

From the Desk of Fr. Gary
November 11, 2018

Over the past two weeks we have heard about our stewardship of treasure renewal campaign in all three of our communities of St. Joseph, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Our Lady Star of the Sea. Witness speakers have shared what it means to embrace giving, to embrace stewardship as a way of life.

Our hope is that, through the witness of these fellow parishioners, all of us will be inspired to examine our own giving to the parish. Our hope is that we can all take some time to reflect on the gifts God has given us, to thank God for those gifts, and then make a return to the Lord in thanks, through a planned, proportionate and sacrificial gift to the parish.

We are aware that we are conducting this renewal campaign in the midst of a very difficult time in the life of our Church. I have been humbled by the generosity of peoples' pledges, even in the midst of this scandal around sexual abuse and cover up.

Last week Archbishop Sartain, Bishop Elizondo and Bishop Mueggenborg wrote to parish leaders letting us know that along with bishops across the country, they will be dedicating themselves to seven days of intensified prayer and sacrifice, from last Monday, November 5, through today, Sunday, November 11. Their prayer is to ask the Lord to open their hearts to the guidance of the Holy Spirit during the U.S. Bishops' General Assembly which begins tomorrow, November 12, and runs through Wednesday, November 14.

The bishops also asked for our personal prayers for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit would help them to be truly good shepherds in every aspect of their pastoral ministry. The bishops noted the need for this outpouring of the Spirit as they make critical decisions in response to the clergy sexual abuse crisis.

Let us keep the bishops in our prayers as they meet in Washington, D.C., this week. And may we continue to nurture hearts of gratitude for all the Lord has blessed us with, even in the midst of the crimes, and the sin, of clergy sexual abuse and its cover up by bishops.

As I have reflected on this time in the life of our Church, and how I can effectively pastor in the midst of this crisis, I am aware that we need both strong and clear voices about what we will no longer tolerate, and we need to continue to support the good work of our parishes.

We heard from parishioners about their thoughts and feelings regarding the sexual abuse crisis at two meetings on September 30, at St. Joseph, and October 3, at St. Thomas. The notes from those meetings were forwarded to the Archbishop for his prayerful consideration as he prepares for the Bishops' meeting. Those notes are also posted on our respective websites.

But, we have not allowed this crisis to paralyze us. In the midst of this struggle, we continue to celebrate quality liturgies, form children and adults in the faith, and reach out to those who are in need. Parishioners and priests alike must continue to make our voices heard so that our leadership knows that we support concrete steps to hold bishops accountable for their abuse of

power. At the same time, you and I are called to continue support the work of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For those of you who have already made a pledge for your stewardship of treasure this year, thank you! For those who are still reflecting on your gift, I pray that the Lord guide you to making a pledge that brings you peace and joy.

May our Good and Gracious God, who has blessed us so abundantly in Vancouver, Camas, Stevenson, and throughout the Church, continue to guide us on our way.

May God Bless You!

Fr. Gary Lazzeroni