



ST. ANTHONY
—DE PADUA—
CATHOLIC PARISH

March 1, 2019

Dear St. Anthony de Padua Parishioner,

I cannot believe it, but I have been privileged to be pastor here now for one year. How time has flown by. I am writing at this time to give an update on the status of the parish. As a church we are striving to grow closer to Christ every day, as all of us desire to go to heaven. To help in this regard we have established longer adoration hours, introduced the *myParish* app, learned about St. Anthony de Padua during our Advent Parish Mission, as well as focusing on making the liturgy the best we can. In the months and years ahead, we look forward to more opportunities for growth in our spiritual lives. At this present time, I look forward to our Lenten parish mission, with topics focusing on growth in discipleship. I encourage you to come and even consider inviting your family and friends to attend.

Next, I would like to discuss with you our financial situation at this time as well. There is good news to report, that we are improving, yet we must continue to be prudent and vigilant. As I shared with all of you back in December, we were blessed with a \$140,000 grant from the Mary Cross Tippmann Foundation to help us with much needed capital improvements within the school. Additionally, we are committed to looking at other means of income to help us offset other capital expenses. With the help of our parish finance council, our parish business manager, myself, and of course your commitment, we are seeing strides towards improvement. One such example has been Our Go-For-The-Gold debt reduction plan which has been very successful to date, as we have raised \$40,800 in the past 10 months. But we must continue to be prudent, vigilant, and consistent as we move forward. Thank you for your support and prayers.

Additionally, as we continue to assess our financial situation, we are also committed to long term financial stability. This includes our discernment and investment with one of our key missions of our parish, our parish school. Our school passes on not only knowledge, but a culture of Catholicism that cannot be found within the wider community which no longer looks to faith for guidance. In fact, this current school year, the parish is investing more than \$1,940 per student. Additionally, the parish grants a \$1,300 tuition allowance to families who maintain *Active Parishioner* status. My purpose in sharing this information is for you to know how strongly we believe in our school and assisting families who are a part of our community. As we continue to move forward, we are looking to our continual investment in our school. We are committed to our parish school, but with it not being a financial burden on our parish, or to the detriment of services that can be afforded to help our parish grow closer to God. We are looking at a few changes next school year, which I am confident will help us not only next year, but for many years to come. These changes can cause fear and concern, especially when one desires to look at only the past. We must realize our current situation, but also our great history and continue to build upon that. It is necessary and essential that we look at our present needs and plan accordingly. As Catholics we hear, do not fear, I say this to you as well "Do not fear." I am most confident in the direction of our parish, which includes a wonderful school, with wonderful families and committed teachers to our Catholic Faith. Have we experienced some bumps in the past, and will we have some in the future? It is possible, but we must remain committed to working together as we continue to grow and become the best we can be.

I also ask you to have faith, faith in our parish finance council, faith in our parish school board, and faith in me as we make necessary changes. Currently we are not just looking at an investment in the school,



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but an investment into our whole parish, which includes our buildings, and most importantly with each one of you. It is important that you know that my number one priority as your pastor is to encourage you in the practice of the faith, most especially in attending Holy Mass every Sunday. This command of the Lord is so that we might first and foremost worship Him, receive from the storehouse of His graces, participate in the joyful community of believers, and teach our children by example that God comes before all else.

In the past months we have updated our definition of an active parishioner at St. Anthony de Padua Catholic Parish. This update has an emphasis on being registered in the parish, one whose family attends Holy Mass every Sunday and contributes to the life of the parish in giving of their time, talent, and treasure. Yes, the expectation is every Sunday. What about vacations? Of course, there will be those Sundays missed when you are out of town. However, even when we are out of town, we still are required to attend Holy Mass. Again, my goal is for you and your family to go to Heaven. Fulfilling God's command to honor the Sabbath is paramount to this precept of the Church. To be clear, I am not tracking how much you give, nor is there a minimum amount required. My greatest goal is for you to be a part of the community of faith here at St. Anthony's and so find the path to heaven. That being said, the Lord is clear we ought to give our first fruits to God.

In the months and years ahead, we will begin to implement new programs that will help us as we grow in faith together. We are currently in the process of updating our parish mission statement. I am also excited, as I will begin to recreate a parish pastoral council, which has been lacking since January of 2017. The role of the parish pastoral council is a very important advisory body for our parish and they have given our pastors solid advice over many years. Pastors need their advice and counsel in order to make critical decisions for the future of our parish. Realizing that such missions can only happen through the grace of God, we unite in asking for His grace and His blessing and we commend ourselves and our efforts to the care of the Mother of God, the protection of St. Michael the Archangel, and our patron St. Anthony de Padua.

Thank you again for choosing to be part of the family at St. Anthony's which will not only prepare you well for living in the world but will most importantly guide you on the path to Eternal Salvation. May our Lady keep your families under her protecting mantle and may we all strive to be like our patron, St. Anthony de Padua.

Yours Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Robert Garrow
Pastor