

# TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SIRACH 27:30-28:7 ROMANS 14:7-9 MATTHEW 18:21-35

SEPTEMBER 13, 2020



Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, shooting ten girls, killing five of them before killing himself. The close-knit Amish community gathered to console and heal one another. The community, including the families of the victims, attended Charles Robert's burial service. Family members of the murdered children embraced Robert's

widow. They later sent a monetary gift to her and her three children.

Their acts of forgiveness shocked the world. From their personal crosses they quietly whispered, "Father, forgive him." I ask myself today what would have to change in my heart to be able to follow their example.

## PRAYER

Father, I pray for myself and my brothers and sisters throughout our nation. We're hurting. We're drowning in hate and anger. Deliver us from the grip of the evil one. Rend our hearts that they might beat in rhythm with your own. Heal us that we might love as you love and forgive as you forgive.

**F**orgiveness is a powerful theme throughout the gospels. One of the most endearing of all Jesus' parables, The Prodigal Son, is a story of a forgiving father and an unforgiving brother. Today's parable, the story of a forgiving master and an unforgiving servant, could not have come at a more appropriate time.

Our country is in dire need of healing. Anger is erupting in city after city. The Left and the Right have no common ground from which to speak. Families are torn apart by political dissonance. Jesus' teachings about forgiveness seems to be falling on deaf ears. I would like to recall a tremendous teaching on forgiveness. It was given in 2006.

A gunman, a milk delivery man, burst into a one-room Amish school house in the town of

# ST. JEAN BAPTISTE FINANCIAL REPORT

## SEPTEMBER 2020

### THE EXTRA-ORDINARY

Though we're not quite finished yet, we've completed a great deal of repair work this summer. The biggest and most expensive job was the stabilization of the church's 22,000 square foot plaster ceiling. Very few people even knew the work was happening because for the last three months it quietly took place in the attic of the church from the hours of 6 pm until midnight every day. The heat generated by the church's copper roof prohibited any work during the daylight hours. The final cost was \$563,500.

We've just about completed the repair of the decorative plaster inside the church. We had removed many of the ornamental details due to the condition of the ceiling. They've all been re-mounted and restored. In addition, we had to replace two 60-foot interior drain pipes in the north wall of the church that suddenly began to leak this summer. Now we're in the process of repairing the last two areas that were damaged by water leakage in the north transept. The cost is \$286,185.

We've begun rebuilding the vault, but work is presently on hold while we wait for permits from the city for the replacement of our oil tank and the sidewalk along Lexington Avenue and 150 feet along 76<sup>th</sup> street. The basic reconstruction cost is \$326,855. The cost of the installation of a new oil tank, and the replacement of a portion of the boiler room floor that has suffered severe water damage over the years, are not included in the basic price. We're guessing that it will cost an additional \$75,000.

The good news about all this repair work is, first of all, that most of the repairs have been completed, and secondly, all of these repairs, with the exception of the oil tank and floor replacement, have been paid for!

**The total investment in the building this summer amounted to \$1,266,537.** This includes \$11,800 in electrical work, and engineering fees of \$78,197. Here's how we paid for it.

You generously contributed over \$600,000. The remainder, another \$600,000, came from heaven. During the summer St. Jean's was remembered in a will that was restricted to "the building project." We know the name of the donor, but none of the priests, brothers or sisters have any knowledge of her. This really was a gift from heaven. With your help and the kindness of a mystery donor we managed to have all this work done without owing a penny to anyone. All I can say is that God wants St. Jean's here, beautiful and in excellent condition!

### LOOKING AHEAD

St. Jean's being St. Jean's, the challenges continue. There's still important work to be done next year. Part of the engineer's work was to survey the exterior of the church building. We found that the entire south wall of the building needs extensive pointing. The limestone of the façade and along 76<sup>th</sup> street also need attention. I've personally directed almost all the repair work on the church since 1987. I

never had the south wall of the church pointed. The rectory was pointed in 1997 along with the north and west side of the church, but not the south side. I believe the last time it was pointed was in the 1960s. So, we're well overdue.

The wooden frame of the half-moon stained glass window in the south transept has rotted out and is very fragile. This needs immediate replacement. The frames of the south windows of the community center are also crying out for repair. Last but not least, the rectory's original 1911 boiler must be replaced before we transition into a gas/oil heating system. We don't have a final proposal yet, but we're estimating the cost of all this work will be in the neighborhood of \$500,000.

#### **THE DAY TO DAY**

A question everyone asks is how the parish has been maintaining itself since the lockdown in March. Up until July we were doing surprisingly well. We fluctuated between \$8,000 and \$10,000 in weekly donations that came mainly through envelope giving, mailed in and dropped off, and electronic giving. Very little cash appeared in the donation boxes. However, August saw a big dip in giving, \$4,000 to \$6,000 weekly. But at the same time a parishioner came to the rescue with a \$5,000 weekly donation throughout the month. I extend a huge THANK YOU on behalf of all of us! With Labor Day behind us, we hope that as people return to the city, they will re-engage and support the parish once again.

Rentals, which represent half the church's revenue, have gone down, but not as much as we feared. We've retained our two major renters, the Hewitt school and Applause, a theater arts program for children. Our extra rentals on

weekends and evenings have been curtailed by Covid19 gathering restrictions. That's the good news. However, in order to address an anticipated \$300,000 deficit this year, we were forced to lay off two of our staff and to re-negotiate the salaries of four of our support staff. We have a wonderful staff here. Everyone has the church's well-being in mind and we work together as a family. I personally thank them for their commitment; I also thank them on your behalf.

#### **IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO END WITH GOOD NEWS**

St. Jean Baptiste High School received a surprise gift in August! An alumna of the school, living in Massachusetts, died a few years ago at the age of 84. She and her husband had been married for 61 years. Her husband told us that the two of them had had a wonderful marriage. He felt that her experience at St. Jean's had made his wife the wonderful person she was. Since they had no children he decided to give a donation to her Alma Mater in her memory. He said he had bought a new stock many years ago and it had taken off. He gave \$1,000,000 of Apple stock to St. Jean's. He wishes this to be an anonymous gift. Another gift from heaven!

Then, shortly before Labor Day a parishioner decided to kick off contributions for next Spring's projects and made a \$50,000 stock transfer to St. Jean's. We all extend our heartfelt thanks.

**We don't know what the future will bring but I can assure you that St. Jean's has angels watching over us – in heaven AND on earth.**  
God bless each and every one of you.

Fr. John A. Kamas, SSS  
Pastor