

Can you believe that in about two weeks I will mark my first anniversary as pastor of St. Regis parish? In some ways it doesn't seem possible.

Recently I ran into Fr. David Brinkmoeller, who works for a national office for priests. I see him about once a year. He said to me, "I hear you've become a pastor." I said, "That's right." He asked, "How's it going?" I said, "It's wonderful. I enjoy the work, we have an active parish, a talented staff, the people seem happy, and they give very well. It's Camelot," I told him. He said, "All too often I hear just the opposite from priests. You be thankful for what you have."

And I am. I want to thank all of you for contributing to our parish. You have volunteered your time, you have prayed for one another, you have welcomed new members, and you have freely given us the money we need to do our work in the Lord.

You know the joy of giving. It's a great mystery--giving more and having less makes us feel good. We expect that having more will make us feel secure, but we know that giving more makes us feel free. When we give our time, when we give our talents, when we give our treasure, we receive the reward of peace.

This talk is a little difficult to pull off because the more I suggest that you have less, the more you'll wonder why I want more. Basically there are two reasons; one is what your contributions do for us; the other is what they do for you.

What do your contributions do for us? They employ a team of people whose work it is to proclaim the Gospel. Our school forms our children; our Outreach program comforts the lonely; our counselor directs the confused.\* Through the Parish Forums this year you have told me you want more attention on our youth. Your contributions this year have now made it possible for us to hire another minister and to expand our service to young people. Your donations also help our community. We provide food for the hungry, clothing for the poor, and shelter for the homeless.

But your contributions also work for you. Many of you will receive the service of our staff this coming year. But above all, your pledge will assure you that you share in our work. When we're at work, it's you at work through us.

If you currently do not pledge with us, I urge you to do so this year. We have much work ahead of us; there's so much more we can do. Here in Camelot we have exciting years ahead, and we're anxious to have you share them as part of the family.

Next Sunday is pledge Sunday for our parish. You should receive your card in this week's mail. Please fill it out and bring it with you next week. Next month you'll receive a pledge card for the diocese--the United Catholic Stewardship Appeal--but we ask you to make your parish pledge next week.

The man born blind in today's Gospel symbolizes coming to faith. Those who have not heard the Gospel are like the blind, until they receive the light of Christ. My brothers and sisters if we do not live the Gospel we have heard, if we do not put our faith into action, we are like people who have sight, but shut their eyes. I ask you to prayerfully consider your pledge for next week. Open your eyes to the light of Christ. Giving will bring you more than you give away. Giving will bring you peace.

L5 Regis 24-25.iii.90

*this is the 3rd year we're asking you for a specific 12% increase in your pledge to help us offer a just wage for our workers, especially the teachers in our school.*