

Dear Members of Holy Name Parish,

Two months ago or so, I took over from Fr. Gros; here are a few random thoughts that I've had in the last few weeks.

When I first arrived here two months ago, I wrote in my first Pastor's page

*I want to help each of you grow in your personal relationship to Christ. And I hope you will help me negotiate the various obstacles that are sure to come. Again, everyone has to pitch in to make this work. I will help in whatever way I can, but I will also be counting on all of you.*

The work that goes on in a parish cannot be done by the pastor and staff only; nor should it. This work, this ministry, of ours is the primary responsibility of each of us, you and me. As I tried to define what we should look like as a "parish" community, I turned, as I often do when wanting something more reliable than Wikipedia, to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

*A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church...*

A parish should be a cross-section of humanity; that is, it should be made of women, men, and children of various races and socio-economic situations. It is where the people of God rub shoulders with one another as the Body of Christ. Together, we witness to the Salvation that comes to us through Christ. Moreover,

*[W]hen it acts...the Church reaches a higher degree of actuality than it would achieve simply by continuing in existence...[I]t is most tangibly and intensively "event" when Christ Himself is present in his congregation...from the Catholic Encyclopedia.*

I grew up in a small town with only two churches. Sadly, there was one for white people and another for those of color. We have happily moved beyond that in the Catholic Church. I am happy that we see people of all colors and ages and genders in this Christ community at Holy Name of Jesus. This truly looks like the Body of Christ!

About the school, as you know, the Holy Name of Jesus School, in existence for more than 125 years, is sponsored by and supported by our parish community. Tuition cannot even keep up with the operational needs of the school; the parish must help to keep it running. This is not an easy task, but we can do it...if everyone pitches in.

As for the church, yes, the University owns the church building and land under it and they maintain the exterior of the church; but we, the community, are responsible for maintaining the interior. Your contributions must provide for the needs of the school, the rectory, and the interior of the church itself. We do not receive funding from anyone, not Loyola and not the

UCS Province. We are “on our own”, as it were. From time to time, we as a community will have to face the reality of three old buildings that must be maintained and/or repaired. In fact, as I write this, I am expecting the bad news that the school will need a new roof. So, when the time comes, and it will, that we ask for financial help, please, remember and be generous. Later this fall you’ll hear me ask for your time, treasure and talent again when we do a stewardship drive.

As an example of how you can be more involved, we recently put out a call for applicants to be on our School Board. We are especially in need of people with experience in marketing, finance, and facilities management. Ours is an advisory board, but good advice has to have a good source. Please, if you have experience in the fields I just mentioned, do contact the main office of the parish at 504-865-7430 and I will be happy to give you more information.

We also need Eucharistic ministers, greeters, council members, and so forth. So, if you are interested in any of these, it is not too early to volunteer. Several of our volunteers have been doing this for some time and need a break.

Which brings me to my final point. I realize that all of you have very busy lives. And I’ve noticed that there is a relatively small group of volunteers who carry most of the burden. We need more of you. Please, think about what you can offer to the Church community.

If, as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* says, “When it acts, the Church receives a higher degree of actuality...”, then we are those who act. Of course, there is a spiritual dimension to the quote, but it is also the way a cohesive, vibrant parish operates. Different people take on different functions for the good of all.