

My name is Gerry Fee and I serve as your Parish Council Chairman. The Parish Council's purpose is to assist and offer input to our Parish Priest. Father Paul asks me to share with you, a few thoughts.

This year my wife and I have been following Father Mike Schmitz' Catechism in a Year podcast through Ascension Press. An amazing, informative exercise. What we believe as Catholics, comes from God's revelation and covenant relationship with the Jewish people, and directly from teachings of Jesus handed down through the apostles and His Catholic Church. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave authority to His church – "you are Peter and upon this Rock, I will build my Church" and "to those whose sins you forgive they are forgiven and to those whose sins you retain, they are retained".

The church, in this authority, has given us five Precepts. As Father Mike explains, these precepts are "obligatory", not optional, if we want to call ourselves Catholic; and they are intended to be "positive", to guarantee the very minimum of what we need to do to be called Catholic.

What are these the five precepts of the Catholic Church?

"You shall attend mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labour;"

"You shall confess your sins at least once a year;"

"You shall receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season;"

"You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church;"

"You shall help provide for the needs of the Church."

That last precept means that we are obliged, as Catholics, to provide for the material needs of the church, according to our ability. I would like to focus on that last precept for a few minutes.

I have been involved in business and actively involved in several organizations over the years. Very early on I learned of the 80/20 principle. 20% of the members give and do 80% of the work and other 80% of members give and do 20% of the work. In my sales career 80% of the sales came from 20% of the sales force; in volunteer organizations 80% of the projects were done by 20% of the members; virtually all my business and organization experiences have demonstrated this 80/20 principle. The exception to this principle is the Catholic Church. Mathew Kelly, who is an Australian author and motivational speaker, found that in a Catholic parish, 90% of the church is funded by 6-7% of the parish. 90% of what happens in any given parish is funded by 6-7% of that parish. So, the remaining 10% is funded by 93-94% of the Parish.

So many non-Catholic Christian churches have incredible staff. They have incredible programs and are able, to help so many people. It is amazing. Imagine if all of us Catholics took this 5<sup>th</sup> precept to heart, if every person in the pews, every person who is registered, every person who is going to mass was saying "I am going to provide for the needs of the church according to my ability." What amazing things could we accomplish??

The needs of the parish church are not only financial offerings, but the parish church also needs members to offer their time and talents.

Our parish employee expenses cover our pastor; an office administrator/bookkeeper; a maintenance /caretaker; and two half-time employees. You probably can imagine the work of office administrator and caretaker but what do the part time employees do for us. These half-time employees organize Mass readers, Ushers, Live streamers, coordinate religious education, Youth Ministry, RCIA, and adult faith formation. These two half-timers have 32 children, from grades 2-11, in our religious education classes; 24 youth taking part in our faith formation program; they have a Sunday night youth faith/study group; they take our youth in the summer to Spokane for a 4-day Steubenville conference and they organize; supervise youth ministry activities (like baking cookies for last Sunday's St. Vincent DePaul's fund raiser); and they have 14 adults and 5 children going through the weekly RCIA program. We get a lot of value from those half-time employees. We do not have a lot of areas to reduce expenses. As you heard a couple weeks ago from the Finance Committee chairman, our parish falling short in our weekly offerings and our Pilgrimage of Faith appeal.

In our Parish, we have over 31 ministries taking care of our Parish and our Parishioner's needs. In the past we have had 16 other ministries that we no longer have because we do not have anyone coming forward to involve themselves in these ministry needs – like the Parish Bazaar, which was a great Parish fund raiser and community builder, Bereavement ministry to support those who have lost loved ones, Children's liturgy where, at one mass, the children were taken to the hall to hear the gospel in a language they could understand. A few examples of ministries we no longer have but should have.

Besides considering how you can further help fulfill our parish's financial needs; I am asking you to consider how you can use your time and talents in our parish ministries. On the back of our Parish Bulletin, we have a list of some of these ministries and the contact person. Look over the list, and if you have questions, give the contact person a call. In the new year, the weekend of January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, we will have a Ministry Fair in our parish center. Representatives from these ministries will be there for you to ask questions and hopefully you will find a ministry that fits your time and talent. I ask you to budget another 10-15 minutes when you attend mass on that weekend to attend this Ministry fair.

As Father Mike often says, "we belong to one another." Christianity is not a spectator sport but rather needs the involvement of everyone. Thank you for your consideration and attention.