

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE MARTYR

FISCAL YEAR 2010 PASTORAL LETTER

“At all times, preach the Gospel. When necessary, use words.”

When faith informs our actions, what we do is far more persuasive than anything we could say about our desire to preach the Gospel. As we join in worship with other Catholics and participate in parish life, we spread the Good News not only through our individual efforts, but also through the actions of a vibrant faith community. Here are some of the activities that you, as members of the parish of St. John the Martyr, proposed and brought to fruition during the fiscal year ending August 31, 2010.

We are fortunate to have Fr. Paul Feeley in residence at our parish. Fr. Paul brought his considerable body of scholarship to us through a series of insightful Advent lectures that examined the unique role of the persons of Holy Scripture in the Incarnation. Fr. Paul also led a weekly Scripture study in the church hall following the 10:30 AM Mass on Sundays. Fr. Paul’s fresh interpretation of the Gospel readings was often based on a comparison of translations from earlier Greek scripture.

During Lent Fr. Sunny presented an hour-long audio-visual presentation on the Passion of Christ. Combining dramatic images with a haunting musical score, the presentation grabbed us with its intimate portrayal of Christ’s suffering ascent up Calvary. Seventy parishioners were privileged to see this profound and beautiful reflection on the Passion.

Our Lenten preparations were aided by distribution of “The Story of Our Conversions” on Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday. The booklet, which was undertaken by our Communications Committee, profiles the inspiring stories of 12 converts to Catholicism. The booklet was distributed with a unique double-sided bookmark created by the Committee that could also serve as a parishioner registration form. The timing of the booklet before Easter was intended to awaken a renewed sense of commitment for those of us who were born into the Catholic faith. An article about our booklet also appeared in *Catholic New York*.

We invited parishioners to extend their faith commitment by signing up for various parish ministries on Pentecost Sunday. Our Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Choir, Ushers, Fund Raising and Communications Committee members showcased their ministry or committee in the church hall following the morning Masses. Several new volunteers signed up, and generous parishioners marked the birthday of the Church by donating cakes and other desserts for the event.

Many emergencies, illnesses and petitions come up needing ongoing prayer. A prayer chain consisting of a group of people who pray for the needs of the parishioners on a daily basis was established. On Pentecost Sunday a parishioner donated a book to enter prayer requests for the prayer chain. This book is available behind the last pew of the Church.

Nearly 140 people crowded into our church to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on July 16. The Solemn Mass, which was marked by beautiful traditional hymns in honor of our Blessed Mother, was concelebrated by all the Carmelite friars currently in residence at our parish, and by special visitor Tom Tortorella, newly ordained deacon of the Archdiocese. The rite concluded with enrollment in the Confraternity of the Brown Scapular. The Solemn Mass followed three evenings of prayers, hymns, readings, homilies and devotions in preparation for the feast day. Our thanks to the parishioners who served cake and beverages in the church hall following the Mass.

An A-frame sign to announce church activities was purchased and set up outside the church in May using money donated by a parish member. Posters displayed in the sign announcing specific events included the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel celebration and our Friday Film Nights. Other posters displayed in the sign included a Schedule of Services, RCIA instruction and research about Catholics who attend Mass.

The Friday Night Film series featuring films with themes of moral struggle continued with an ever-growing audience enjoying a pizza buffet supper, a carefully selected film and discussion at the conclusion of the film. The films presented during the last fiscal year were “Days of Wine and Roses,” “The Apartment,” “Witness,” “Dead Poets Society” and “Crimes and Misdemeanors”. Each film was introduced by Fr. Michael Tueth, S.J., Associate Professor of the Communication and Media Studies Department at Fordham University. Fr. Tueth moderated a discussion at the conclusion of each film. Many thanks to the volunteers who coordinated the film nights and to those guests who brought dessert.

The Fund Raising Committee held two raffles to benefit the painting of the church. The prizes for this first raffle included the first prize of \$1,000 and merchant cards in the amounts of \$500, \$250 and two \$100 cards. Because parishioners donated the prizes, the raffle netted \$6,600. The second raffle was a Lottery Tree covered with 105 scratch-off Lottery tickets in various denominations. One winner received all the scratch-off tickets. This raffle added \$2,400 to the painting fund.

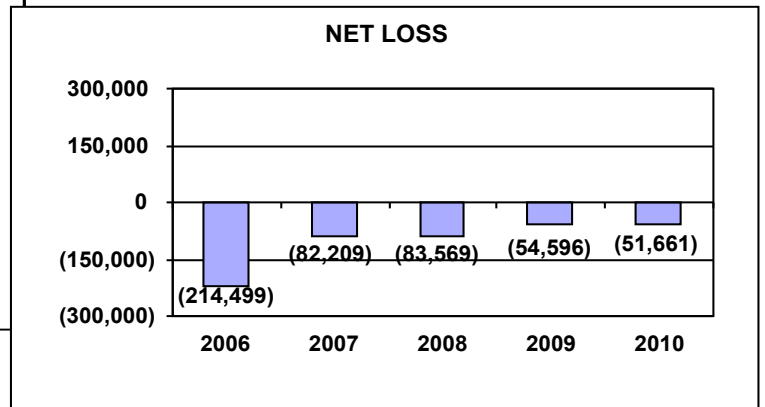
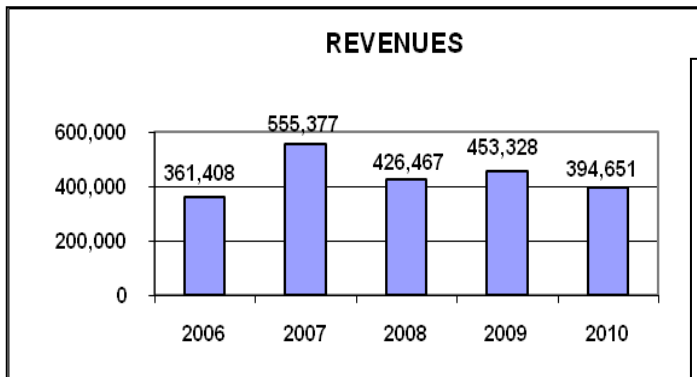
To strengthen the stewardship at St. John the Martyr, parishioners were encouraged to sign up for Parish Pay, an automated means to financially support the church through monthly contributions from a person’s checking, savings or credit card account. Enrollment in Parish Pay helps to ensure predictable revenues in order to meet ongoing financial obligations.

Although thunderstorms were predicted, stalwart volunteers from our parish staffed our church’s table at the 3rd Avenue Street Fair in June. Our presence on the street brought us to the attention of the passersby, many of whom stopped to chat about faith – or just grab a brownie. Our thanks to those who took the time to staff our table or made it a point to come by and visit.

Parish Financial Report Fiscal Year Ending August 31, 2010

Our financial report covers the fiscal year ended August 31, 2010. As you can see from the table on page 2, our revenue for the 2010 fiscal year was \$394,651, a 13% decrease from fiscal 2009. However, regular weekly and holy day collections, which are the foundation of our parish's income, remained fairly steady at \$292,876, a decrease of only 3% compared to the prior fiscal year. Thanks to your generosity and to your willingness to use ParishPay, the automated giving program, our offertory base has remained fairly consistent in these difficult economic times.

On the Expense side, we decreased our operating costs 11% primarily by holding the line on staff salaries and deferring some maintenance expenses. Although we are watching our expenses closely, we incurred a net loss of (\$51,661) in the 2010 fiscal year. That is the amount by which our expenses exceeded our income over the 12-month period ending August 31, 2010. The loss required us to dip into savings to cover our day-to-day expenses. Based on current giving, we are projecting a loss for fiscal year 2011 of (\$52,208).



Taking Stock

Many of our long-time parishioners wonder why, it seems, we are always singing a sad ballad about our finances. The first answer is simply that we have better processes for tracking our income and expenses. The rosy picture of past years may not have fully reflected the underlying reality of our fiscal situation.

The second reason is that our parishioner base has shifted. The trend among many parishes is, unfortunately, declining Mass attendance. When Vatican II sought to bring habitual Mass attendance back to sincere worship, many Catholics erroneously felt that missing Mass on Sunday is no longer a serious offense and stopped coming to church regularly. It is up to the faithful to support their church, and since this has traditionally taken place in the form of a personal offering during the Mass, our collections have fallen from their peak.

Also, several years ago, the Archdiocese began to pay some of our bills with the expectation that the diocese would be repaid once our parish turned the corner. That debt has climbed to \$730,329 as of August 31, 2010. Since this indebtedness introduces vulnerability into our parish's independence, we would like to revive regular giving to the point where we are once again covering all our bills and even begin to pay back the Archdiocese.

Going Forward

As you look around you, you can take delight in what you, our parishioners, have made possible. The funding for the rehabilitation of our church comes from not only Bicentennial Funds but also from monies raised through our fund raising activities and another loan of \$162,960 from the Archdiocese of New York. We ask that you continue your generous giving and prayerfully request that you consider increasing your weekly offering if your means allow it. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we will continue to be diligent stewards of the treasures entrusted to us. We will move forward together as a parish in our work as Christ's disciples.

**INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENTS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2009 & 2010
AND BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011**

	FY 2009	FY 2010	Budget FY 2011
Revenue			
Regular weekly collections	251,981	250,366	250,000
Holyday collections	49,519	42,510	50,000
Rental Income	2,772	2,301	0
Cardinal's Appeal rebate	29,435	2,005	0
Temporary restricted contributions	47,310	51,954	0
Donations and bequests	24,177	13,761	15,000
Fund raising programs	28,350	11,395	25,000
Other miscellaneous	19,784	20,359	29,960
Total revenue	453,328	394,651	369,960
Expenses			
Clergy salaries	60,425	49,603	47,400
Lay salaries	136,783	137,449	128,685
Clergy benefits	24,723	21,987	27,592
Lay benefits	67,748	42,605	36,432
Lay pension contribution	14,660	11,713	8,809
House living expenses	27,609	23,744	27,000
Office and clerical expenses	39,273	34,211	37,700
Parish fund raising expenses	4,670	1,378	2,500
Utilities	41,287	42,084	40,000
Repairs	40,493	32,100	18,000
Property and general insurance	20,273	19,086	19,500
Cathedraticum	26,163	27,408	25,000
Other	3,817	2,943	3,550
Total expenses	507,924	446,311	422,168
Loss from operations	(54,596)	(51,660)	(52,208)