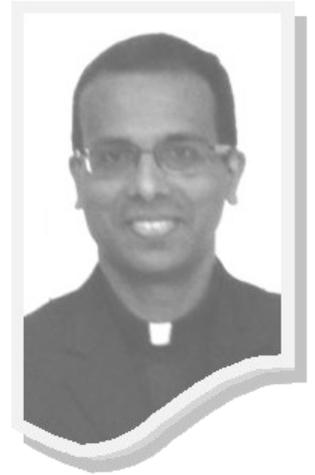




From the Pastor



Blessings Received . . . Blessings Given: Part I

Jesus repeatedly reminds us in the Bible that we are stewards of God's blessings. Stewardship is a way of life that brings God into the front and center of our daily living. It is a way of living each day in gratitude for all the blessings that God has given to us. The goal of our life is holiness, and stewardship is the practical way to get there. God has called us to build His kingdom here on earth. He has given us gifts of time, talent, and treasure to help us in that work. A good steward is **Grateful, Responsible, Generous, and Returns with increase**. It is our responsibility to show our gratitude to God for these gifts by giving back to Him the "first fruits."

We kicked off the stewardship of treasure drive last weekend. "**Blessings Received . . . Blessings Given**" is the theme of the 2019 Stewardship Drive. The financial budget is being prepared for the coming year, and this stewardship drive will help us to plan and allocate the finances needed for various ministries and various maintenance projects to continue our mission to proclaim the gospel. You have been very generous with the material resources God has blessed you with. Your response to the last stewardship of treasure drive, "Funding the Future, Fulfilling the Past," was very encouraging. We were able to do what we planned and more because of your generosity. We have paid off \$2.2 million of our debt during the 12 months. That alone has saved us \$1.2 million in interest over the next 12 years. If not earlier, I am hoping that we can pay off the remainder of the debt (\$370,000) by the 10th Anniversary of the new (27th Street) Church, which is August 2019.

We hoped to have the nuns teaching in our school in the next three to five years. But God surprised us. They are here already. What a blessing! Enrollment in our school is up 22% this school year. This is greatly because the Church is now paying part of the maintenance cost, which amounts to \$60,000, that the school now has to provide scholarships. This is the partial fulfillment of the vision for the school. Achieving the full vision involves the Church stepping up to pay the full maintenance cost of the school, which is another \$60,000, once we pay off the debt and starting next school year. I would like to see 200 students in our school in the next three years. I am very confident that we will get there. God has always beaten our goals. This year my goal was 140 students. But He beat that again. We have 142 students this year! I'd like to see the Church to be the second home for all—especially for our children and our youth.

In the coming weeks, too, you will be hearing and reading more about stewardship that will enable you to pray and determine your sacrifice. When you receive the stewardship packet in the mail, please take time to read it, and make your commitment. Then bring it to Church on the "First Fruits" weekend, which is **November 17–18**, and place it in the offertory—or mail it to the Parish Office so that we can continue our mission to evangelize and catechize. If you do not receive a package in the mail next week, we probably do not have your correct address, or you are not registered. In any case, we will have stewardship packets available in the pews and in the narthex of both Churches. God wants us to share His blessings. Kindly say the stewardship prayer at home every day. "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind" (Hebrew 13:16).

—Fr. Jose Thomas