

## *From the desk of Fr. Jim*

### **MONEY AMONG FRIENDS**

No matter what the circumstances in which a parish finds itself; no matter if it is a small country parish or a sprawling mega parish, there is one thing that is true beyond a doubt. We need each other.

For reasons that stretch back to our first parents, Adam and Eve, we try as best we can to avoid this truth about us. We may come in to Mass late and leave as quickly as we can, backing our car into a parking space, but the day will come when we will wish we had a few friends. I think that God forces us into these situations, out of love for us. In everyday life, the circumstances abound. We run out of gas, have a flat, a deadline looms, the roof leaks, we get sick. We need someone to help us.

The goals that we share in life are such that we need each other to accomplish them. In fact, the more we do need each other, the more potentially magnificent is the goal. In our parish we should not forget the wonder of building a new, permanent church. Without the cooperative effort of putting our own resources together, we could have never accomplished this good thing.

The devil does not want this to happen. He does not want us to acknowledge our need for one another. He does not want us to cooperate, pool our efforts, live in community, help one another. He will do anything that he can to discourage us. His fears are based on two things.

First, he knows that if we give of ourselves, build a community of friends, we will experience a deep and rich fulfillment in our life. The more we give of ourselves, the happier we will be. This is the exact opposite of his goal. He wants us miserable. Being isolated and friendless is the most effective way for him to do this.

Second, the devil does not want us to make the church strong. The more confident and capable the church is in dealing with life's problems, the more we are able to proclaim the "Good News of God in Christ Jesus." Our efforts to further our mission by education (catechesis), works of mercy toward the poor and those in need, the celebration of the sacraments, the construction of facilities for the advancement of the church and the worship of God, sharing in the burdens of the larger church both here and far away ... when all these things are happening the more fearful is the devil that God's goal of the happiness of humanity might be realized.

So, each of our efforts are essential in accomplishing this. We may only be able to give a small amount of time or to only give a little from our financial resources. We cannot imagine that our gifts make no difference. When we allow ourselves to be convinced of this, the devil scores a point or, even worse, plants a deadly seed in our heart. If we come to think that the good actions that we make can do no good, where will that thought carry us? Rather we must know that the good work that God accomplishes in us will help to bring all humanity to the knowledge of his love.

As you make a financial decision about your giving to the Church, know that your decision will have an effect on the life of the parish. We all joyfully share the burden of the success of our living the Gospel and working together for the spread of the Kingdom.