

For a columnist (even an amateur such as me) one of the most humbling experiences is the printing of a retraction. It is with great pride that I issue the following retraction. Last week I indicated that we failed to reach our goal for the 2009 Catholic Faith Appeal. Ironically enough, after the bulletin went to print, a very generous parish family stepped forward and made a substantial contribution that put us over the top for our appeal. At the close of business on Friday, January 8th, we had received \$514,232.52, exceeding our goal of \$513,000.00 by over \$1,000.00. Thank you so much to everyone that made this very difficult goal a reality.

We have created a new Stewardship Commission at St. John the Evangelist. Bob Claussen has been appointed President. One of Bob's first initiatives for this new commission will be the completion of a parish survey. It is our hope that every adult will fill out the survey which will be offered next month electronically online and for those without internet access, in paper format as well. The survey will be quite extensive and will give every parishioner the opportunity to convey their thoughts on how the parish is performing. This will be an anonymous survey so you may freely assess your thoughts on the direction of the parish in complete confidence that your name will not be associated with any of your comments. The survey data will be compiled by an independent firm that will maintain total confidentiality of your submitted data. We learned of this firm through the Diocese of Green Bay who successfully used them for the compilation of their statistics and opinions. This firm comes to us with the recommendation of the Diocese of Green Bay and at NO CHARGE. At the base of my column in this bulletin, you will see a form which we will ask that every parish family complete. We are requesting the names, addresses and email addresses of each member of every household. The reason for this request is twofold. We would like to update our database and we would like to have all of your email addresses. For those of you with active email addresses, we will email you the link to the survey directly. You will not receive any spam from St. John the Evangelist. This survey is our attempt to be proactive in taking a vested interest in YOUR thoughts and concerns before moving our parish forward to the next level. PLEASE take the time to first fill out the aforementioned family information and then by completing the upcoming survey. The experts suggest that if we receive 50% participation in the survey we will have done extremely well. I am confident in our parish family that we can far exceed 50% participation. Thank you to everyone in advance for completing the attached family information and upcoming parish survey. We will include the parish information card in the bulletin for the next three weeks. You may complete the card and drop it in the collection basket or bring it by the front office. We truly value your input!

Recently I have had several comments regarding second collections at Mass. Allow me to shed a little light on the situation. At St. John the Evangelist, we have "special collections" and "second collections." There are numerous special Diocesan collections throughout the course of the year for anything from the Church in Latin America to Retired Religious to Peter's Pence. Every Catholic Church in the United States has the same annual special collections. The envelopes for these special collections are included in your packet received in the mail. The special collections are generally accompanied by a letter in the bulletin from the Bishop explaining the reason for the collection and the use of the funds received. There may also be an announcement from the pulpit explaining the specifics of the special collection. The special collection envelopes are to be included in the offertory collection and are then separated. There is no second collection for these special collections. The funds received for these special collections are non-assessable and the funds received are sent directly to the Diocese of Venice to be used for the specific cause. In years past, we have not done a great job in explaining to our parishioners the specific upcoming special collections and what they support. This is why we have focused more energy recently on educating our congregation on the importance of these collections and the many great causes they support. Occasionally, as was the case this past weekend for the seminarians, the diocese will ask that we have a second collection to meet a difficult financial obligation. This has also been the case in the past for Hurricane Katrina, the Tsunami and major earthquakes throughout the world. In the case of a second collection, the basket will be passed again immediately following the regular offertory. We generally will only participate in five second collections throughout the year. The five second collections are for World Mission Sunday and the other four are for our Jamaica Outreach Program. These special collections should be placed in the first collection. Only the five mentioned for World Mission Sunday and Jamaica Outreach will be deemed as a second collection. Obviously, you are not obligated to participate in any of the special or second collections however we would ask that you read the Bishop's letter and prayerfully consider making a contribution if you find the cause to be worthwhile and/or near and dear to your heart. The intent of these special and second collections is not that you reallocate your normal gift to the parish but rather make an additional gift if you so choose. I truly hope this brief explanation has cleared up any confusion regarding the special and second collection process and procedures.

Do you know what our parish emblem looks like? For those of you that receive mailings from the parish or have seen one of our business cards, the answer may be yes. For many others, I would guess that you have no idea. The parish emblem that has been in use since the construction of the church back in 1992 is simply a picture of the front of the church. It has

served us well for the past 18 years however we feel that it is time to design an emblem that incorporates the symbolism that reflects who we are as a Catholic Community. We are going to have a contest within our parish to design a new emblem that will incorporate these symbols to be used on all of our letterhead, envelopes and business cards. In an upcoming bulletin I will include the parameters to be used in the design and we will have a deadline for submission of entries. For instance, the symbol of St. John the Evangelist is the eagle. St. John the Evangelist was the 4th Evangelist and is frequently depicted with a scroll. He looked into the dying eyes of our crucified Lord on that dark day at Calvary and received the Messiah's last request. An agonized John heard the final words from the Cross, entrusting to him the care of the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, who was uppermost in the thoughts of her Son in his last moments of earthly life. The new emblem will certainly incorporate an eagle and some type of reference to scripture. We feel this will be a fun exercise for our parishioners and will ultimately result in a new emblem that will be the work of one of our own parishioners. I am eager to see some of the submissions and rest assured, I have not one artistic bone in my body therefore I will not be submitting an entry.

It is no secret that many in our parish are currently unemployed and looking daily for an opportunity for some type of work. Did you know that the Federal Government is preparing for the 2010 census? As a result, the Federal Government will be hiring between 2,000 and 3,000 part time employees in Lee and Collier County to participate as census takers. The rate of pay for these part time positions will be between \$10.75 and \$16.50 per hour based on your performance on a short employment test. On Tuesday, January 19th at 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm the United States Census will hold interviews in the ballroom of the Parish Life Center to fill many of these positions. If you would like to interview, please bring your ID in order to complete form I-9. You will be required to take a 30-minute basic skills test consisting of 28 multiple-choice questions measuring knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform a variety of census jobs. You must be a U.S. citizen, be at least 18 years old and have a valid driver's license. Even though this is part time employment, it seems that this may be an ideal opportunity for those looking to "get over the hump" or simply for someone looking to make an extra buck. You do not need to pre-register. Simply arrive at either 3:00 pm or 6:00 pm on Tuesday, January 19th. If you are unable to attend, you may call the toll free census line at 866-861-2010 to schedule an interview.

We are going to hold a meeting on Saturday, February 13th at 1:00 pm in the PLC ballroom which will be open to the lead representative from each of our parish ministries. If your ministry wishes to be recognized as a ministry of St. John the Evangelist, we expect representation at this meeting. We will publish some form of this announcement for the next five weeks in advance of the meeting to ensure that every ministry has the opportunity to appoint a representative to attend.

 Family Name _____

Household:

Names: Husband _____ email _____

Wife _____

Children Age____ _____ email _____

Age____ _____ email _____

Age____ _____ email _____

Age____ _____ email _____

Address _____

City_____ State__ Zip_____ Phone_____

 In His work together,

Scott Schlossberg, MBA
 General Manager