

Things Going on at CTK

Acts 1:1-11

Psalm 47

Ephesians 1:17-23

Luke 24:46-53

At the beginning of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he explains how *everything* should be directed toward "knowledge of [Christ]" (Ephesians 1:17b). Saint Paul expressed his desire that everyone have the eyes of their hearts opened, that they be enlightened and "know what is the hope that belongs to [Christ's] call" (Ephesians 1:18). He desires for us to personally know the blessings—the "riches and glory," and the "surpassing greatness of [Christ's] power" (Ephesians 1:18-19). After Christ's Ascension, He sent His Holy Spirit upon the Church to be the primary visible instrument leading people to these blessings.

As I mentioned last weekend, I am going to use this homily time to address some of the different things that are going on in our parish and school that serve, in small but important ways, to lead us closer to the blessings of Christ. While I can't possibly cover everything during this homily, I am going to cover some of the most frequent questions that people have asked me and parish council members in the last few months.

Missalettes

A few months ago, the Parish Council reviewed all of the options we have for missalettes and they have voted to continue to use the ones we now have. They are large-print, bilingual missalettes that have a number of easy-to-use features. Unfortunately, there are also some things that we used to have in our old missalettes that these new ones don't have. We were hoping to find one that had everything, but it was impossible in the large print, and the small print was like 2-point font!

Our Capital Campaign and Building Projects

As most of you know, we have finished building the west wing addition of the school. This was done primarily as the least expensive way to create more meeting room space in other parts of the campus, including the old church, the parish center, and the PRE classrooms. Now that the school no longer needs those spaces, we can fully utilize them for other events. The new wing of the school was dedicated in January and we had a wonderful turnout of parishioners. The outdoor classroom on the north side of the church is being completed right now.

We are also working with the architect on the renovation plans for the old church. By first estimates, it looks like it will cost about twice as much as what we budgeted for, but thankfully, people are continuing to pay their pledges and it looks like everything should work out. Thank all of you for your continued generosity, despite how chaotic the economy has been!

I've had two people express concern that we are not doing the same projects that we originally presented to the parish. As you might remember, we were originally going to build a multipurpose building on the south side of the campus in addition to the other projects I just mentioned. However, once we had the final pledge numbers from the capital campaign and realized that we did not have enough money to do all of the projects, we did the ones that would create the most versatile meeting space on campus. We immediately came back to all of you and presented the changes and gave everyone a month to change their pledges if they did not still support our mission. Since that time, we have done everything we have said we were going to do and hope to finish all of it by the end of this year or middle of next year.

CASA

Several months ago, the bishop preached (via CD) on our Catholic Arkansas Sharing Appeal (CASA). We are currently way behind in our parish goal—only 40% of our goal in pledges. Every year, our parish writes grants for CASA money and every year we are blessed to be beneficiaries of CASA grants. The most recent CASA grants we've received have paid for additional security cameras on campus, Stanford testing material for the school, books for PRE, RCIA, and the church, and professional development for staff members. I encourage all of us to support CASA, knowing that it helps support our own parish and many parishes who need help more than we do.

New Staff Members

Some of the parishioners have wondered what process I use to hire new staff members. I actually use a process that the Diocese recommended to me years ago and has been extremely effective. The process involves putting a search committee together. The committee is generally made up of people who have some knowledge about the job position, including Parish Council members, parishioners and staff members. The Committee puts together a “qualities profile,” a list of qualities we believe that the person needs in order to perform the job or ministry well. Then the Committee clarifies the job description and duties in order to write the advertisement. The Committee also determines the scope of advertisement. After résumés are emailed to the Committee, they review them, looking for candidates who match the qualities profile. Such candidates are contacted for interviews and their references and former employers are contacted. If none of the applicants meet the qualities profile, then the process begins again, with a broader scope of advertisement. In the end, the Committee makes a recommendation on who they feel should be hired.

During my time at CTK, I have only hired two staff members without using this process. The first was our original Family Life Director. Since she was employed jointly by CTK and St. Boniface, Fr. McDougal and I worked together reviewing applicants. The other person was our new Administrative Assistant to Hispanic Ministry. The reason I did not use the formal search committee process was because the job description and duties changes on a weekly basis and it is a part-time position. Hispanic Ministry is obviously in a radical state of development right now in our parish. If Hispanic Ministry continues to grow and develop, than it will be important in the future for us to have a formal search committee to hire a Director of Hispanic Ministry.

Automated Phone System

When I first arrived at CTK six years ago, our office phone system consisted of an answering machine that only held three messages. The system made no provisions for emergencies after office hours. We now have an automated phone system. While none of us loves having our calls answered by an automated attendant, there are a number of benefits to having such a system. Now, when Donna cannot get to the phone in time to answer, or if she's on another line or helping someone who has stopped by the office, people can direct their calls to the person they want to speak to. Also, there is a function on the phone for emergencies—like when someone has died or someone is in need of anointing of the sick.

Please know that during office hours, we try to answer every call. However, when we don't at least you don't get directed to an answering machine that is full! :)

Long Range Planning Committee

Our Long Range Planning Committee is continuing to work on an updated 5-year plan. We are almost ready to present some suggestions to the Parish Council, who will have to modify them, present them to the parish, and vote on them. These plans will then be used to put together a Deanery plan with the other Catholic churches in our Deanery. I cannot thank the members of the LRP Committee enough for their dedication to our work. We usually meet a couple times a month for one and a half hours, which

is a big commitment. A couple of our members have been on the Committee since its inception almost six years ago!

Financial Statics

There was a lot of interest generated from our survey last fall about the finances of the parish. It's important for all of you to know that we report our finances regularly in the bulletin and, in more depth, in the King's Courier. Also, if you have any questions about our finances you can call the church office and talk to our Business Manager, Bob Geurtz.

A couple of quick financial facts from our recent survey include—

- It cost about \$153,000 to run our parish and school each month!

Salaries & Benefits	\$102,622
Business Expenses	\$11,792
Utilities	\$6,839
Supplies	\$10,005
Maintenance	\$3,915
Education	\$12,819
<u>Fellowship & Outreach</u>	<u>\$5,274</u>
Total	\$153,267

- About 25% of our parish families do not give any money to support the operation of our parish.
- We offer \$40,000 a year in tuition assistance to Catholic school students and \$2,000 to two UAFS students.

What Do I Do All Week?

Numerous parishioners have expressed interest in knowing what my schedule looks like during a normal week. Well, the thing I love about priesthood is that there is no such thing as a “normal” week! However, I thought it would be fun to post my schedule on my blog this week. So beginning Sunday, I will post, hour-by-hour, what my days look like for a week. Of course, I will maintain strict confidentiality by not be posting the names of people I meet with or the details of various meetings. Simply visit my website: www.FatherT.com to see the posts, which I'll upload each night.

Other Important Things

There are numerous other awesome things that are going on in our parish, including some upcoming parish missions and retreats, new opportunities for adult education and formation, a summer school program and art camp, a part-time assistant pastor in January, a full-time Advancement Director at the school, some upgrades to the Parish Center, and countless other things! Please read the bulletin closely each week to keep up-to-date on all of the opportunities being offered for us to grow closer to Christ and to experience His blessing!

SUGGESTED PRAYER EXERCISES:

- ✚ Read Jeremiah 29:11-14 and reflect on the ways you see this Scripture passage being fulfilled at Christ the King Catholic Church and School, as well as in your own life.