

October 29, 2011

“God loves a cheerful giver!” (2 Corinthians 9.7b)

Paul, with the confidence of one who understood the heart of God and, perhaps as importantly, the nature of a cosmos that freely bestows its riches upon all, penned this counsel about giving. I can only imagine how it must have read in the original language given that the Greek term that we translate “cheerful” is also the root of another English word: hilarious! Either way, the point is the same. We are advised to give with joy.

As we enter our annual fall Canvass, coupled this year with our Capital Campaign, I ask three things of you, my dear sisters and brothers with whom I share life in community.

First, in the words of the familiar prayer, that you “read and inwardly digest” the written materials that accompany my letter.

Secondly, that you make a financial Canvass pledge to support our ongoing life and labor in 2012.

Thirdly, that you make a pledge over 3-5 years to help fund our building renovations, which will serve us now and for the generations of those who will succeed us.

A final word. Paul’s counsel speaks to the *quality* of our giving – the happy spirit that is to inspire our munificence. However, in the immediately preceding verse, he addresses the *quantity* of our giving; our right discernment about which gives rise to the joy of our offerings...

“Each of you must give as you have made up your mind” (2 Corinthians 9.7a)

Interestingly, the Greek word translated “mind” is *kardia*, which more literally is rendered “heart” – understood by the ancients to be the seat of all mental, physical, and spiritual life. One interpretation is that we are bidden with the deepest and broadest introspection to contemplate our giving in light of what we (and not what another may or may not) have. When we look to our resources and abilities – not to those of others, comparatively or otherwise – then we can make an authentic offering, which, as *truth-full*, almost inherently, is joyful.

So, dear members of my parish family, let each of us give as we have decided in our hearts, for God loves cheerful givers. And so do I!

Love and peace to you in your discerning,