

Today's psalm invites us to "give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever." We give thanks to God for our faith, for our life, and for the beauty of the world around us.

This weekend I give thanks to God for all of you and the way you share your time, talent and treasure. Earlier this year I made an appeal on behalf of the stewardship council. We needed additional volunteers, especially to bring communion to the sick of the parish. You made a generous response to this and other ministries. I give thanks to God that you are willing to sacrifice your time for your faith.

Today I'm making my annual appeal for you to make a pledge to our weekly collection and to the needs of our diocese.

Before I do that, let me bring you up to date on our building project. Two main activities are underway. Our building committee has met with Steve Obarski, the director of the diocesan Office of Worship, and he helped us think through the arrangement of the pieces in the sanctuary. Then our architect has been finalizing our contract. Dave Malanowski, the diocesan finance officer, signs that contract. The signing was delayed in order to work out some details. Our architect, GLPM, is based in Lawrence, Kansas. We've all been trying to negotiate the number and cost of trips the firm is required to make during the construction period. The diocese wants to make sure we get our money's worth, and we don't want unreasonable demands on the architect. Everyone assures me that the details have now been worked out, and the contract should be signed any day now.

That means we will begin working on the schematic design with GLPM. When the diocesan building commission approves those drawings, we will let the project out to bid.

So far, you have pledged over \$447,000 to the building. We have received over \$176,000 of that pledge to date. Thank you. The more we have on hand the better off we will be when construction begins.

We have other income. In the past few years we have updated our heating and cooling equipment, and we are starting to see some savings. We receive payments from advertisers on the back of our bulletin. Occasionally someone remembers our parish in their will. All this helps. But the most important gift we receive is the one you place in the weekly collection. It pays our bills and offers you opportunities for worship, education, service and friendship.

Bishop Finn is making an annual appeal for our diocese. Your gift to this collection, called Together We Can, pays for Catholic Charities, Campus Ministry, the Diocesan School Office, the Central City School Fund, Parish-Based Ministries and Youth Ministry. Right now our parish is receiving exceptional support from various diocesan offices to help us add to and renovate our church.

I am asking you today to support all of these efforts. Our parish bills are going up. Whatever you give us each week, we could really use an increase this year. Our diocese also needs your help. If you have not given to Together We Can in the past, make this the year you say thanks for all the support we receive.

And please continue to support our building campaign. We will have a very exciting year ahead of us, and I'd like each one of you to feel a part of the work we are doing.

God has been good to us, and when we share our time, our talent and our treasure, we give thanks to the Lord, whose mercy endures forever.