

St. Patrick's Parish MARKHAM

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Dear Friends in Christ,

"I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them... The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms."

I never tire of reading these opening lines from Pope Francis', Joy of the Gospel. Jesus truly is the way God's love becomes incarnate in the world.

Despite the great challenges and obstacles presented by the pandemic, we at St. Patrick's have sought to remain faithful to our mission. Thank goodness for the technologies of Zoom, live-stream, YouTube, social media, our website etc. They have enabled us to stay connected. They have enabled faith to continue to grow. Our mission has stayed the same, but our methods have had to change. So, in the past two years, hundreds of people have had small group faith experiences through on-line Alpha - our youth, young adults, older adults. We have even started Alpha for parents whose children are receiving sacraments. Some of these testimonies have been on our website or have been shared at mass.

For the past two years RCIA has been on-line, but that too has not stopped people from meeting Jesus for the first time, inquiring about faith and making a commitment to live out a friendship with Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church. Amazing! In 2021, at the Easter Vigil, nine people became Catholic. Wow! Despite the pandemic, faith continues to grow!!!

People are coming forward to not only participate in experiences like Alpha, Life Shared, Live Your Strengths, CCO (Catholic Christian Outreach) faith studies and small group studies like "Listening to Indigenous Voices," they are risking the steps to become leaders in these evangelizing efforts. By accompanying each other in the faith, we are already seeing some signs of growth in discipleship.

Youth ministry, sacramental preparation, reaching out to the poor, holding retreats, on-line ministry meetings - these have continued unabated. We now have a Communications Team that creatively finds media to share the message of Jesus. We have a team of committed people who ensure that we can come to mass safely and receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Our Pastoral Team has taken on all kinds assignments totally different from their job description so that we can stay on the mission.

On our parish financial front, the pandemic has shone a powerful light on the nature of our giving. While some parishioners continue to faithfully drop off or mail in donations, we realize more than ever that passing the basket does not fund our mission. Like so much of our parish life, we have had to change our giving to an on-line process. There are now more parishioners giving on-line than any other form of giving. So, to all those who give, THANK YOU! The response by parishioners who changed to giving on-line is heartening. It is a work in progress, but we are definitely moving in the right direction.

Attached to this letter is a summary of the parish Financial Statement for 2021. It includes comparative figures for 2020 and 2019. You will note that the Federal Government's Wage Subsidy helped tremendously.

In conclusion, I encourage you, if you have not yet done so, to convert to giving on-line. It ensures that we can fund our mission of bringing God's love into the world through a life-changing friendship with Jesus. Please keep inviting your friends to come to church. Questions about the Financial Statement for 2021 can be directed to: accounting@stpatrick.on.ca

Peace in the Risen Christ,

Fr. Dominic