

Dear friends,

For these eleven years that I have been your pastor much of my energy has been devoted to the financial stability of our parish. Many have worked hard along with me to do this. On the whole we have been successful. Our income has risen over the years, we have begun to meet our AAA assessment without dipping into our savings and we are using standard accounting procedures so that we have an accurate picture of our financial situation. This last item has provided transparency for all to see how our (your) monies are allocated and spent. While we have done better we have always just (barely) stayed within budget. Now, however, because of the national economic downturn and the increased cost of everything we are about to hit a brick wall.

Our income for the fiscal year 2009/2010 has remained almost level with the previous fiscal year. On one hand that is good but on the other it is not because costs have risen dramatically (especially in the area of health care, pensions and insurance). We now find ourselves at a point where we will have to cut \$112,000 from the 2010/2011 budget. We have gone through the budget and cut as much discretionary spending from the budget as possible. What is then left is personnel.

Beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>, everyone who works in the rectory will have his/her hours reduced or his/ her workload increased and perhaps soon we will not be able to afford two priests. We will have to close the rectory office every other Friday and reduce the office hours when it will be open to parishioners. The office will no longer be open in the evenings. Music will be eliminated at least at one Sunday Mass. We will have to cut back on janitorial services for the church and convent. The landscaping around the church will be cut back to twice per month. We will order fewer missalettes. The cost of votive candles will increase. When either priest goes on vacation we will adjust the Mass schedule because we will not be able to afford to pay an extra *priest to come in to help us*.

These cut backs are necessary if we are to save the parish from financial failure. Over the next several years it will only get worse. You may not know that only about 500 families (out of 2000) regularly support the parish in a consistent and ongoing way. If every family committed one hour's salary per week (combined income) to the parish we would be able to meet all our obligations and meet the needs of all our parishioners. This amount represents 2.5% of a family's total income. We have never asked for a tithe (10%) as some Christian denominations do!

The parish is called upon for so many things—above all the sacraments. Baptisms, weddings and funerals are celebrated here with great frequency. We prepare our children for the Eucharist and Confirmation. There are regular visits to the sick and shut ins. Without the support staff who work arduously behind the scenes the quality and timeliness of these ministries is gravely threatened. How

would you like to be told that your loved ones funeral will have to be postponed because there is no priest to celebrate it or staff to arrange it? This would be most disconcerting. . People come by for Mass cards and sacramental records, for a spontaneous confession or seeking pastoral counseling. We feed the hungry at our door and seek shelter for the homeless. We do not limit services only to those who support the parish financially but to all in need.

I know full well that the vast majority of our parishioners have been hit by the economic tsunami of these past couple of years. I know several of you have had to cut back on your contributions to the parish because of this crisis but I also know that many have not even stepped up to the plate to make a worthy commitment to the cause. I am asking you to make that **minimum** commitment of one hour's salary per week. This is the gift back to God for all he has done for you. There is no outside rescue plan, bail out or stimulus package for Our Lady of Loretto parish. Our future is all in your hands.

Sincerely yours in the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. William H. McCain, STL", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. William H. McCain, STL

Pastor