

St. Patrick's Parish MARKHAM

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Dear Friends in Christ,

What words would you use to describe 2020? For many of us, it might be words like fearful, isolating, uncertain, transformative, humbling, locked-down, devastating, resilient, monastic. As we all scrambled to make sense of the crisis that the pandemic brought upon us, one of the most memorable images I have of 2020 is Pope Francis holding the Blessed Sacrament on that rainy, sombre day in which he gave his Urbi et Orbi address to the world, reminding us that God is with us and is making all things well for those who love Him.

At St. Patrick's, despite the doors being closed for a good part of the year, as we strained to reach out to and reconnect with our parishioners with all the technology and social media that we could muster, we came to realize that what is most precious to us is still available: faith, relationships, hope, charity. In fact, not only were they available but God also wanted us to grow them. Our mission, then, of bringing God's love into the world through a life-changing friendship with Jesus takes on an even greater importance. So, we livestreamed Masses and changed sacramental preparation, Alpha, RCIA, youth and young adult ministry activity and parish ministries to on-line experiences. A new website was created to better engage and communicate with our community. We stepped up our efforts to reach out to the poor and the vulnerable.

On our parish financial front, the pandemic has shone a powerful light on the nature of our giving. While some parishioners took it upon themselves to drop off or mail in donations, we realized that passing the basket would not fund our mission. Like so much of our parish life, we had to change our giving to an on-line process. So, first off, I want to extend a great big thank you to those who continue to support us. 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 2020. It includes comparative figures for 2019 and 2018. You will note that the Federal Government's Wage Subsidy helped tremendously. In 2021 this Wage Subsidy will be a fraction of 2020's and will end this calendar year.

As I mentioned in my introduction, the past year has been a year like no other that we have known. But it has also brought clarity to what is most truly important to humanity. In the words of Pope Francis' letter that began the year of St. Joseph, "This emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties. In the face of difficulty, we can either give up and walk away, or somehow engage with it. At times, difficulties bring out resources we did not even think we had." (patris corde, part 5)

So, 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 and grow toward becoming a vibrant, loving community who live for God and others. Pray for an end to this pandemic so that we can once again open the parish to all people soon. If you have any questions about the 2020 Financial Report, please email us at accounting@stpatrick.on.ca

Peace in the Risen Christ,

Fr. Dominic