

April 2009

Dear Parishioners,

We began Lent this year with more people at our Ash Wednesday prayer than we have ever had before. In March and October of each year parishes are asked to count those at their weekend masses. We had the largest mass count in our history - over 100 more people. We had 27 new households join the parish in February - the third most in our history and the most since August and September of 1998. I hope you will be able to join us for our Easter prayer and consider inviting someone to join us for this Easter. Our mass schedule is as follows:

- Holy Thursday, April 9th at 7:00 p.m.
- Good Friday, April 10th at 7:00 p.m.
- Easter Vigil, April 11th at 8:00 p.m.
- Easter Sunday, April 12th at 8:15 and 10:15

It could be April and the promise of spring. It could be the appointment of Archbishop Dolan to the archdiocese of New York. It could be the struggling economy. It could be changes to our Catholic Schools by St. Therese, Mount Carmel, St. Mark, and St. Joseph High School. It could be that within two years seven of the 12 priests in our district will retire or be reassigned. We look for signs of new life, for something to change and hopefully change for the better. Some changes can not come fast enough and some changes we wish we would never have to make. Do we sit back and wait? Do we pretend nothing has or will change? Do we resist at all costs? Do we help or hinder the future? Do we look for the presence of God? Do we consider what is best for the common good or just my good?

I will gather our ministry coordinators and past and present parish council members this month to address some serious issues for St. Anne and the other Catholic churches in Kenosha. If you would like to participate in any of these efforts, please let me know. They include:

- **Parish finances:** While we have made great progress with our financial challenges these past years, we continue to be short over \$90,000 a year. If every household could give \$2 more per week, we would be well on our way to a more secure future. Remember that \$2 a week can happen with a \$50 or \$100 **SCRIP** purchase of gas, groceries, prescriptions, home purchase, home improvement, clothing, gifts, or eating out. It costs you nothing extra but a little planning ahead. Our Finance Ministry will take the lead in how we can close this gap.
- **Parish Membership:** The experts thought we would have over 1,000 households by this time. We made plans based on that information. We have 851 households. We need to grow our parish membership. A new group will be formed to address this opportunity.
- **Change in pastors:** As I will be reassigned in June, 2010 it is important for the parish to plan for the transition from one pastor to another. A new group will be formed to address this reality.
- The diocese is telling every parish and district to **prepare for half as many priests** for parish ministry in the next ten years. Seven of the twelve priests in our district will retire or be reassigned by June 2011. The parish council will lead this project and utilize the wisdom of ministry coordinators and past parish council members to assist.

Thanks for choosing St. Anne to be your parish and for helping us to be a place where people feel welcomed and at home in their search for God and deeper faith. We depend upon your prayer, your involvement in ministry, and your financial stewardship. A report of your financial contributions for the first three months of 2009 is included with this letter.

Peace and Blessings!

Fr. Don Thimm
Pastor