



# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

## Catholic Church & School

August 16, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

As I indicated last week, it is my intent to draw from the St. John the Baptist Endowment Fund to meet whatever portion of the budgeted \$628K deficit actually materializes during the current fiscal year because of revenue shortfalls. At this point, we simply cannot say how severe the actual shortfall will be; while we think we've accurately projected our regular revenue and expense flows, there is no way of knowing how successful any of the ancillary fund raisers I described two weeks ago in this space might be. Nor do we know yet at what point we may want to tap into the Endowment Fund – if it would be better fiscally to make periodic incremental withdrawals throughout the year, or if there is a particular time at which withdrawals can be made without incurring significant penalties, transaction fees or loss of earnings.

Of course, any “hit” on the Endowment Fund translates into a loss to the Fund's earning power in the sense that it lowers the amount of money we have working for us. Hence, the importance of turning to the Endowment Fund only to do what is absolutely necessary. And it is in my opinion absolutely necessary to keep St. John the Baptist Catholic School open and fully operational during this time of pandemic – important not only to St. John the Baptist Parish, important not only to Plymouth; but important to this whole part of Sheboygan County.

This is why I've intentionally included St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in this series of bulletin articles which, on the surface, would appear to pertain only to SJB. St. John the Baptist Catholic School is a resource and blessing not just to SJB Parish and Plymouth but to all Catholics within range (which these days certainly means St. Thomas Aquinas, Elkhart Lake and Glenbeulah, not to mention Cascade and other points south and east, as well). My fondest hope is that through continued educational pieces and promotional efforts, fund-raising appeals like those to which I alluded above might be perceived not so much as requests to help plug a budget shortfall but as an invitation to invest in the Church's future, a future which depends on our willingness to do all we can to prepare the next generation of Catholics to fill our pews in Northwest Sheboygan County for years to come. Of preeminent importance to such preparation is the foundation laid by an outstanding parochial school education such as that which is provided at SJB.

Well, maybe that's really not my fondest dream. My fondest dream is taken from Barb Vite's playbook. Barb is the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's Director of Parish Stewardship, and when she gives her introductory spiel on stewardship to parishes, she always points to St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Wichita, Kansas. St. Francis of Assisi has a grade school with 650 students, three classrooms at each grade level. The school budget exceeds \$2.5 million. But they charge NO TUITION! They can do that because the parish tithes: every member gives 5% of his/her income to the Church.

Of course, it took St. Francis of Assisi 40 years to get to where it's at today, and I only have a dream, not 40 years. But I'm pretty sure SJB and STA could have both! They say that the longest journey begins with a single step. So, how about we start to think about investing in our future in a way that helps us deal with the consequences of COVID-19 courageously, faithfully, creatively and generously as we set out on our journey into a post-pandemic new day?

Fr. Philip D. Reifenberg, Pastor