



ST. MARK Catholic Church

called by Christ to Worship God, to Invite all with love, to Nurture our faith, and to Serve others

October 28, 2024

Dear *ST. MARK* Parishioners,

It was with great joy and excitement that I received the news from Bishop Burbidge asking me to come to *ST. MARK* as Pastor. I promise you, the joy and excitement continues to grow as I meet more and more of you and keep learning about the many good things happening at both our parish and our school. I am so grateful that EVERYONE I have met has been so welcoming and encouraging to me. I feel extremely blessed to have this opportunity to be your pastor as we all continue our journey of faith and seek to grow closer to Christ.

As Pastor, it is my role to lead each of you by ensuring that our liturgical, sacramental, educational, charitable and all programs guide you in your faith life. With this in mind, I ask your help with the Stewardship of our parish through your prayerful consideration of your Time, Talent and Treasure. The 2024 Stewardship Campaign theme is Answering Christ's Call at *ST. MARK*.

At its heart, *stewardship is an act of faith—a way of living that recognizes God's blessings in every part of our lives*. As we prayed in our Psalm response this past Sunday, “The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy” (Psalm 126). By practicing stewardship, each of us is really offering thanks to God for the blessings he has bestowed on us and sharing those blessings with others. When we do this, we are filled with even greater joy! If you were not at St Mark this past Sunday, you can find my homily on the website.

Before looking ahead to the coming year, it is important to look back at last year and be *thankful for our many blessings at ST. MARK*. Of course, I am just the beneficiary of these blessings that you and our amazing Finance Council have shared with me. I am so grateful to Sean Moynihan (Chair) along with all the members of the Finance Council for helping our parish in so many ways.

At the start of Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) on July 1, 2023, *ST. MARK* had an improved financial balance sheet over the prior year as a result of parishioner's sacrificially giving back to our offertory. We finished FY24 on June 30, 2024 with a modest surplus! This surplus is placed in parish savings and contributes to our reserves, that are currently only two months of expenses (the diocese recommends four to six months of reserve!). Just like a family, the parish should have reserves for the unexpected. The FY24 financial report details the FY24 parish finances and can be found on our website.

As we prepared for this new fiscal year (FY25), the Finance Council chose to be conservative in projecting income and expenses. Even with this conservative approach, we are again projecting an overall Church budget of roughly \$3.2M and a deficit, after accounting for restricted capital improvement funds on hand, close to **\$200,000**.

As pastor, it is my role to be honest with you as this is your parish. I am not comfortable projecting a deficit. However, that is where we are. *I am coming to each of you to ask you to prayerfully reflect on*

the blessings God has given you personally and your giving to our parish offertory. Our giving should be sacrificial based on the income of each family. Giving should be prayerfully and privately decided based on the blessings each has received. And from what I have heard from others, offertory then often falls in the range of 2.5% – 5% of income for household giving. Although, I have also met families who practice and follow the 10% tithe.

I truly believe that if each of us is Answering Christ's Call at *ST. MARK* by praying and then responding to this 2024 Stewardship Campaign, discerning what God is asking of each of us, it will lead us to **not** have a deficit at all and hopefully even a surplus with opportunities for further growth for the work of our Lord.

I am so glad that *ST. MARK* is a tithing parish. By putting in to practice this important biblical principle, **we donated \$115,465 to charities serving so many needy people in the community!** Of course, there are many other great things the parish was able to do and celebrate this past year because of your generosity! Some of those highlights:

You celebrated Father Pat's 50th Anniversary of ordination and his retirement, increased Mass attendance, supported parish life in our Five Commissions and *ST. MARK* Catholic School, donated over \$20,000 directly to individuals in need through the Poor Box, and completed significant capital improvement projects:

- Renovated the first-floor restroom enabled by a very generous donation
- Replaced both playgrounds which had become unsafe
- Expanded Memorial Garden niches

Our parish is dependent on the sacrificial giving of all parishioners.

Of course, stewardship is not only about sharing our financial resources but our time and talent as well! *I also would like for each of you to prayerfully consider offering your time and talent to our parish and to the community we serve through our many programs.* Please use this opportunity to consider ways that God is calling you to help others by teaching, serving or ministering. **I need you** and the parish needs you to be able to continue to grow into the community God is calling us to be. And in turn, you will grow in your personal faith journey.

I thank all of you who contributed your time, talent and treasure over the past year to support our Parish. **I am so grateful for your past giving and your future stewardship for the current fiscal year.** I hope to see you this Sunday as we invite everyone to make a commitment to stewardship.

I pray that together we will continue Answering Christ's Call at *ST. MARK*.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Peter Nassetta, YA
Pastor

- You can enroll or adjust your offering by going to **faith.direct/VA823** anytime or Text "**Enroll**" to **571-609-5673**