

I hope that everyone enjoyed a HAPPY THANKSGIVING this past Thursday. If you were traveling over the holiday to be with family and loved ones, we wish you a safe return. Let us please remember those who may have gone without this Thanksgiving. There was an incredibly successful food drive this past week to help replenish the St. Vincent De Paul food pantry. The entire SVDP truck was full after the 1:15 pm Mass. Bags were distributed at Mass on November 15th to be returned this past weekend. The entire Thanksgiving Day collection has also been designated for St. Vincent de Paul to help those in need within our parish boundaries. Over seven families per week need financial assistance for rent, mortgages and utilities. St. Vincent de Paul also provides bags of food and gift cards for food and gasoline. An envelope has been included in your quarterly packet for use on Thanksgiving or anytime during the year. Please be generous and assist those in need. Remember that the individual(s) you are helping could be sitting right next to you at Mass.

We have yet to experience any unseasonably cold weather to speak of here in “paradise” this fall. Many up north have also not experienced any miserable winter conditions as of yet. These miserable conditions are usually “just what the doctor ordered” to chase the remaining seasonal residents out of their residences up north and bring them down to southwest Florida. There used to be a very clear pattern with the seasonal travel habits of our winter residents. Many that have dual residences would come down in late October/early November and open up their winter homes. They would then stay with us until the week before Thanksgiving and head back up north to spend the holidays, returning in the middle of January. Over the past couple of years, this pattern has changed. Many of our winter residents are foregoing their fall visit and instead arriving after the first of the year. Easter also plays a major role in the length of time our seasonal residents remain in Southwest Florida, especially for those that rent versus own. I am overly optimistic that the current poor state of our economy will not prevent those that rent from making their annual trek to Southwest Florida for the winter months. Easter of 2008 was one of the earliest in recent memory falling on March 23rd while last year was on April 12th. Many that rent do so on a month by month basis and will generally stay in Naples until Easter. This means that many of our winter residents were gone by the end of March in 2008. Easter falls on April 4th in 2010 which would suggest that we will again have an additional month of season this coming year. Why am I discussing the seasonal travel patterns of our winter residents? Because these travel patterns have a substantial effect on our local economy. As we are all aware, the Naples economy is heavily based in tourism. Many of our workforce are employed in the service industry and count on our seasonal residents to survive. If our seasonal residents arrive one month later or depart even one month early, this will have dramatic effect on the ability for many that rely on their economic influx to survive. This is certainly the case here at St. John the Evangelist. As I have stated before, we generally operate “in the red” 7 out of 12 months. Our seasonal parishioners are crucial in allowing us to build a surplus in the winter so that we may sustain during the very lean summer months. Let us pray that the local and nationwide economy improves in short order and that we have long and prosperous winter season.

Many of you that attend Mass enter through the east doors which open into the sanctuary where the organ pit is located. Depending on the season, most of you are aware of the persistent problem with leaves and seed pods blowing in the doors every time they are opened. The leaves are from the Golden Rain Trees which I am happy to announce, have been removed. For some reason, there is an “eddy” that forms outside the doors and as a result, the areas immediately outside and inside the doors were covered with a tremendous mess. We have now planted Fox Tail Palms where the Rain Trees formerly resided creating a much more aesthetic and clean look. In addition, there are no leaves to blow into the doors of the sanctuary. We hope you will appreciate the change.

Due to an extremely early bulletin deadline, there will be no collection data this week. The counters had not finished their work in time for the Monday morning deadline. I will include the missing data in next week’s bulletin.

In His work together,

Scott Schlossberg, MBA
General Manager