

St. John Chrysostom Parish

West Roxbury, Massachusetts

Annual Parish Report, 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I sit down to begin to write this report, I have just come from celebrating Mass on the Feast of the Vietnamese Martyrs, thousands of whom gave their lives for the faith. The gospel reading this morning was about the poor widow (Luke 21:1-4) who put two coins in the temple collection. Yet, Jesus said, she gave more than all the others because she gave away everything she had.

In my homily, I reflected on the nature of martyrdom. I said that this is a mystery which can only be understood as a humble expression of love - the love of the poor widow - the gift of oneself without counting the cost. The martyr is a faithful "witness" to Christ's love. Having come to know the love of Christ, such a witness responds to that love not by imposing himself or herself, but by humbly offering himself or herself as a gift, as Christ did. This self-gift becomes our measure of faithfulness: Do we give everything we have in love to and for the Lord? Not for the approval of others, but for love of the Lord? For some, it will be the big self-gift; for others, it will be the widow's few pennies.

I include these thoughts here because, in reflecting on this mystery, I realize how grateful we all must be for the loving self-gift of those who sustain the life of our families, our parish, and our Church; grateful for so many who give of themselves in a true daily "martyrdom" without counting the cost, without imposing themselves, without demanding praise, but simply and beautifully as witnesses to the Lord's love.

And here, as the third anniversary of my pastorate at St. John Chrysostom Parish arrives, I, too, must express my grateful thanks. Thanks to God, to Christ the faithful one, to the Spirit of holiness and truth. And thanks to all who show us the love of Christ.

In the name of our parish, allow me to express our gratitude to Sr. Maureen Taaffe, SCN and to Fr. Charlie and Fr. Paul MacDonald for their generous service to us. We will rejoice with Fr. MacDonald in the celebration of his 50th anniversary of priesthood here on Sunday, February 1 at the 12:00 noon Mass. Please plan to join us for this happy event.

Allow me also to express our sincere thanks to all those who serve our parish, especially the members of our staff - Florence Rosselle, Dorothy Walsh, Al and Helen Solimine, Dick D'Italia and our other parish musicians, Osmani and Rena, John, Marilyn, and Alan Long, as well as our Religious Education coordinators, educators, and helpers, especially Marie Perella-Sullivan and Kate Cody.

In addition, I am deeply grateful for the good counsel that is offered to me by the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Council. And for all who sustain the life of our parish in so many ways - through service in our liturgy, through visitations to the sick, through health-care ministry, through membership in our parish prayer group, and through support for the various parish activities and fundraisers, such as our superb annual bazaar and parish cookout. And for all who were able to participate in our Christmas giving program, which exceeded every expectation of generosity.

A time of renewal - I have often shared with you my conviction that, at this time in the life of the Church, we are being called to a renewed deepening of our life in Christ. We have been through a time of testing and pain

in our Church, and the issues in our world seem to be more complex and overwhelming than ever before. The days ahead offer new challenges for staffing and financing our parishes, and will require prayerful planning on our part so that we may serve the needs of our parish communities well. And, still, in the midst of all this, we are still being called by the Lord to be His Body in the world, to live as his disciples, and to proclaim the Gospel for all to hear.

Now is a time for rebuilding and renewal in our Church, for entering into a time of prayerful reflection, humbly asking the Lord to show us the way forward. I am deeply grateful for the participation of our parish in the Archdiocesan *Arise Together in Christ* renewal program. The feedback from those who participated in the first season in the Fall (about 60 parishioners) is very positive and looks forward to reaching out to include even more participants in the second season this coming Lent. Please consider joining us for this process of personal faith-sharing and prayer in small group sessions.

Ongoing faith learning – What a joy it was to see so many of our parishioners at our recent parish book fair! The Daughters of St. Paul told me that they were impressed by the warm welcome and genuine interest of our parishioners. One of my dreams is to have a full program of ongoing adult faith learning in our parish. We already have many such opportunities here throughout the year and we make available a great deal of literature, such as *The Word Among Us*, for our parishioners' spiritual growth. But just imagine if we had the full funding and organizational ability for a "school" of prayer and ongoing learning here in our parish - morning programs for our elderly parishioners, and evening lectures and study and faith-sharing events for our working adults. I believe that our parish has a unique capacity to be a regional location for such programs, to be a host parish to welcome many others to participate with us. Does anyone share my dream?

Sacraments celebrated at St. John Chrysostom Parish in 2008

*Baptisms – 61 First Communions – 50 First Penance – 50
Confirmation – 41 Marriages – 11 Anointing Mass – 2 Funerals – 85*

Average weekend Mass attendance, based on a count taken for three weekends in October – 1,360

Mass is offered each month at the Roscommon Extended Care Center

*St. John's provides priest coverage of the Faulkner Hospital every Friday, and one Sunday every other month.
In addition, Eucharistic ministers from our parish participate in daily distribution of Communion at the Faulkner.*

Ecumenical and interreligious events - Once again, we were privileged to host the annual Archdiocesan celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year, our celebration will take place on Friday, January 23, 2009. Also, once again, on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul on June 29, we welcomed His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios and members of the local Greek Orthodox community for an evening prayer service here with Cardinal Sean O'Malley. In addition, in what may have been a first in the history of our parish, St. John's had a wonderful overnight visit and morning coffee and presentation from Rabbi Jack Bemporad, a leader in Christian-Jewish relations who also teaches seminarians in Rome. Our parish also frequently hosts meetings of our official Archdiocesan Christian-Jewish dialogue and Catholic-Evangelical dialogue.

Pastoral Ministry report, submitted by Sr. Maureen Taaffe, SCN, Pastoral Associate.

The office of Pastoral Ministry here at St. John's has been a busy one, this year. In addition to the interfaith events and Archdiocesan-sponsored programs which Fr. Michael has encouraged us to participate in, we have experienced an increased interest in all of our sacramental programs. The baptism program continues to thrive with many young families participating. The marriage preparation program was very successful, and

the young couples enjoyed the interactions with the seasoned married couples. The office of Pastoral Ministry strives to maintain a consistent caring coordination of many different endeavors.

I feel it important to note that our parish was visited early in the fall by a member of the Gavin Group, a private consulting firm employed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to assess our compliance with the bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. We were one of about 50 parishes in the Archdiocese chosen for this review. It was determined at the conclusion of this "audit" that St. Johns is in full compliance with the bishops' charter, as well as those of the Archdiocese.

The following is a summary of some of the programs which continue to flourish and serve the parish community:

- **Communion to the Sick** – visits to the homebound is a rewarding experience for the caregiver and the person receiving the visit. We now have 19 ministers to the sick.
- **Food Drive** – Each week there appears to be an increase in food collected and distributed to the Roslindale Food Pantry and to some of our parishioners.
- **Christmas Giving Drive** – Thoughtful and practical gifts were requested for the Christmas Giving Drive, with special emphasis placed on items of clothing and food. These items were distributed to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Pine Street Inn, Rosie's Place, Friends of the Unborn, and to our own parishioners in need. This year, the amount given was truly extraordinary, a true gospel witness.
- **Evangelization Program** – inception of the ARISE Program for primary age children and which appears to be a success. Scheduling and training of Eucharistic Ministers and Lectors.
- **Other parish activities to note** – Annual Bazaar, June cookout, St. John's Day – all a success.

Parish Pastoral Council report, submitted by the members of our Pastoral Council.

The Parish Pastoral Council is made up of seven members, who represent the parishioners of St. John's Parish. The council members assist the pastor in his leadership role of planning and organizing, promoting the evangelization, worship, religious education, and other pastoral ministries of the parish. This year, through prayer, reflection, and discussion, the council is being asked to help discern the needs and direction of our parish in the near future, as the Archdiocese begins a process of pastoral planning for all parishes.

In our first three meetings of the new council, we have had discussions on St. John's Parish and the Catholic Church in the past, present, and where we see it in the future. It is clear that parishes can no longer stand alone and have to work with other parishes in the community to be able to spread the word of Christ. We all need to take an active role in our church if we are going to be able to maintain the vibrancy and spiritual life of the church.

Religious Education report, submitted by Marie Perella-Sullivan and Kate Cody, Rel. Ed. Coordinators.

Religious Education is thriving with many new and continuing students this year. Approximately fifty young adults will be receiving the sacrament of Confirmation and forty students will be receiving First Eucharist this coming spring. We have many new and returning teachers who are vibrant people filled with faith to share with our young parishioners. The ARISE Program has been inculcated throughout the elementary program and has heightened the awareness of scripture in our lives among the children and their families. Liturgy has become an integral part of the program with a set Mass schedule for grades one through six and seven through ten. The spirit of giving is alive in well with the students assembling Thanksgiving Baskets as well as participating in the Christmas gift program.

Adult, and Children's, Choir reports, submitted by Dick D'Italia and Osmani and Rena Rodriguez.

Our Organist and Minister of Music, Dick D'Italia, reports that the Senior Choir has been trying to recruit new members for the Christmas and Easter liturgies, but that getting a sustained commitment from new members has proven to be challenging. He writes that, "Our congregation is one of the best, or the best, singing parish

and I would like to continue to keep it that way by providing the choir with new music and musical information."

The goal of the Children's Choir at St John's is to enhance our worship experience through music at the 9:00 Family Mass, to involve the children in the musical aspects of the liturgy, and to educate them in areas of both repertoire and music theory/terminology. The Children's Choir prepares at least one post-Communion piece each month, and the children are encouraged to lead responsorial psalms and other acclamations during Mass. The choir is able to sing in two or three parts and the children are always enthusiastic about learning new music. Last year the choir had the opportunity to sing at several other events outside of church. They sang at an ecumenical Gospel Fest in Hyde Park. They sang at the Tree Lighting in Cleary square, at the prayer service for Christian Unity, and at our annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration. These were wonderful opportunities for the choir to share their gifts and take part in their community. This year we are planning a special Lenten musical/prayer Service and the kids want to do a Cabaret/Broadway night as a fundraiser.

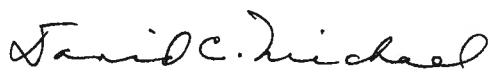
We would love to see the choir grow. Although we have maintained our membership of about 20 singers, it would be nice to have more voices. A problem that has been expressed by several of the young people who have grown out of the choir is the lack of anything for the teenagers. They feel out of place in the "Children's Choir" and out of place in the "Adult Choir." At some point, we would like to expand the Lenten prayer service to include a staged version of the Stations of the Cross and include the teenagers and the young adults. We cannot express how rewarding it has been to work with these children. It is a blessing to see them actively participate in the Liturgy and sing to God's praises.

St. Vincent de Paul report, submitted by our parish conference.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was founded in the 19th century by a student at the University of Paris, Frederic Ozanam. There are active Vincent de Paul conferences in all four parishes in West Roxbury and Roslindale. The members of our parish conference meet bi-weekly to share friendship, prayer, and discussion on the scriptures.

The members of our parish Vincent de Paul conference wish to thank our parishioners for their unfailing generosity. For the fiscal year ending September 30, the parish's contributions totaled \$27,159, and the conference's expenditures were \$28,417. Fifty-five percent of the expenditures was for food given to local individuals and families. Thirty-eight percent was used to help local individuals and families meet other expenses including clothing and utilities. The remaining seven percent was used for special projects, including support of the local food pantry. Thank you once again for your generous support for those people in our parish and local community who sometimes find themselves in difficult economic circumstances.

I sincerely hope that this annual report helps to describe, as well as increase, the vibrant life of our parish. Once again, I wish to express my sincerest gratitude for all that so many of you do to sustain our community, and to affirm my personal commitment to support and nurture the full and active involvement of all the lay faithful in the life of the Church, as is called forth by the very nature of our baptismal sharing in the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



Fr. David C. Michael, Pastor

Be sure to visit our parish website: www.rc.net/boston/stjohnchrysostom

December, 2008

Dear Fr. Michael,

We have prepared the attached financial report for the fiscal year 2007-2008, which ended on June 30, for distribution to all parishioners. This past fiscal year, our income met our expenses and the year ended with a surplus of over twenty seven thousand dollars. This is good news. However, we are not yet meeting our goal of fully funding the ordinary parish operating expenses from our combined weekly and monthly offertories. As in the past, the surplus money we needed was taken from the special Gifts, Bequests, & Donations funds. While we are very grateful that we have these funds available, we do not recommend continuing to rely on this source to pay for ordinary parish expenses.

This past fiscal year, the weekly offertory rose by just under 6% compared to last fiscal year, and the monthly offertory rose by over 17%. These are remarkable results given the current economy, and are a true testament to the good will and generosity of all our parishioners. However, we know that our operating expenses will continue to rise and we are forced to ask all parishioners to consider an increase in their offertory. With approximately 1400 people attending Mass each weekend, a three dollar increase per person would make our parish much more financially stable. Or, assuming that 60% of the 1400 weekly Mass attendees are working adults, it would be an additional five dollars per week, per working adult.

Given the current economy and its uncertainty, we want to be prudent in our use of our resources. However, although there are currently no emergency maintenance situations needing to be addressed, we still need to make a plan to replace the roof of the church/parish center, as well as the rectory, and to address the persistent problem of the leaks around the skylight in the church. In addition, it has become evident that we need to improve the air quality in the church, especially in the warmer months. This past summer we did some minor projects around the church. We will continue to do small projects as needed.

We are beginning to work with Butch Razoyk of Architectural Design Concepts to get his input on the issues of maintaining and improving the physical property of the church and the worship environment. We look forward to using his considerable experience and expertise to guide us in the crafting of a plan for our capital projects.

We, the members of the St. John Chrysostom Parish Finance Council, thank you for the opportunity to assist the parish and look forward to working with you and the staff in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Tom Arsenault

Larry Donnell-Kilmer

Doug Mann

Tom Scannell

Annual Financial Report

December 2008

REVENUE	06-07	07-08	Change	% Change
Offertory	\$324,106.27	\$342,857.50	\$18,751.23	5.786
Offertory Monthly	\$46,037.00	\$54,091.00	\$8,054.00	17.495
Parish Activities	\$23,666.15	\$25,881.50	\$2,215.35	9.361
Interest	\$8,832.56	\$7,208.78	-\$1,623.78	-18.384
Gifts, Bequests, & Donations	\$52,907.92	\$89,072.13	\$36,164.21	68.353
Sacramental Offerings	\$18,885.00	\$20,290.00	\$1,405.00	7.440
Religious Education and Marriage Program	\$11,920.00	\$13,876.00	\$1,956.00	16.409
Fuel and Snow and Building Fund	\$7,907.13	\$11,008.00	\$3,100.87	39.216
TOTAL REVENUE	\$494,262.03	\$564,284.91	\$70,022.88	14.167

EXPENSES	06-07	07-08	Change	% Change
Administration	\$269,470.39	\$296,511.35	\$27,040.96	10.035
Salaries - Lay personnel	\$153,836.70	\$170,975.44	\$17,138.74	11.141
Salaries - Clergy and Religious	\$80,848.75	\$91,989.54	\$11,140.79	13.780
Supplies, Phones, Automobile	\$34,784.94	\$33,546.37	-\$1,238.57	-3.561
Parish Activities	\$12,808.62	\$20,320.55	\$7,511.93	58.647
Church Services and Programs	\$25,062.34	\$25,040.02	-\$22.32	-0.089
Rectory Expenses	\$42,255.52	\$43,572.50	\$1,316.98	3.117
Operation and maintenance of Church	\$59,655.50	\$60,857.91	\$1,202.41	2.016
Utilities	\$18,127.39	\$16,720.23	-\$1,407.16	-7.763
Maintenance	\$41,528.11	\$44,137.68	\$2,609.57	6.284
Taxes, Insurance, Pensions	\$53,431.40	\$54,080.83	\$649.43	1.215
Religious Education and Marriage Program	\$14,168.57	\$13,719.24	-\$449.33	-3.171
School Tax	\$18,204.00	\$19,446.00	\$1,242.00	6.823
Cathedraticum	\$0.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	100.000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$495,056.34	\$536,548.40	\$41,492.06	8.381

NET INCOME (LOSS)	-\$794.31	\$27,736.51
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