



Church of the Presentation

271 West Saddle River Rd., Upper Saddle River NJ 07458
201-327-1313 www.churchofpresentation.org

October 2009

Dear Parish Family:

I believe that one of my most important tasks as pastor is to report to you annually on the “State of the Parish.”

Last year’s Share the Dream planning process produced some wonderful ideas. The process will continue this year and we’ve already implemented some of your suggestions. We’ve restructured our adult education offerings through our new program, Presentation Café (Catholic Adult Faith Exploration). Msgr. Ed Ciuba, a Scripture scholar, has arrived to live in residence at our parish and we’re already experiencing the benefits of his gift of public speaking with a couple of the Fall courses. Stephen Kass has begun a four-part series on Spirituality in the Workplace and our mission speaker will be here in November presenting “Luke Alive.” We continue to enhance our Family Faith Formation program (our partnership with parents). Parishes are wrestling with the failed C.C.D. models of the past and are looking for better methodologies and pedagogies to pass on our faith in an increasingly secular world.

In addition to Fr. Ed, Denny Foley has joined our staff on a part-time basis as Operations Manager, working with me on many of the issues which arose during the Share the Dream process. Denny headed up this initiative last year and he’s the perfect person to help us see it through. We have prepared a summary of the efforts of the six Share the Dream subcommittees who worked on the ideas and suggestions raised at the Parish Assemblies in March (see the reverse side of the summary financial report). More detailed information is available on the parish website: www.churchofpresentation.org.

Recent bulletin columns of mine have mentioned bathroom renovations, another need which came through loud and clear during the Share the Dream process. Unfortunately, by the time the final estimates and permits were obtained, it was too late to have construction done by the end of August. Due to the volume of activity that occurs during the year, we’re going to wait to renovate the bathrooms until next Summer, when things slow down and the noise and inconvenience won’t impact as many activities and parishioners.

We have upgraded our antiquated phone system and replaced our copiers. This economic climate put us in an advantageous bargaining position with the vendors and fortunately, new technology costs less to operate and maintain than old technology, which will result in cost savings in the years ahead. We also replaced our light bulbs in the church and auditorium with those more environmentally friendly and cost efficient which will help reduce our operating costs.

We have had great feedback on our "Peek at Sunday" weekly email and we will continue to use email together with our bulletin and website to communicate with all of you. If you're not on our distribution list, email communications@churchofpresentation.org if you need to give us an updated email address.

Enclosed with this letter is a summary financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009. All contributions were down from last year, which is an area of concern but not surprising given the current economic conditions. Unfortunately, due to the slippage in collections and the volatility in the stock market, for the first time in years, we incurred a loss.

As is typical for non-profit charitable organizations without manufacturing or inventory costs, employment costs will continue to be Presentation's largest expense, but these have decreased over the past two years. Supporting outreach is our second largest expense, and our financial statements do not even reflect your generosity in supporting the special collections and the Archbishop's Annual Appeal. We continue to co-sponsor St. Paul's Interparochial School in Ramsey, we provide cash gifts to other parishes and a large portion of our outreach expense supplements the time and talent of our many parishioners involved in ministry here. In addition to local and long distance "outreach" we've had to increasingly respond to the need for "inreach," helping many of our own parishioners this past year.

Collections this year continue to decline versus the same period last year, which will certainly cause us problems if this trend continues. Thank you to those who continue to support our parish and I humbly ask that if you are able, please consider increasing your weekly offering by \$5.00 (or your monthly Parish Pay offering by \$20.00), which will go a long way in helping us continue our mission without having to cut back in vital areas of ministry and outreach. Also, please keep Presentation in mind as you plan your Wills. I would invite you to consider a final gift to your parish as good stewards for the next generation.

Presentation doesn't have a history of fundraising (except for renovations and major additions over the years) and we're hoping to change this beginning next month (November 6) with the Night of Broadway Stars. This promises to be a wonderful evening of food, drink and song. Tickets are still available if you're interested. Our 50th anniversary year, 2011, will be here before we know it and we're starting to plan some exciting events to celebrate!

I believe in financial transparency, and to the extent the financial enclosure does not answer any questions you may have, I am always available. We use numbers to quantify our situation. What the numbers don't tell is the energy, spirit and love which exists in our parish community. It is exciting to be here and I look forward to the years ahead. I encourage you to continue to support Presentation, so we can continue to be a parish of the 21st century which serves many and welcomes all.

God bless,



Church of the Presentation “Share the Dream” Update

Following the Share the Dream Assemblies of March 20-22, 2009, six sub-committees composed of a cross-section of parishioners gathered to prayerfully consider the hundreds of suggestions/ideas which were raised. Each sub-committee processed the information and proposed a plan for implementing their recommendations. The following is a brief summary of their efforts. *More specifics of the proposed implementation plans may be found on the parish web site at www.churchofpresentation.org.*

Adult Catechesis

Many parishioners expressed a desire for a greater understanding and knowledge of the Catholic faith in order to deepen their relationship with God. In response, we have restructured our adult education program and have begun offering our new Presentation Café (Catholic Adult Faith Exploration) program addressing such topics as Workplace Spirituality. Future plans include a Luke Scripture study, opportunities for personal spiritual direction and the offering of a modular eight-week “World As Our Neighbor” program.

Family Faith Formation

In response to suggestions for strengthening our Family-based model, our lectionary-based curriculum is including more doctrine and Catholic practices. An advisory group of parents involved in the program is supporting the efforts of the staff involved. Many suggestions called for creating age-specific peer groups. Because of space-constraints in our parish facilities, we attempted unsuccessfully to obtain the necessary classroom space from one of the local schools. While we will continue to find appropriate space for peer gatherings, age-specific break-outs will occur at the November and January family gatherings this year.

Liturgy, Worship and Prayer

While the liturgies at Presentation are diverse and well-received, suggestions were made to foster even more reverence and quiet time for reflection during Mass. To that end, subtle changes have been incorporated including a brief liturgical team prayer before Mass, more pauses for silent prayer during Mass, and the use of soft instrumental music as the reception of the Eucharist comes to an end. The sub-committee has also developed guidance on Mass etiquette that will be communicated to the parish in the near future. Longer term efforts will be aimed at identifying ways to provide parishioners with a better understanding of all aspects of the liturgy as well as strengthening the homilies.

Service

While Presentation is involved in many important outreach ministries beyond our “parish borders” there were numerous suggestions for addressing needs closer to home. Some have already been addressed; we now have ongoing NAMI (National Association Mental Illness) programs, plans for a ministry supporting those dealing with addiction, and support for special needs children and their families. Longer term focus will include ways of reaching out to our homebound and elderly parish community and to those who are struggling financially at this critical time. We will also be examining additional ways to communicate our needs to get more parishioners involved in service at the parish.

Spiritual Growth, Retreats & Small Christian Communities

Many parishioners had expressed a desire for ways to deepen their spirituality. A wide array of opportunities for spiritual growth is available at Presentation and the committee strongly suggested that greater awareness be given to them, especially Cornerstone. For our 50th Anniversary Jubilee celebration in 2011, we will be developing an in-house co-ed retreat (18 years old and above) that will be offered on Thursday evening, Friday evening and Saturday morning several times throughout the year.

Youth & Young Adults

The majority of the suggestions regarding *Youth* concerned enhancements to both the Confirmation and Jr. High programs offered at the parish. As a result significant changes were incorporated into both programs including expanding one-day retreat topics, enhancement of the learning sessions and the offering of more service opportunities. With respect to *Young Adults*, the focus will be on developing a core leadership team, forming SCCs, offering a retreat opportunity and inviting young adults to participate in the 6:30 Liturgy and other ministries.