

Today's first reading from Acts of the Apostles describes the church at peace. People honored God by the way they lived. They were committed to their faith, and they donated their time and possessions. Some members were being persecuted for their beliefs, but the community still grew in numbers.

In many ways, the Catholic churches housed at Cameron and Maysville are also at peace. People honor God by the way they live; they are committed to their faith, and they donate their time and possessions. New members have joined both our churches.

As we near the end of this fiscal year, I would like to thank all of you for the contributions you've made to our church and for the thousands of hours you volunteer. With your help, we've developed our religious instruction and our worship. Our buildings are kept up and kept clean. We're paying our bills, and we're putting some money away for future improvements.

Several months ago I asked you to help pay for a new air conditioner and heater for the church. They are being installed this week, thanks to your generosity.

At St. Aloysius Church our dream is to redo the interior and to add an accessibility ramp and restroom. At St. Munchin we are hiring an architectural firm to do a feasibility study of our buildings and to develop a master plan for their future. Some day we will have a capital campaign for our buildings, but not today.

My appeal to you this weekend concerns the weekly collection. Each fiscal year our bills go up just as yours do. This year I'd like to show better appreciation for our staff. For example, Tammy works overtime almost every week. She volunteers those extra hours, but we really should pay her for her work. I'd also like to continue improving the office with better internet access and finally get a parish website hooked up.

Bishop Boland recommends that we give 5% of our income to the parish and 1% to the diocese. In this week's mail you'll receive pledge cards for both these purposes. We are including extra pledge cards for young people who have jobs. I encourage every wage earner to develop the habit of giving. Your pledge tells us how much you plan to give this year. It helps us with our budget, it sets a goal for your annual giving, and it shows God you are willing to share. No matter how small or large your gift, God will take it from there.

Your pledge is not a contract. If you fall behind, we don't send out the police. It's a statement of intent; it helps us all plan for the year.

A few members have asked if they can contribute electronically. Instead of writing a check for the envelope, they'd like an automatic debit from their bank to ours. We can do that now; but if you prefer the envelope system, use it.

Thank you again for all that you give. God has blessed our community with faith, service and peace. You will receive pledge cards in the mail this week. Let's show our gratitude by placing them in the basket next week. Together we can make our community grow in peace.