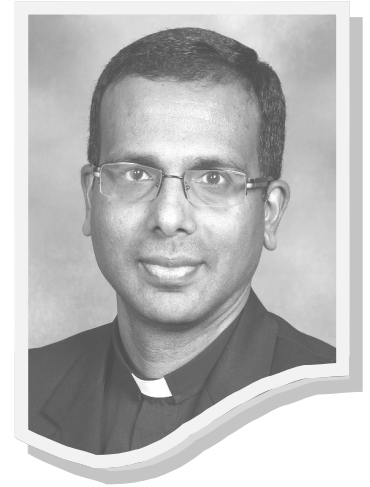




## From the Pastor



### Mortgage and Beyond

**I**t was about 18 months ago when the parish decided to initiate a debt elimination campaign. Now I want to thank you for your generous support—for we have achieved our objective! That's right! We have raised sufficient funds to pay off the debt. This is an amazing example of what happens when we are prepared to make a little sacrifice, and what God does when we do our share. He surprised us every step of the way.

**We plan to have the mortgage burning ceremony next Saturday, March 30th, after the 5 p.m. Mass, which will be celebrated by Bishop Liam Cary, and followed by a reception in the narthex.**

St. Francis Parish borrowed \$4.1 million in 2009 for the construction of the new 27th Street Church. When I arrived in July of 2016, \$1 million of that had been paid off. When we started the debt retirement campaign 18 months ago, we still owed \$2.6 million. Your generosity has now made the debt history. So, we are not accepting any more gifts for this purpose.

Now that the debt is paid off, we can move on to achieve the rest of the vision that I had laid out 18 months ago at the beginning of our campaign. Part of the vision has been achieved already. Paying off the debt was not the vision, but it was the key step to achieve our vision. We need a Director for the Youth and Young Adult Ministries, and we are in the process of hiring someone to fill this position. In addition, I would like to fill the position for an Hispanic Minister next year. We are also pursuing the possibility of a second access to the 27th Street facility. The heating system in the old part of the this facility needs an upgrade, and we are compiling a list of things that need to be done to renovate the Historic Church, which is estimated to cost about \$400–500K. We also need a rectory at the 27th Street Church, which would get us a step closer to becoming two parishes. All these are possible in the next three years—now that the debt is behind us.

We are a Catholic Community with a Parish and a School, and our Mission is to evangelize and educate. Part of the vision was to better support our school. I would like to see at least 200 kids in our St. Francis Catholic School in the next three years. In order to facilitate that, I would like to build up a scholarship fund for \$500K in the next three years, which would be managed by the Church. I believe that no Catholic student should go without a Catholic education for financial reasons. A Catholic school education is the best way of transmitting our Faith to the young and evangelizing the entire family. After having seen what your generosity and God's blessings have done, I have no doubt in my mind that God will beat our expectations again, and we will achieve our vision.

**THANK YOU**, once again, for being part of our incredible success story in making the campaign such an astonishing success. You are a huge blessing to St. Francis Parish!

—Fr. Jose Thomas Mudakodiyil