

The Parish is YOU

Welcome: Good morning. Today I stand before you as your brother in Christ. My name is Gordon Rodewald, and I have been a parishioner at the Proto-Cathedral since 2002. I am a member of the Knights of Columbus, the Finance Council and the fairly new Stewardship Committee.

Introduction: I am going to share with you information today which is critical to you as an integral member within our Parish family. Critical because without every one of us thinking and acting as a Parish family, the body is not whole. Families rely upon each other to thrive, grow and gain the peace only an engaged parishioner will understand, and which is required for the survival of our family.

Body: The main point of what I want to communicate is the vital need for each parishioner to be fully engaged in the life and health of the parish, by giving of your time, talent, and services, which will undoubtedly lead to giving of treasure. Let me ask you, what is a Parish? Is it this building? NO, It is YOU. It is US. There was a time when all churches had geographic boundaries, and everyone knew in which Parish they lived, they thought of this as an extended family. This does not hold true as much now, especially for Our Parish which is very much a destination parish. The geographic boundaries assigned to The Proto-Cathedral are very small, fewer than 1 in 5 of us live inside that boundary. The rest of us drive to get here, and we are willing to do this because of the beautiful liturgy and music. The result is a growing family of families all seeking the same thing, a closer relationship with Jesus Christ and to help each other get to Heaven.

Parish life gives us eternal food in the Eucharist. Parish life needs nurturing, like any other relationship, to thrive and grow. **There is no parish without her parishioners.** The Bible says we are the eyes and ears for Heaven. We are the hands to do God's work. All the members of Christ's Body need to contribute and feel the weight of that responsibility, to find your role and use your gifts to maintain the Parish health so that it will continue to grow and flourish, just as you do in your personal home. The Body needs all its parts, hands, feet, voice,

thoughts, prayers, work, time, talent and treasure. Everyone here is the life and lifeblood of the Parish. You are an essential parishioner because this is a growing, vital, evolving family – OUR FAMILY. OUR PARISH. What WE choose to do with that makes or breaks the health and vitality of our Parish.

Let's break down how that should look.

1. Time: A number of years, ago the Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater was a very sleepy parish and was under the threat of closure. Today, it is quite different. There are so many opportunities here to grow in our faith and in our relationship with Christ. Do you see yourself here? Taking part, taking advantage of these opportunities, helps us grow closer to God as a Parish Family and enriches our Parish Life.

For example:

- a. Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation
 - b. Daily Mass
 - c. Confession
 - d. Alliance of Two Hearts and Communion of Reparation Eucharistic Adoration
 - e. Lenten and Advent Parish Missions
 - f. Faith Formation Classes
2. Talent and Services: How often do we have the simplest or most complex problems come up at home, where plumbing, gardening, or electrical skills are needed? If there is a family member with the appropriate skills, they just do it! The same is true in our parish family. Our parish family relies on each of us to share our special gifts or skills to help when it is needed.

We also have many ministries that serve our parish family in various ways, and provide outreach to the community. These do not come to you without the time it takes to plan, set up, engage, and clean up. Today, less than a handful of our Parish family takes on the brunt of this work. You may also know that there are several big projects

underway right now. The Kitchen remodel will begin soon, the Adoration chapel just broke ground, and other projects are being discussed.

I want you to become involved, to feel like a family member, and make your gifts available to God and to your Parish family. We have an opportunity, together as Family, to keep this destination Parish vibrant, active and alive for many years to come. This cannot happen without your engagement, the sharing of your talent and services.

Examples:

- a. Liturgical Ministers
- b. Frassati Supper
- c. Social Committee
- d. Protect Life Crusaders
- e. Knights of Columbus
- f. Share your special skills or services

3. Treasure: When you have a leaky pipe in your house, or an arcing electric panel, you pay a professional to fix it. When your bills are due to keep your lights on, you pay your bills. Why would you not see the same critical need and your role to play in your Parish home? To create and maintain a vibrant Parish life takes commitment and funding to pay the bills and support everyday expenses. The more events and programs we have here, the more electricity we consume, the more gas we use, the more garbage we generate. All of this costs more money.

The Parish is where we encounter Jesus Christ. This is where we live to bring children closer to God in our faith, through the gifts of the Sacraments that guide our lives, nourish our souls, marry and say good bye to our loved ones. We sing, and cry, pray, and console, plan, laugh and perform every function of vibrant family. It is our responsibility to fund our church and the programs that keep us alive in body and soul. How do you see yourself here? The Bible tells us to tithe 10%. Father asks that we give 5% of our income to our

Parish and 5% to other Catholic organizations. Based on last year's giving and this year's budget, we know that we have a gap. Just as your costs at home go up, so do the costs to maintain your church. But, if each person in addition to whatever they gave last year, even if it was nothing, would consider giving an additional \$3.00 per week, about the cost of a cup of coffee, the parish would break even: balance the books. But more than that, this small request provides an opportunity for our Parish to continue to grow and thrive. This is an easy wonderful start, an increase of \$3.00 more per week. We can do this together!

FEEL GOOD: Imagine Our Parish with adults learning, supporting, caring, and ministering. Imagine the children growing, learning, strengthening in the Holy Spirit with each milestone, just as they are met within any other family. WE HAVE ALL THAT NOW! Where do you see yourself, your children, and grandchildren in 50-100 years from now? What legacy will we leave for our future generations, through hard times and good times? How do we ensure this beautiful church, its beautiful liturgy and tradition, and the Catholic Faith are available for generations to come?

Conclusion: As a good steward of the Church, you are needed to play your role and be active in the life and health of your parish. Next weekend is commitment Sunday. I ask you to not only join me and increase your pledge to the Parish by at least \$3 more per week, but also, prayerfully consider signing up for a ministry, commit to spending more time with God in Prayer, and offer your God given gifts and talent to your Parish. Come to the next coffee hour or evening program, get to know the people you are trying to get to Heaven with. Enrich your life and the life of your Parish Family.