

Dear Parishioners,

As I shared last weekend, Holy Rosary has received an amazing gift, a great blessing. As you know, we have been carrying and managing a substantial debt burden. When I arrived here in 2016 our debt was almost \$3.2 million and our monthly obligation on the loan was \$29,500. We have made some progress with the debt and realigned the organization through cost-cutting to achieve a balanced budget. We did this mostly through staff reduction. You might remember that in 2016 we could not make our debt obligation payment and had to ask the Archdiocese for relief. They agreed to 6 months payment of interest only.

The miracle? Sharon Benson, a life long parishioner of Holy Rosary, left her entire estate to our parish. The estate was substantial, just over 2 million dollars! When I shared this news with our Finance Council, which has been working hard with me through the cost cutting, they said, "This is a miracle!" Sharon Benson lived a very simple and modest life; she suffered from cancer in her last years. She died May 24th at age 71 and her funeral was here on May 30th. May her soul, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Most of the proceeds of Sharon Benson's estate will be going to pay down the principle of our loan/debt. The good news is that as of last week our debt now stands at \$1.2 million with a monthly payment of \$14,000. That means our debt is down almost 2 million dollars since 2016 and our payments are now less than half of what they used to be, realizing a \$186,000 savings annually. This puts us in a much better financial situation and much closer to doing away with our debt altogether, which is a hope of mine.

If God has been generous with us, we should also be generous. We have decided to put 10% of this gift into outreach. Two outreach projects in particular we want to help fund: St. Pius X is partnering with CCS in building an outreach center to service the homeless, families, and pregnant women in need in South Snohomish County. And we would like to start a sister parish relationship in Uganda. The rest of the gift will be kept in reserve for future special projects. To recognize this generous gift, the main figures of the nativity scene were purchased in Sharon Benson's honor and there will be a plaque to recognize that.

The lowering of our loan payment means we can begin to grow our staff and programs according to a strategic plan. The past few years we have been discussing with the Pastoral Council and staff how we grow the parish from maintenance to mission, according to some of the ideas presented in Fr. James Mallon's book Divine Renovation. A real need we have is to grow our youth ministry. Kelly Groesbeck has been doing part time youth ministry along with confirmation prep. We would like to shift her responsibilities to doing Confirmation preparation (which will gradually be moving down to 7th grade) and 1st Communion preparation as well as

other responsibilities in the school. Therefore we will be looking to hire a part time Youth Minister.

In Christ,

Fr. Vincent