

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As much as I enjoy writing about the Faith, and how it relates to our everyday lives as Catholics, there are times that we need to look at the more secular matters, which none of us really enjoy. A couple of weeks ago, we published, in the bulletin, a parish financial report for the year ending August 31, 2017, but because of the storm, the bulletin was not delivered in time, and we forgot to bring it over last week. This week, my column is looking at the report, and explaining some aspects of it.

The revenue of the parish comes from different sources:

*Our weekend Masses, Holyday and special monthly and Devotions collections amounted to: \$251,299*

*Christmas, Easter and other special collections were: \$30,596*

***Total Regular Collections: \$281,895***

This is what was reported as regular and special collections, however, there was a problem on how things were being reported and recorded, which has been taken care of.

*Our various fundraising functions: \$15,980.* Many of the fundraising activities had mistakenly been reported as part of the first collection, which has been addressed, and all future fundraising will be reported as such.

*Parish programs including Religious Education, Youth Ministry, Pre-Cana and other programs amounted to: \$38,902.* The fees associated with Religious Education help to run the program, but parishioner contributions continue to provide for the religious formation of our parish's youth. The Pre-Cana program, run by volunteers, actually brings in much needed funds for the parish.

*Auxiliary revenue includes funds donated for liturgical services (Baptisms, Marriages, etc.) poor box, candles, bulletin advertising, donations & bequests: \$95,062.* Our current contract with the bulletin company pays the parish \$5,000 per year.

*Collections the parish took up on behalf of others in need like Catholic Relief Services, Peter's Pence, World Missions, Respect Life and other Special National Collections raised: \$10,137.* Even though this is reported under revenue, it is paid out immediately to the groups that it is collected for.

*We earned interest and gains on our investments this year amounting to: \$1,343.*

***Total Revenue: \$443,319***

Our Expenses were as follows:

*Salaries paid for clergy, clerical, church maintenance, religious education, housekeeping and music ministry: \$112,482.* Yes, it is true, people who work for the Church (including priests) get paid, although these are not high salaries; aside from the clergy, salaries included two full-time employees and three part-time.

*Fringe benefits on the salaries detailed above – including federal & state mandated employment taxes – along with medical/dental insurance and pension contributions amounted to: \$78,363.*

*The expense associated with the fundraising programs run throughout the year was: \$345. As I already mentioned in the Revenue section, the fundraising was not properly reported, and as a result, neither is the expenditure.*

*Supporting our parish programs including Religious Education, Youth Ministry, Parish Social Ministry, liturgical expense, candles, altar linens & cleaning of vestments, Bereavement ministry, Pre-Cana and prayer groups: \$63,948. We are called, as a people of God, to ministry, and it costs money to run ministries.*

*Our annual subsidy to Holy Angels Regional School amounted: \$44,892. This assessment is based upon our Sunday first collections, as a percentage, which has been readjusted at a lower percentage. In honesty, this subsidy had not been paid in over a decade.*

*Maintaining office operations for the parish including postage/ mailing, printing, computer maintenance & support, office furniture & equipment, bank fees, telephone, accounting fees, interest expenses and other professional fees and other miscellaneous office expense totaled: \$37,932. As mentioned above, there are only two full time employees for the parish, since other services are needed, we have contracted with the diocesan parish services to provide bookkeeping and other services.*

*Our diocesan assessment that helps support the Diocese of Rockville Centre programs, many of which benefit us without additional cost (legal services, personnel services, fiscal oversight, etc.) was: \$26,438. This is based upon a percentage of total parish revenue, including collections, fundraising and other donations.*

*To support the rectory with food, laundry & other household expenditures amounted to: \$12,877.*

*The funds we listed above as collections on behalf of others were disbursed in the total amount collected: \$10,137.*

*Maintenance of church building & accompanying structures for the year including, utilities (gas, electricity, fuel oil & water), repairs & insurance premiums for property & liability insurance. The total expense was: \$126,415.*

**Total Expenses: \$513,829**

**As of the fiscal year ending August 31, 2017, Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish's expenses were \$70,510 greater than its revenue.**

This is not a new situation, nor has it only begun over the last four years, or even ten years, but has been part of a continuing cycle, which I intend to end. Over the six months that I have been here, I have been as honest and transparent with all of you, as parishioners, as I can be. I have also asked, in past bulletins for all of you not to lose hope because of the financial situation, or over any other situations we will face as a Faith Community. **As of the end of August, we were in debt \$1,204,651**, owing the Diocese of Rockville Centre \$845,465, part of which includes \$29,309 in interest for the year, which is now suspended, pending a balanced budget including a plan for repayment. Our debt to Holy Angels Regional School is \$354,870, which is non-interest bearing, and various vendors were owed \$4,316.

Looking to the future, we have already taken steps to lower expenses, and have found new sources of revenue, as well as revisiting some of the things that have helped the parish financially in the past.

Ultimately, what is needed is an increase in collections, which will be brought about by an increase in mass attendance, which will result in more people being as generous as all of you have been. This parish has seen good times and hard times, but it has survived, and thrived. Now as we prepare to celebrate the centenary of its founding, we will walk together into a new era, cherishing our past, experiencing what God makes present, and looking forward with hope. God Bless you all.

Pax,

Fr. Henry