

Message from Fr. Bloom

My column for this Sunday's bulletin got truncated. Fr. Michael O'Brien used to say: "To err is human, but it takes a computer to really foul things up." Anyway, I have some important matters to communicate to you, so I am adding this bulletin insert.

First of all, I do want to thank you for your kind words, prayers and support during this difficult time – the tragic death of my nephew, Benjamin Hills. I appreciate your ongoing prayers for Ben, his mom Marianne and all our family. The picture in the bulletin shows Ben with my youngest great nephew, Julien Bloom.

At the Generations of Faith evening (which was wonderful, by the way) I mentioned some things about Ben. In the last year of his life, he sponsored a young woman, Jessica Luna, for the Sacrament of Confirmation. They attended classes together and Ben placed his arm on her shoulder when she received the oil of Confirmation. Jessica says that she still feels Ben's hand on her shoulder.

Ben died in a house fire that burned all of the possessions in his room – except one item. The fire fighters said that a small gold cross on his wall was untouched: a beautiful symbol of hope. At the time of terrible tragedy we recognize that the only hope we have is the cross of Christ.

The death of young person reminds us of the brevity of life, how important it is to give our all while God gives us the precious gift of time. In our Stewardship renewal we reflect on God's gift and how we are called to share the gifts God gives us. I want to thank all of you who responded to our annual parish Stewardship renewal. As of Wednesday, we have received 85 renewals. If you have not yet returned your Stewardship renewal brochure, please place it in the Sunday collection. In the bulletin you will see a Stewardship Prayer that you can say in your home.

At our Finance Council meeting this week, we noted a disturbing trend in Stewardship Pledges here at St. Mary's:

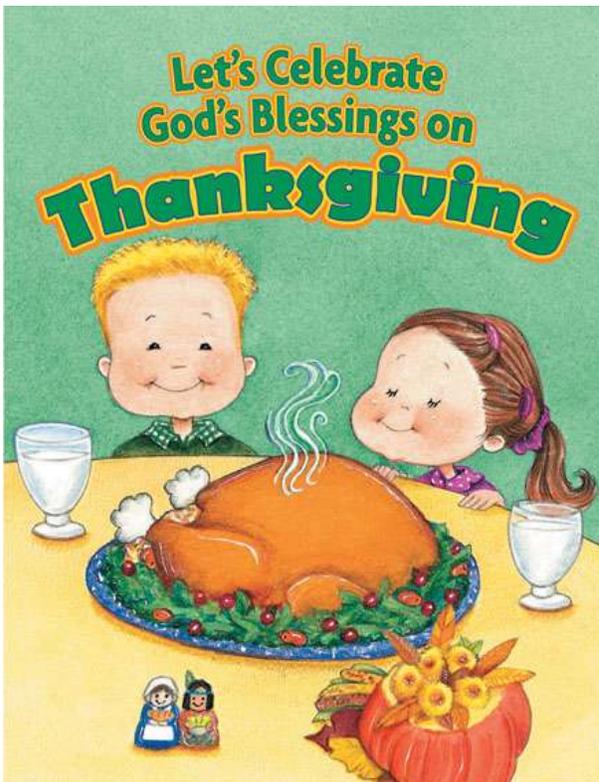
Nov 2006: \$185,730
Nov 2007: 139,347
Nov 2008: 65,014



(Message from Fr. Bloom, continued)

Obviously, last year was a difficult year and we are still feeling the effects in lower levels of parish giving. By next week we should have better idea about this year's Stewardship renewal. I will let you know in the Sunday's bulletin. Meanwhile, if you have not yet returned your Stewardship renewal, please do so this week.

Your pledge will help me and our Parish Council in making plans regarding our parish mission. It will also aid you in fulfilling God's purpose by recognizing Him as the source of all you are and all you have – and in making a conscious planned commitment. We know that people's circumstances change. Some have lost employment and must reduce their giving. Others are blessed with a job and can give more so that we can achieve our common goals. Remember: No one is so poor that they have nothing to give – and no one is so rich that they have nothing to receive. We must mutually support one another by our Stewardship and prayer.



This Thursday is Thanksgiving. The greatest prayer of Thanksgiving is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. I invite you to join your parish family at 9 a.m. for Mass. Please bring an item of food from your Thanksgiving table (e.g. bread or pie) to be blessed at the end of the Mass. Also I invite you to bring non-perishable food that our St. Vincent de Paul Society can give to the poor of our community. The collection at the Thanksgiving Mass will go entirely to our St. Vincent de Paul Society to aid the needy. I will celebrate the Mass mainly in English with some parts in Spanish, particularly the Eucharistic Prayer. I have found that most of us are so familiar with the Eucharist Prayer that we can follow it no matter what language.

On the First Sunday of Advent (November 29) we will not only have the Advent Wreath, but I will share about an exciting program called Catholics Come Home. There is more information in the bulletin and at their website: <http://www.catholicscomehome.org/>.

Please have a beautiful week. I look forward to seeing you at the Thanksgiving Mass, this Thursday at 9 a.m. May God bless you and your family.

--Fr. Phil Bloom