, we do NOT have an assistant pastor (we cannot afford one!). Fr. Kaz returned to Poland last July and will not be replaced. (I am now the only assigned priest at Light of Christ! I am now 64 and I am a limited resource. It is in your best interest to keep me healthy and sane!!!) Our parish staff has performed heroically to bring down costs and to function as efficiently as possible. Because of this we are now facing a budget deficit of \$23,000.00 instead of \$276,000.00. If we are lucky, we will break even at end of the fiscal year.

I promise that I will do my best to eliminate increases. There are, however, expenses over which I have no control. Some examples of these are: property & liability insurance (this fiscal year will cost us almost \$58,000.00!); utilities will probably exceed slightly over \$100,000.00; health care insurance will be in the neighborhood of \$75,000; our employee's pension plan will be \$51,493.00. All of this must be paid! Our tithes to the Diocese will be \$176,033.00. (This is not an option!) However, it is thanks to the Annual Pastoral Appeal that for every dollar you pay directly towards APA is one less dollar we must take from our offertory! As you know, we are part of a larger picture. The APA supports the many ministries of our Diocese. It helps educate our many seminarians; assists the work of Catholic Charities; helps our retired priests, just to name a few of the many good works. Our parishes also benefit greatly from the Diocesan Annual Pastoral Appeal. The support services such as the Legal department, the Construction department, Religious Education and the Youth and Young Adult departments, and more. (Please be generous to this Annual Pastoral Appeal. It really does help a great deal.)

And now it is almost budget time once again and we undoubtedly can expect increases in costs and expenses. As a parish we are faced with many of the same financial problems that you are facing at home. I realize that these are difficult and troublesome times for all of us. Please regard our parish - its plant, its operations, and its many ministries and activities - as you would your home, because it IS!! Light of Christ is our Father's place; our legacy; our family home! It is our responsibility to care for the place where we gather to worship and thank God; to be nourished with the Eucharist and sent on mission to build God's kingdom in this world. It deserves our very best effort! So many of you have been exceedingly generous; so many of you are doing the best you can under some difficult circumstances. This I know. God bless you all for your goodness!

I have asked much of our staff and of you. I have appealed to you before and you have risen to the occasion. And now I am asking you once again. The cost of things will go up, that I can count on. Now I need to know that I can count on you!

Peace and love,



## AROUND THE AREA

- ◆ **Retrouvaille, winner of the Smart Marriages Impact Award and endorsed by Pope Benedict XVI, is a lifeline for marriage.** Retrouvaille helps couples through difficult times in their marriage. Retrouvaille has helped tens of thousands of couples experiencing marital difficulty at all levels, including disillusionment and deep misery. The next program will be held on the weekend of **February 6-8, 2009** at the **W i m a u m a C o n v e n t i o n** Center in Wimauma, FL. For confidential information and to register, call Barry and Faith Peterson at 800-470-2230
- ◆ **Married Couples: When All The Hustle & Bustle Of The Holidays Are Over.....** Don't you and your spouse deserve a beautiful, romantic weekend away together? If you agree then you'll want to attend a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. The next available WWME weekend is March 13-15. For information call (813) 270-7832 or go on-line at [www.wwme.-tampabay.org](http://www.wwme.-tampabay.org).
- ◆ **EWTN pilgrimage** - spiritual & educational journey to St. Bernard's Benedictine Abbey, Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament and Castle. **Dates: March 2-5, 2009.** Cost-\$335.00 - trip Includes: deluxe coach - lodging all meals and more. Call Anne Marie at 847-9060.
- ◆ **ESPIRITU SANTO FASHION SHOW LUNCHEON "HAPPY HEARTS HELPING HOSPICE"** , Sat. Feb. 21st 11AM-3PM. Hospice of the Florida Suncoast will provide fashions from their boutique shop which will be modeled and available for sale. Proceeds go to Hospice. Tickets are \$12 and include lunch. For tickets please contact Cathy Germer at 727-409-4764 or by email at [cgermer@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:cgermer@tampabay.rr.com), The deadline to purchase tickets is Feb. 17th.
- ◆ **Our Lady of Lourdes Men's Retreat Feb. 20-22, 2009 at the Franciscan Center in Tampa. Fr. Jack Vessels, S.J. from New Orleans – Director** The cost for the weekend is \$165 for a single room and \$145 per person for a shared room. To reserve your place, mail or bring your check (made out to O.L.L.) to Our Lady of Lourdes Church 750 San Salvador Dr. Dunedin, FL 34698. Let us know if you need transportation or can give others a ride. For more info call Bill Uber 727-734-7976. **COME AND BE REFRESHED!**
- ◆ **St. Cecelia's Inter-parish Singles** - (for singles age 50+) For more info on meetings call Naomi at 593-3505 or [www.scips.tripod.com](http://www.scips.tripod.com).
- ◆ If you are an adult with limited income and lack access to **prescription drug services**, we invite you to contact us. Our patient advocates will determine if you are eligible for free medications to treat your chronic health conditions. Advocates will work with you to complete application forms and initiate refill requests. This program is sponsored by the **Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Upper Pinellas District Council, and The Health Councils, Inc.** with funding provided by Pinellas County Government. For further information please contact us at 727.461.9598
- ◆ **Zoomers** is the fastest growing 55+. We meet the 3rd Thursday of the Month at 7:00 PM at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Dunedin. Cost \$2.00 Refreshments -Call Catherine @ 734-9696, or Charlene @ 432-5895
- ◆ **"What St. Paul has to tell us about being Good Christians"**- A Day of Reflection with Father Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R. -"Saturday, **March 14, 2009 -10:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.**- Sponsored by: Our Lady of Divine Providence House of Prayer@-711 -\$25.00 Donation per Person (Non-refundable) - Mass of the Day will be celebrated— bring a brown bag lunch—drinks provided-Registration closes on Tuesday, March 10 or when seating capacity is reached. A registration form is required for each registrant. print one from our website: [www.divineprovidence.org](http://www.divineprovidence.org). No registrations accepted at the door. CALL 727-797-7412 for further information. No Registration confirmation will be sent