



St. Cecilia Roman Catholic Church

St. Cecilia's Church
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Third Stewardship Message - September 17, 2006

Last week we learned about the "Stewardship of Treasure Program" being launched here at Saint Cecilia's. Today I want to share with you first, details on why the program is being conducted and second, what each of us is going to be asked to do.

To begin with, I'd like us to reflect a little bit on just what is Saint Cecilia's Parish

Is Saint Cecilia's:

- Our Church or Parish Center buildings?
- Our Pastor – Father McKenna?
- Our liturgies?
- Our many committees and activities?

NO – I firmly believe it isn't any one of these, but rather, it's US as a FAMILY, a small piece of God's greater family:

- US attending Mass and worshipping.
- US praying, studying and learning.
- US working together – on dozens of committees and social events like our Fun Fair.
- US sharing our joys and sorrows, US being a warm and welcoming community.

We are a FAMILY and when I say I belong to Saint Cecilia's, I'm saying that I'm part of the Saint Cecilia family.

As a family member, I'm faced with responsibilities including doing my fair share to help our Parish family survive and succeed. I commit to share my SELF with our family – my

TIME, my TALENT and my TREASURE.



Let's talk a little bit about our Saint Cecilia family's need for Treasure. This past year ended June 30, 2006, our collections and operating income were about \$138,000 below our operating expenses. It was only because of a large unexpected bequest that we balanced income and expenses. Large bequests are rare and can't be counted on. Today our cash reserves are at long-term lows. Or, as Paul Mura said last week, we've lost our cushion (not our Cushing).

Since July, we've been operating without replacing Sister Cathy and we've been asking other staff and volunteers to pick up her duties. In addition, we've been cutting expenses in every area possible. Meanwhile, as you know, utility and other costs are rising.

We can't count on unusual bequests to pay our normal expenses. Despite all these cost-cutting efforts, our Finance Council estimates we still have a need for about \$95,000 additional giving to balance this year's reduced budget. That's about a 25% increase in our weekly giving.

We have about 900 people attending Mass each Sunday at Saint Cecilia's. That's probably about 700

families. To balance our bare-bones budget, we need to average at least another \$2.50 per family each week or about \$130 more each year.

As good family members, we have a duty to step forward and commit to help pay the expenses that make us who we are – an active, welcoming, friendly parish with members who care about each other. If we don't, who knows how long Saint Cecilia's will be able to survive as one of the most active parishes in Irondequoit?

What am I going to be asked to do? As Paul and Ross said last week, I'm not going to ask you for a commitment today. That will come next week on Commitment Weekend. For today, let's take a look at the handout we each received at the door before Mass. It has some Questions & Answers and a table offering a Guideline To Giving.

Let's review some of the questions you may have.

Who will be asked to support this appeal? - Every member of our Parish

We plan to ask each member of our parish family to consider making a significant increase in their regular support for our parish. We hope each parishioner will play a conscientious role in shaping the future of St. Cecilia Parish.

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How much should I increase my offering by? - An amount that makes me feel good.

Only you can decide what is appropriate for you and your family. A lasting and meaningful increase by all of the faithful at St. Cecilia Parish will make a tremendous impact on our parish.

What happens if I miss Mass and am unable to bring my offering? - I should be sure and "Make It Up" because our parish is counting on it.

The church depends upon the consistent, regular offerings of all its members. If you are unable to attend Mass, it would be very helpful if you could "make-up" your offering at the next Mass that you are able to attend.

What if I cannot increase my offering at this time? - Just let Father know.

While it is our hope that this appeal will have a significant, positive impact on our offertory, I am particularly interested in hearing from 100% of our parish. Not everyone is in a position to increase their support. However, everyone can respond to the appeal. Perhaps there is something that St. Cecilia Parish can do to assist you and your family. I ask everyone to pray for the success of this appeal.

When should I start contributing at my new level? - ASAP

Please start contributing at your new level immediately. Please try and maintain this new amount as your regular giving level each time you make an offering.

Looking quickly at the "Guideline to Giving" table, we see suggested new giving levels depending on where each of us is today. For example, the table suggests that a \$5

weekly donor consider a new Giving Level between \$8 and \$10. The suggestion for a \$10 weekly donor is from \$14 to \$17. We realize that our some of our parishioners can do more and others can not. We just ask that you do as much as you can to help keep Saint Cecilia's parish afloat.

In the next several days, we will each receive a letter from Father McKenna asking that we search within ourselves, pray and come to Mass next week prepared to complete an intention card committing ourselves to a new level of giving to our Saint Cecilia family.

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