

Annual Stewardship Report for the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year The Catholic Student Center at USF, Tampa

In my report to you this year I would like to address six topics regarding stewardship and the annual budget at the Catholic Student Center. They are:

- The Weekly Offertory
- The Endowment Fund for Campus Ministry
- Missionary Co-op Collection for the Little Sisters of Gulu, Uganda
- Stained Glass Windows & Renovations to the Chapel
- Other Contributions and Projects
- End of the Year Contributions
- Receipts for Income Tax Purposes

The Weekly Offertory And How It Supports Our Mission

The Diocese of St. Petersburg and its individual entities schedule their fiscal year from July 1 to June 30. During the July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 time period the total offertory collections at the Catholic Student Center were \$143,812.33. This represents an increase of approximately 18% from the 2009 to 2010 offertory figure which was \$121,451.82. This is an unusually large percentage of increase; the typical year over year offertory increase is in the range of 5% to 7%. I expected some increase in offertory and attendance as a result of the new stained glass windows, but this turned out to be more than I expected. It will be interesting to see if these numbers continue into the current fiscal year.

I am very grateful for your support, especially in light of the difficult financial situations faced by many in our country and in our world. The offertory collection covers approximately two-thirds of the annual budget at the Catholic Student Center. The Diocese subsidizes our annual budget in the amount of \$61,600. The diocesan subsidy is a necessity due to the small size of our Chapel and the large student population. Your offertory contributions provide much more than the majority of the operating expenses of the Chapel; they give the Bishop and the Diocese great confidence that their annual subsidy supports a ministry that is valued by the local community.

Your faithful financial support allows me to maintain the Center physical plant, provide the resources necessary for our liturgical life and support the activities of our Catholic Student Union. In the past year our community welcomed thirteen infants to the Sacrament of Baptism. Three members of our community received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Four young couples completed their pre-marital preparation at the Catholic Center in order to be married elsewhere.

Our on-going faith formation activities continue to be very successful. The Adult Faith Formation program meets on a weekly basis to read and discuss books on spirituality and belief. The student Bible Study group meets weekly at the Catholic Center. The student organization also organizes small group meetings to provide community and support for students living in the dorms and off-campus.

The Catholic Student Union has benefitted over the past few years from very good student leadership. The CSU has about 100 members on its email list. The group organizes a wide variety of activities throughout the academic year. Some events are strictly fun, such as the Ice Cream Social, tubing on the Rainbow River and visits to the Ropes Course at Riverfront Park. There are community service events such as the group's annual participation in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. There are also a number of retreat experiences that are offered throughout the year. Participation in these events varies between twenty and sixty students. These numbers remain fairly consistent from year to year; participation in group activities is somewhat limited by space available at the Catholic Center.

Endowment Fund for Campus Ministry

This Endowment Fund was established in August 2000 in order to provide a funding source for the future of campus ministry activities at the Catholic Student Center. It is my hope that income from this Endowment will eventually alleviate the need for an annual subsidy from the Diocese. It will be several decades before the principal amount in the Fund is sufficient to generate any significant income. When I established the Fund it was with the understanding that this would be our community's gift to a future generation of students and members. During the past fiscal year our Endowment Fund for Campus Ministry gained \$8,548.76 from favorable investment performance. There were contributions to the Fund in the amount of \$5,500. The current value of the Fund is \$203,233.33. No withdrawals have been made from the Fund since its inception.

Little Sisters of Gulu, Uganda

The monthly collection we do for the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu, Uganda is part of a diocesan program called the Missionary Co-operative Plan. Under the Plan, each parish in the Diocese is paired with a missionary organization; some of these missionary organizations are domestic, and some are foreign.

Prior to 2003 the Catholic Student Center did not participate in the Missionary Co-operative Plan. As we are the recipients of a diocesan subsidy the Chancery does not levy the assessments and fees on our budget that are levied against parish budgets. The Catholic Student Center is considered a mission for the University community, and is not expected to support missionary activities other than its own.

This situation changed when I was approached by a diocesan official in 2003. Sr. Irene Lucy Onyai was scheduled that year to speak at three parishes in the Diocese, and request a collection in those parishes to help with the work her community does in northern Uganda. At the last minute, one of the parishes declined to have Sr. Irene speak. As this parish was the home parish of both myself and the diocesan official, we felt some obligation to avoid embarrassment to the Diocese because of this last minute equivocation.

Sr. Irene spoke at our Sunday liturgies that Fall, and I scheduled a collection for the following weekend. This is the normal pattern for Missionary Co-operative partners: a factual presentation and one annual collection. Some members of the our Sunday congregation asked if we could do a monthly collection for the Sisters, and that has remained our practice.

The funds collected for the mission organizations that participate in the Plan are remitted to the Diocese; the Diocese forwards the money to the missionary organization. The Diocese acts as a "middle man" for two reasons. The first is a minor issue of accountability, namely, that the money is leaving the entity where it originates (the Catholic Student Center, in this case), and being transmitted to another entity (the Little Sisters). Every Diocese makes an annual financial report to the Vatican. This financial report summarizes all transactions that occurred during the previous year. As mission collections are a line item distinguished from normal operating transactions, Missionary Co-op Plan funds are disbursed through the Diocese in order to allow for this accounting.

The second reason is that each Diocese in the US makes a contribution to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops to support the office and staff that manage the Conference's business matters. The dollar figure that each Diocese contributes is based on the amount of money that the Diocese sends to the various missions it supports. The intention of this was to make the contribution an equitable share of the costs of the Conference's activities; it protects poorer Dioceses from being unduly burdened. The dollar amount of the contribution is a percentage of the total figure collected for missions, but the contribution to the Conference is not deducted from the mission collection monies. Rather, it is paid out of the Diocese's operating expenses. These operating expenses are paid by monies the Diocese collects from the Annual Pastoral Appeal and other levies on parishes.

The money collected by the parishes that participate in the Plan is sent to the Diocese immediately after the collection, and transmitted by check (in the case of a domestic mission), or by international wire transfer (in the case of a foreign mission). This past year we sent \$27,550 to the Little Sisters. Our contributions allowed the Sisters to finish the bottom floor of their new building, furnish it and purchase four thermal therapy machines with which to treat the people whom they serve.

The Little Sisters' primary mission is to care for those displaced by the civil conflict in northern Uganda. There has been relative peace there for over a year as the government and the rebels have agreed to a cease-fire, but there are still thousands of people who suffer the consequences of the war. Some have lost homes and loved ones; others have been ostracized by their families. \$27,550 is a fairly small amount of money in the United States, but it made a big difference in the lives of those who have come to depend on the ministry of the Sisters. The money collected here, as with most of the charitable donations collected by the Catholic Church, goes only and solely to the entity for which it was collected. None of our contributions is spent on administrative, or other fees, with the exception of the wire transfer fee charged by the Diocese's bank.

Other Contributions and Projects

You might have noticed satisfied smiles on the faces of our student organization members this year. Several people from our congregation have provided food and meals to the CSU during this

semester. In addition to periodic snacks and treats, a feast day meal was served to the students on the evening of the Feast of all Saints. I'm sure the Saints in heaven were jealous. A few members of our congregation have asked how they can participate in these activities in the future. I will ask the student group to plan a schedule of dates on which they would like to have snacks, or other food, provided. The schedule, and any specific food requests, will be published in the bulletin and on the website for those who would like to contribute. The students, and I, thank you!

Every year we collect non-perishable food items for the St. Vincent de Paul Society. In the past I have taken some of this food to the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry on Nebraska Avenue and some to local St. Vincent de Paul group at Corpus Christi Parish. The Offertory collection on Thanksgiving Day 2010 generated \$167.00; those funds went to the SVdP at Corpus Christi. These organizations provide material and spiritual aid to local families and individuals in need. The model of operations used by the St. Vincent de Paul Societies does not provide "handouts." The recipients of help are treated with dignity, and encouraged to work toward self-sufficiency. One of the hallmarks of our Catholic Faith is its reverence for human life and freedom. The St. Vincent de Paul Societies embody this value in their work. Both the Nebraska Avenue Thrift Store and the Corpus Christi SVdP group would welcome your volunteer involvement in their activities.

We do a bi-annual collection of baby items for Catholic Charities Life Pregnancy Center, in May and December. Those items provide assistance to the Life Pregnancy Center in their mentoring program for women with infants and young children. This ministry exists in order to provide an alternative to both the women's health clinics that encourage abortion and the fundamentalist counseling centers that force religious conversion on women already in desperate circumstances. It's easy to complain about the social ills afflicting women, or the widespread lack of respect for human life, because complaining doesn't cost anything. The Life Pregnancy Center provides real help on a free basis, and referrals to affordable health care options. The Life Pregnancy Center is always interested in welcoming new volunteers to the programs. If you are interested in this ministry, please contact Emma Boe at 813-631-4398.

Stained Glass Windows and Renovations to the Chapel

The windows in our Sunday Chapel were installed in May 2010. At the time of the installation I had sufficient funds to pay for those windows and begin the design process for stained glass windows in the Daily Mass Chapel. Thanks to your generosity the new windows in the Daily Mass Chapel were installed in July 2011. Some of the contributions that were made to this project were unrestricted contributions, that is to say, they were monies that could be used for any benefit to the Chapel building. Those unrestricted donations allowed me to purchase a new baptismal font and to provide our student organization, the CSU, with an LCD projector system for use during their meetings. This projector system also allows us to use the Daily Mass Chapel as a cry room for infants on Sundays.

At present, I am in the process of planning some changes to the sanctuary area of our Sunday Chapel. The new baptismal font changed the layout of sanctuary appointments, and will probably require some minor renovations to the back wall of the Chapel and the raised platform on which the Altar

sits. In the next few months I plan to speak with a liturgical consultant about the details of these renovations. At this point in time I cannot estimate the cost of the work, which will entail enlarging the sanctuary platform, moving the Ambo (lectern), to the other side of the sanctuary and finding a permanent placement for the Tabernacle and Font. I expect that I will have an estimate by the springtime.

End of the Year Contributions

Some members of our congregation like to make end-of-the-year contributions to the Catholic Student Center as part of their planning for income tax purposes. If you find this helpful, I would ask you to consider either a contribution to our Endowment Fund or the building fund for the Chapel renovations. If you have any questions about these funds, I will provide you with as much detail as I have.

Receipts for Income Tax purposes

At the end of the tax year I mail receipts to those who make their contributions by check, and itemize those contributions on their tax returns. If you have received a receipt letter in the past, you will receive one for the 2011 tax year during the month of January 2012. If you would like to receive a receipt letter, or have any questions about anything in this Stewardship Report, please contact me by email at: director@catholicusf.org.

The approach of the holiday season is an opportunity for us to give thanks for the many gifts we have received from God's providence. Our faith community has a special place of prominence among the many things for which I am grateful. I pray that the Lord will bless you and your loved ones in the coming year.

Thank you for your participation in our community,
Fr. Alan