

5th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Cycle B

February 5, 2012

Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air

A Penny...In a Minute

There is an anecdote about a man who was trying to understand what God is like. One day, God appeared and invited him to ask whatever questions he wanted.

So this man began: *“O God, how long is a million years to you?”* God replied: *“A million years is like a minute.”*

The man then asked: *“O God, how much is a million dollars to you?”* God replied: *“A million dollars is like a penny.”*

The man stopped and thought for a moment, and then asked: *“O God, will you give me a penny?”* And God said: *“In a minute.”*

Our Capital Campaign

In recent months, I have felt something like that man asking for a penny – well, for what a penny is to God in the anecdote!

Whenever I as a priest talk about money, it is always important for me to remember that the money is not an end in itself. Instead, money is a means to an end and that end is the living of our faith as a church community.

Our Faith

The Scripture passages today, as they do every week, nourish our faith.

In our first reading, Job is in the pits, completely down. Life has gotten very bad for him and he sees no purpose or future.

This experience can happen to anyone of us. And as we hear in today’s gospel, Jesus responds to us in these situations.

He addresses the darkness in our lives – whether it is physical illness or a moral fault or an addiction or a depression. He draws us out of that and offers us light, hope, wholeness, and purpose.

Context for the Campaign

Our faith is the real context for my remarks at all the Masses this weekend about our capital campaign.

As you know, we have a goal of \$4 million. This is to address some significant needs in two of our parish buildings and also in the broader Church of which we are a part – the Archdiocese; I have shared a lot about all of this over the past six months and I will not repeat that today.

The good news is that so far, we have over \$2,300,000 in pledges [see below]. That is excellent and I am so grateful to all of you who have been able to pledge and participate in this so far.

This weekend, we want to conclude the formal phase of the campaign. And so, we are providing an opportunity at all Masses for every family to respond to the request for a pledge.

So right now, I would ask our volunteers to distribute the commitment cards, and I am asking every family to take a card, even if you have already pledged. No, I am not asking for a second pledge!

I am asking each family to take a card 1) if you have already pledged, or 2) if you are ready to make your pledge today, or 3) if you are still thinking about this and are not yet decided, or 4) if you know that you are unable to make a pledge. This will help us to have accurate records and to bring this formal phase of the campaign to completion.

My Exhortation

Now I do want to remind us of two important things.

First, these are pledges. They are good faith intentions and they are not legally binding documents.

And second, these pledges can be fulfilled over 5 years. That is 60 months.

We are not asking for the entire gift today or this month or this year. Rather, it is over 5 years, 60 months.

So, for example, a pledge of \$25 a month over 60 months becomes a total pledge of \$1,500. A pledge of \$50 a month over 60 months becomes a total pledge of \$3,000.

A pledge of \$100 a month over 60 months becomes a total pledge of \$6,000. Obviously, you can go higher than these examples or lower.

The important thing is to do what is appropriate for you and your circumstances. As I have often said, what is important is: Equal Sacrifice, not Equal Amounts.

That spirit has energized this campaign wonderfully, and I am hoping that it will energize us today as we consider our commitments. I want to thank you once again for your generosity and your belief in the work we do for God and God's people.

And now, I am happy to introduce _____ who is a member of the Campaign Committee – a wonderful group of parishioners who have worked so hard on this. _____ will now guide us through the completion of the Commitment Card.

*We received an additional \$770,000 in pledges at the eight weekend Masses. As of Monday February 6, we have total pledges of \$3,127,000.