

**SAINT BARTHOLOMEW PARISH
NEEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**



**Annual Report
2020**

26 October 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I pray this finds you well. These past months have been a trial for everyone, but we find consolation in the truth of Jesus' promise to remain with us until the end of the age (see Mt 28:20). In these days of pandemic, unprecedented in our lifetimes, I wanted to share with you a bit about how our parish is doing. Please know of my continued prayers for all of you.

Fr. Derek

ST. BARTHOLOMEW PARISH AND THE PANDEMIC

While public Masses had to be discontinued in March on account of the stay-at-home order from the Commonwealth, St. Bartholomew's continued to function and serve as a place of prayer. The Tuesday night Eucharistic Adoration that had begun with Lent continued even into the Easter season, when public Masses began again. The church building was also open each morning to be available for private prayer. Fr. Derek was also available for the Sacrament of Penance for those wishing to celebrate it. Some other ways in which the parish sought to keep everyone connected included:

- Sunday Mass being live streamed on our Facebook page from the chapel in the rectory. Through the wonders of technology, Antonia was able to provide music from her home to augment the celebration and provide some consoling melodies.
- A weekly email blast was begun in order to provide information and encouragement to our parishioners in these uncharted waters.
- The Parish Pastoral Council tried to phone as many parishioners as possible to check in on them and assess any needs, particularly for the elderly and those who were alone.
- At the initiation of some parishioners a ministry was begun to the parents of our youth. The "Parent Happy Hour" meeting by way of Zoom was begun as a point of connection for parents and has blossomed to include guest speakers and has invited parents to join in charitable projects such as sandwich making for the homeless.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION / FAITH FORMATION

We are blessed, in our parish, to have some wonderful people who step forward each year to serve as catechists in our Religious Education program. This service is so important to our parish in general but to our youth especially. The witness of our catechists to the importance of the faith in their lives is essential to helping the young people come to a better understanding of the importance of going deeper into the relationship Jesus desires to have with each one of us. Under the capable leadership and organization of Jen, Maryellen and Andrea, our religious education program is excellent.

Formal, in-person religious education classes, however, came to an abrupt end with the stay-at-home order in the spring, though some of our teachers were able to touch base with the students at certain times. As we moved deeper into Lent and toward Easter we were able to make some at-home activities and resources available to everyone by way of the website and email. This helped to keep our students connected to the parish and to the faith. Thanks to an arrangement with the Archdiocese, these resources included access to movies, videos, audio and books on the "Formed" platform (www.formed.org).

Currently our religious education program is using a sort of “hybrid” model where the bulk of the learning is going on at the home with some classes offered by way of Zoom meetings to check in on how the home learning is going. There are a few “in person” learning opportunities such as teaching Masses as well. Perhaps one blessing to come out of our current circumstances is that the need to have part of our program done at home this year serves to highlight the reality that the primary place for learning about our faith is intended to be in the home. At the very beginning of the rite of Baptism, before anything else happens, the priest or deacon addresses the parents and godparents and asks them about their resolve to pass on the faith of the Church to the child being baptized. The rite continues only after they have acknowledged that. In fact, a religious education program is meant to augment and assist the learning of the faith that happens at home and to prepare the young people more specifically for the sacraments they will be receiving, especially Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

The youth, however, are not the only ones benefiting from our faith formation program. Thanks to a generous gift by a parishioner specifically for the purposes of adult faith formation, we were able to team up last fall with the Evangelization Committee from Saint Joseph’s Parish to offer a Bible study program in Ward Hall. The program, *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible*, from Ascension Press included videos to be watched, study to be done at home and small group discussions. Participants came from as far away as Walpole. In spite of the prohibition against in-person gatherings right now, another adult Bible study is underway focusing on the Book of Revelation. This topic was chosen because of the eucharistic themes that can be found in the book highlight the importance of the Eucharist for us as the Archdiocese of Boston observes a “Year of the Eucharist.” Thanks to the technology of Zoom, the videos can be watched together, and small group discussions continue to take place in breakout rooms.

WORSHIP / SACRAMENTS

Public Mass at St. Bartholomew resumed on May 25th, but in a manner much different than any of us were used to. While we are currently permitted to operate at 40% capacity, when social distancing protocols are put into place (seating every third pew), the real capacity is much lower. Still, it has been a great joy to welcome back some familiar faces and, at the same time, greet some new faces as well. Knowing that, in our current circumstances, many are not able to return to Masses personally, or may not feel comfortable doing so right now, we continue to live stream our 9:45 Mass on our Facebook page each weekend. This is accessible through our website. The video of the Mass remains on the Facebook for later viewing as well. We have also found new opportunities for parishioners to volunteer since the church needs to be cleaned and sanitized after each Mass, and we have people checking people in and helping them find seats at each Mass (We ask people to register for Mass ahead of time.).

In June we were given the green light by the Archdiocese to celebrate the Sacraments that had to be postponed on account of the stay-at-home order. We had a wonderful celebration of First Holy Communion for our seven second graders in the Religious Education Program. Approximately one hundred young people received the Sacrament of Confirmation in eight different celebrations. The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), which is normally celebrated at the Easter Vigil, was celebrated at a Sunday Mass when we welcomed two people into full communion with the Church.

Sadly, during these days, we cannot have choral singing or congregational singing during our Masses, but our wonderful cantors are keeping us in tune during this time. I’m happy to report that through the technology of Zoom both the Adult Choir and the Youth Choir are

remaining connected through virtual rehearsals and are looking forward to the day they can return. The Youth Choir has had some “virtual performances” of songs posted on our Facebook page, as has our cantor, Danielle. Back in May, Antonia and Charlie put together a wonderful concert for us by way of Zoom in which they both sang and played from their own homes and even led some sing-a-longs. We are looking forward to having our annual Advent Concert by way of live stream on December 6th.

PHYSICAL PLANT

While recent years have seen some significant issues addressed such as new signs for the parish property or new doors for the Church, this past year did not see any major projects. That being said, I would remind you that, with the age of our buildings, there are bound to be surprises. After one of our Confirmation celebrations this summer, for example, I came back to the rectory to find my office had been flooded by the rains that had fallen. Thankfully, it was not a roof issue but an aged, blocked pipe that runs through the walls that had cracked from the pressure of the rain draining from the roof. One significant expense, however, that we have incurred recently is for a new carillon (bell) system which will hopefully be installed soon. The one we had was so old that it was beyond repair.

My approach to the physical plant has been, and continues to be, to try to avoid any major projects since we are scheduled to form a collaborative with Saint Joseph’s Parish in the coming years. When that happens, it will be for the pastor to assess the needs of the two parishes and determine how the resources, including the physical plant, will be best used.

PARISH FINANCIAL STATUS

Financially, I’m happy to report that St. Bartholomew’s Parish is very sound. This past year St. Bart’s saw a small surplus in our net operating income. The primary source of our operating income is the weekly offertory collection and the Grand Annual Appeal. While many parishes saw a significant decrease in offertory funds during the stay-at-home order, ours dipped for a couple of weeks and then recovered. Many of our parishioners either mailed in their donations, dropped them off at the rectory, or began or continued the use of on-line giving. Some people also gave some extra gifts to the parish at that time. I am grateful to the people of the parish for their continued support.

The cost of the carillon system that was mentioned above is approximately \$12,000. Fortunately, we had already replaced our speakers on the roof last year, so the cost wasn’t more. To pay for this we used one of our accounts at the Archdiocese which is specifically for local parish needs. The funds in this account are rebates from the Archdiocese’s *Promise for Tomorrow* campaign from the Jubilee Year 2000.

We are quite comfortable with the amount of money we have in the parish’s accounts at the Archdiocese which you can see from the accompanying page. Much of the money here is from the sales of some pieces of property a number of years ago we have sufficient savings in our accounts at the Archdiocese of Boston. These funds, I’m told, were going to be used some years ago to build a new parish center, but it didn’t happen for various reasons.

While we have sufficient funds our savings accounts, we should be cautious about relying on these for operating expenses. As these funds were primarily sourced through property sales, it seems they are best suited for use for the physical plant, especially as we anticipate any needs of the coming collaborative. The normal source of a church’s operating income is the weekly offertory and other appeals such as the Grand Annual.

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW PARISH - FY21 Grand Annual

Parish Financial Summary

FY21 Budget (7/1/20 → 6/30/21) | FY20 Actuals, Budget, Variances (7/1/19 → 6/30/20)

	FY21 BUDGET	FY20 ACTUAL	FY20 BUDGET	FY20 VARIANCE	
TOTAL INCOME →	598,861	600,074	630,896	(30,822)	ITEMS TO NOTE
TOTAL EXPENSES →	591,024	595,987	638,187	(42,199)	
NET INCOME →	7,837	4,087	(7,291)	11,378	

INCOME

Offertory	297,820	304,001	314,850	(10,849)	<p>FY20 Actuals vs. FY20 Budget, experienced the below significant variances:</p> <p><u>INCOME ABOVE BUDGET in...</u> 1,688 - Grand Annual 6,219 - Sacramental 5,011 - Interest & Dividends</p> <p><u>INCOME UNDER BUDGET in...</u> (10,849) - Offertory (4,294) - Catholic Appeal Rebate (4,600) - Gifts & Bequests (8,261) - Other Donations (13,837) - Market Gain & Loss</p>
Grand Annual	101,000	101,688	100,000	1,688	
Catholic Appeal Rebate	32,320	29,006	33,300	(4,294)	
Gifts & Bequests	20,000	20,400	25,000	(4,600)	
Religious Education	25,770	22,790	23,420	(630)	
Interest, Dividends, Market	51,725	20,474	29,300	(8,826)	
Lease/Rental Income	47,026	47,026	47,026	-	
Other Income	22,700	54,134	57,275	(3,141)	
Parish Clubs	500	555	725	(170)	
Total Income	598,861	600,074	630,896	(30,822)	

OPERATING EXPENSE

Salaries & Benefits	365,052	367,895	386,700	(18,804)	<p>FY20 Actuals vs. FY20 Budget, experienced the below significant variances:</p> <p><u>EXPENSES ABOVE BUDGET in...</u> 2,590 - Buildings & Grounds</p> <p><u>EXPENSES UNDER BUDGET in...</u> (18,804) - Salaries & Benefits (6,994) - Pastoral & Liturgical (15,621) - Extraordinary Improvements (2,808) - Other Misc Expenses</p>
Office/Administration	30,968	34,528	35,642	(1,113)	
Rectory Building/Grounds	70,039	77,510	74,920	2,590	
Pastoral/Liturgical	32,670	28,811	35,805	(6,994)	
Tax - Central Ministry/Sch	47,390	46,635	45,300	1,335	
Parish Clubs	480	380	1,165	(785)	
Extraordinary Maint/Improve	40,000	34,409	50,030	(15,621)	
Other Misc.	4,425	5,817	8,625	(2,808)	
Total Expense	591,024	595,987	638,187	(42,199)	

YEAR END

June 30, 2020

CASH ASSETS

Savings & Checking	152,992
RCAB Depository Accounts	1,410,994
RCAB Common Investment Fund	256,345
Total Cash Assets	1,820,332

Although the current COVID-19 pandemic was unexpected, the generosity of St. Bartholomew's parishioners was not. Through their own economic struggles, they counted the parish as their own family and ensured the Church would not suffer financial hardship. Through this care and concern, we were able to avoid the need for government loans and prevent the need to furlough staff.

As compared to the **FY20 budget**, the **FY20 actual** income was (\$30,822) less than anticipated, and the actual expenses were (\$42,199) less than budgeted items, leaving us with a positive net income of \$4,087 for FY20.