

After the resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven. The Letter to the Hebrews distinguishes heaven from sanctuaries made by human hands. Jesus entered the Jerusalem Temple throughout his life. But at the end he entered the sanctuary of heaven. Our churches are imitations of heaven. So today's scripture says, "Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself." His ascension has prepared for ours. While we wait, we take care of this earth, especially our local sanctuary, and we try to lead our lives in ways that please God.

In your pews is a copy of our current financial report, telling you how we manage our earthly treasure. I'd like to thank all of you for contributing, and our staff and councils for saving and spending wisely.

On one side is the St. Munchin report; St. Aloysius is on the other side. At the top you'll see our income and expenses by categories. The middle column shows the figures for this year to date, and the right column shows the same period last fiscal year. Contributions are up for both churches this year. At St. Al's we actually doubled our income, but both churches received special gifts from a few donors who had an unusually good year. It may be a long time till we see gifts like theirs come in again. The fundraising for St. Munchin shows over \$15,000 for last year's purchase of new heating and air conditioning in the church. This year's gifts are much less because we did not have similar needs. The religious education income is up so high this year because we received a \$7000 grant from the diocese to help our catechumenate and religious formation.

Under expenses, the biggest difference is the last item, extraordinary expenses. This year we hired GLPM architects to plan improvements to our buildings. We paid them \$17,000 for a master plan that is almost ready. We paid all those fees without dipping into savings and while holding to the budget in the midst of rising costs. You also made outstanding gifts to two African priests. And our savings still grew over 10% this year. We now have \$110,000 on deposit with the diocese.

At St. Al's, the increased gifts and expenses are primarily related to building improvements. We beautified the interior space and added handicap accessibility, a restroom and a reconciliation room. We spent over \$40,000, and we still have \$25,000 on deposit.

This paper shows how God blesses those who give. And I hope each of you has experienced this in your own lives.

Next year our costs will rise again, and we cannot count on some of the unusual gifts that made this past year so strong. You'll be receiving a letter from me this week asking you to pledge your annual gift to the parish. If you can increase your gift, it will help us meet expenses. You'll receive one pledge card from us and one from Bishop Boland. Please fill them both out and bring them with you to church next weekend. In faith, let us build this temple strong, that we might enter the sanctuary of heaven where Christ, ascended, sits at the right hand of the Father.