

I'd like to thank everyone who has attended receptions so far in our Gift of Faith campaign. Your participation shows your interest and your questions have helped us all understand the campaign. Gift of Faith has three goals: it will reduce our parish debt, continue improvements to our building, and contribute to the diocesan campaign. This campaign will provide funds each year to renovate our school and parish facilities, and that is a priority. We have already received several advance pledges, and I have good news. This campaign is off to a stronger start than our past efforts. The first 25 pledges we received total over \$243,000. That's 20% of the goal for the whole parish. So thank you, everyone for your generous support.

If you have not yet attended a reception you have two more chances, and I'd like you to come even if you have not RSVP'd. One will be tomorrow (today) after the 10:30 mass. The other is Monday night at 7. Both will be in the gathering area of the church. When you come to a reception you'll receive your campaign brochure, you'll hear more about the goals of the campaign, and you'll receive your pledge card. You can ask questions, and most importantly you can meet a lot of other people here at church. I am asking volunteers to pay a home visit to anyone who cannot come to a reception, so you can save us some effort if you come for one of these last chances. Volunteers, by the way, your first meeting will be this Tuesday night at 7. Thank you for your help.

We're not asking everyone to pledge the same amount, but we are asking everyone to pledge the same sacrifice. We have people who are giving their tithe and more. I do ask you to consider prayerfully what you can offer the church, and make it a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for all that you've received. As St. James tells us today, faith without works is dead. If we say we have faith, we better do something with it.

One thing to keep in mind when you make your pledge is that the annual diocesan campaign is part of this pledge this year. Usually I come to you in November and ask you for 1% of your income toward the diocesan drive called "Together We CAN." This year Bishop Boland is giving us November off, with the understanding that you can put that pledge into this campaign.

Pledges are not legally binding. In fact, let me formally announce that if you still owe on the pledge you made for the building fund three years ago, thank you for trying, thank you for all that you gave us in those blue envelopes, but that pledge is over. I'm not coming back after you for those contributions. After all, this is the jubilee year. For those of you who fulfilled your pledge and gave even more, there aren't enough words to thank you, and you should be glad because if there were we'd be here a very long time. This pledge is new. Let's start it off with a new sense of commitment.

Next weekend is pledge weekend. Please bring your pledge cards to church with you next weekend. If you've sent it in already, that's great. Thank you. Next weekend as a sign of our sacrifice we'll pause at mass long enough to bring our cards forward. In the meantime, pray about it, talk about it, come to the receptions, please, and together we'll thank God for the blessings we have received.