



Pastor's Desk

300 E. Third Street, PO Box 1106, Storm Lake, IA 50588

[Jesus said:] "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more" (Luke 12:48b).

2017 Easter Season!

Dear Parishioners,

In addition to the letters sent to you, in which I asked you to consider your support to the parish, I want to present this letter for those who would like to understand more about our parish's financial strain.

I am deeply grateful for the generosity toward our parish and her many programs by so many in the parish. As many of you know from your own household budgets, each year usually requires more income. That is true, too, of our parish budget. In addition to the many small increases in materials, equipment and supplies, we especially have needed to look at and make progress on making sure that we more fairly pay those who work on our behalf. We cannot continue to accept pay scales for our employees that are as much as 30% behind similar professional positions; this most especially hits our teachers, administrators and directors of parish offices.

Our parish budget is tightly developed; each line is considered carefully. Nothing is spent unless absolutely necessary. Because of this great care, we often come in under budget on some items. Nevertheless, the greatest share of our parish budget goes to salaries, health care, and other fixed costs. If you have been following the giving and budget needs in the bulletin, you will have noticed that when this 2016-17 Fiscal Year concludes on June 30, we are likely to be more than \$100,000 in the red. I am hopeful that that dollar amount will be lowered significantly by a generous response to the request for a special one-time gift by the end of June. It would be wonderful if everyone did her or his part so that we could even come in with a balanced budget!

I know that making up so much in these final weeks is quite unlikely. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that St. Mary's has operated at a deficit in some past years. We certainly want to avoid that if at all possible. We need as well to pull back a bit and look at the larger picture. We can note that our parish is affected by larger economic forces over which we have no control, e.g., the slump in the agricultural economy and how that reverberates through our local economy. These economic changes come and go, so I believe it would be unwise to panic too soon; rather, let us all take our financial situation seriously and do our own part to help the parish with all her programs and activities.

Lastly, as we all know there are going to be changes this summer as a result of Ministry 2025. Recent changes in priests' assignments have affected our new grouping, but we are moving forward with it: St. Joseph, Schaller; Sacred Heart, Early; St. Joseph, Sioux Rapids; and St. Mary's, Storm Lake. How that will all shake out will take a few years; the hope of Bishop Nickless, the diocesan planning committee, and your clergy (priests and deacons) is that the new parish groupings will make for vibrant communities of faith and new opportunities for all the people of the newly linked parishes. I hope we will all be welcoming whenever we see people from other parishes join us, and that you will feel welcomed whenever you chose to attend a Mass or event at one of the other locations.

To paraphrase what I said in one of my earlier "State of the Parish" addresses: thank you "for your prayers, your love ... and your money" (quoting Fr. Mervin Hood). Blessings on all of you and all your family and friends.

Yours in Christ Jesus, our Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Timothy A. Friedrichsen".

Rev. Dr. Timothy A. Friedrichsen
t.a.friedrichsen@gmail.com