

Letter from the Pastor, Parish Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council

October 21, 2023

Dear Parishioners,

Our Pastor, Fr. Hannafey, and our Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils are reaching out today to provide you with a parish update and make an important request.

To begin, we hope you have observed an uptick in activity at OSJ. We have truly begun to rebuild our parish after the pandemic and hope you are experiencing a spiritually satisfying parish life. Mass attendance is up, and we are seeing more young families joining Children's Liturgy of the Word. Faith, Food and Friends is providing food and social services to more guests than ever, Care for Creation is raising environmental awareness, and the Friendship Circle gets bigger with every meeting. Our Social Justice Committee is forming and has begun organizing around your loud call for us to do even more in our local community, while the Ignatian Spirituality Committee continues to develop additional ways for our parish to explore and grow within the Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola. These are exciting times.

OSJ will be staffed with one Jesuit for the foreseeable future. This is a daunting task, as the Pastor must cover *all* our sacramental duties in addition to serving as the Pastor. As a result, the Parish Council and Finance Council have each recommended that we hire an experienced Pastoral Associate to help the Pastor and our existing staff manage the parish. The Pastoral Associate will help with the spiritual and administrative tasks which used to be covered by Jesuits assigned to the parish.

Consequently, we need to rebuild our finances to meet the challenges of running an active parish and we are asking for your help in this effort. We need to close a persistent budget gap and pay for the Pastoral Associate. This position is new and was not in previous budgets and the associated expenses (~\$80K) are included in our call for additional contributions.

We are asking you for money now because offertory contributions have declined each year since 2018 (Table 1), while expenses have remained steady or increased, partially due to inflation. As a result, we have closed the budget gap each year for the last several years by withdrawing funds from our investment accounts. We are blessed in having an investment account backstop, but this is not a good long-term financial management practice. Investment accounts should be reserved for capital projects and one-time expenses but should not be used to fund operating expenses.

Table 1.

Fiscal Year (Current Year is FY2024)	Offertory Contributions (includes Sunday, Easter, Christmas, Weekday and Holy Day collections)
2018	\$610,629
2019	\$586,157
2020	\$579,045
2021	\$468,339 (Pandemic closing)
2022	\$492,672
2023	\$481,256

We have not had a formal offertory collection campaign since 2017, though in 2019 we asked for your help with the courtyard project. You were generous then – especially when the project's scope increased to cover significant additional work. We anticipated a modest decline in “regular” giving for a year or so as folks shifted their giving to the capital campaign but expected the weekly collections to increase over time. This *did not* happen, but the pandemic did. Contributions declined when the sanctuary was closed – though on-line giving remained steady. Expenses did not

drop, and we would have ended the pandemic year with a much larger deficit but for \$86,000 in federal payroll relief to partially cover staff salaries. Offertory income has increased since the pandemic but is still only 80% of what you gave in 2018.

We have analyzed your prior giving patterns and determined that just asking you to increase your contribution by a certain percentage won't get us to the sustainable level we need to support our ministries and operating overhead. Four hundred people or families contributed to the various offertory collections in 2022. Of these, about half (202) currently use envelopes or have set up regular donations through the website. The weekly amounts ranged from \$1 to \$500, with most ranging from \$5 to \$50 per week.

We ask that you consider making a modest increase in your weekly giving. Doing so will significantly reduce the shortfall we have been experiencing for several years and provide funds to cover the cost of the Pastoral Associate.

What is meant by a modest increase? For example, our offertory collection would increase by over \$150,000 if *each* of the 202 envelope/e-givers added \$15 to their weekly contribution. We understand this might not be possible for some families – *and we are grateful for what you are able to give*. Our request is that you review your current contribution and try to dig deeper. Think of the \$15 suggested increase as a *relative amount*. For someone giving \$5, it's a big jump, but for a family giving \$50, maybe the increase should be \$20 or \$25. Please think hard about this, especially if you are an e-giver who set your weekly amount before the pandemic and have since let it run on autopilot. More detail about the offertory breakdown and *suggested* giving amounts are included in Table 2.

Table 2.

Current Weekly Donation	Current Monthly Donation	Suggested Weekly Donation	Suggested Monthly Donation	Estimated number of Parishioners	Total Contributions at Current Annual Donations	Total Contributions at Recommended Increased Annual Donations	Estimated Total Increased Annual Revenue
\$5	\$20	\$15	\$60	182	\$43,680	\$131,040	\$87,360
\$10	\$40	\$20	\$80	86	\$41,280	\$82,560	\$41,280
\$25	\$100	\$40	\$160	77	\$92,400	\$147,840	\$55,440
\$50	\$200	\$75	\$300	41	\$98,400	\$147,600	\$49,200
\$100	\$400	\$135	\$540	8	\$38,400	\$51,840	\$13,440
\$150	\$600	\$200	\$800	3	\$21,600	\$28,800	\$7,200
\$200	\$800	\$275	\$1,100	2	\$19,200	\$26,400	\$7,200
\$350	\$1,400	\$475	\$1,900	2	\$33,600	\$45,600	\$12,000
\$500	\$2,000	\$675	\$2,700	1	\$24,000	\$32,400	\$8,400
				402	\$412,560	\$694,080	\$281,520

Jesuit USA East – DRAFT Apostolic Plan

On October 5th, we received a *draft* of the Jesuit USA East Apostolic Plan (the “Plan”). This plan is the culmination of a communal discernment among the Jesuits and lay colleagues of USA East Province (the “Province”). The Plan outlines the Province’s collective goal to renew Jesuit community life, discern their apostolic and institutional commitments, promote Ignatian spirituality, and advance the Jesuit mission for justice and reconciliation. The purpose of the plan is to assist the Province in “deploying human, financial, and other capital resources to serve its mission and advance the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus.”

The Plan envisions the scope of apostolates and communities over the ten-year Plan horizon – that the Jesuits will be able to support based on their estimated numbers. Importantly, the Plan also states that the missions that remain staffed must focus their efforts on the apostolic priorities.

This report does not provide any conclusions for any of the existing Jesuit apostolates (universities, schools, parishes, or other areas). What it does seek to do is provide an understanding that the Jesuit order supports more ministries today than they will be able to in the future. With respect to the nineteen parishes currently served by Jesuits, there will be a need to reduce this number over the next ten years to seven to nine parishes. The Plan expects to mission two or three Jesuits to each of the remaining parishes in keeping with the priority to enhance Jesuit community life. While we are most concerned about the Plan’s impact on parishes, it suggests an equal, or greater, impact on their other apostolates.

We do not know what this means for OSJ. The Plan will be submitted by the Provincial to Rome next month and published in early 2024. It is possible Rome will reject the draft, but that is unlikely given the number of Jesuits expected to retire from active ministry in the next 10-15 years.

The Plan does not specifically list the factors the Province will use to decide which parishes will continue to be staffed, but the Plan discussion of the other priorities provides some insight. In building Jesuit communities, the Plan directs local communities to live closer to the people who need our help. Another priority is serving the poor and marginalized. A third is focusing more attention *and action* on the environment. Jesuit missions will be assessed on how they address these priorities. We believe – based on what we are doing today – Old Saint Joseph’s Parish mission aligns with the Plan’s priorities, and we are determined to do even more.

What’s Next?

We have concluded that:

- We are a community of faith, rooted in the Jesuit tradition and are determined to remain an Ignatian-centered apostolate.
- The Universal Apostolic Preferences apply to what we do *today* for the community outside our walls, to our growing environmental awareness and most important our respect for sacred liturgies.
- Whatever the Province decides we will proceed, as we have in the past, as a parish dedicated to advancing the works of God on earth.

This is a lot to take in and process. Please know that we remain open to your input, thoughts, and concerns. We are a strong parish today and will continue to be one with your help – especially as we approach our 300th anniversary. With all our work and the gifts of the Holy Spirit we will follow the path God is asking us to take.

Peace.

Francis T. Hannafey, S.J.
OSJ Parish Pastoral Council and OSJ Finance Council