

Pastor's Notes

August 11, 2024

One of the things I intend to do before long is to re-set and restate what Partners in the Gospel is: Why the archdiocese believes there is a need to rearrange things. I think it best to wait to do so until September, when folks have finished their summer travels and activities, when our parish communities are more strongly represented. I believe that by restating the starting point, it will help us to know what questions we will need to sort through, as we consider what it means to be St. Thomas and St. Philomena.

In the meantime, something I've learned, whether from people in their various parishes or from my own observance, is that in most every parish (including the one from which I came), there are a handful of volunteers who seem to do most everything. I've heard it proposed that 10% of the people do 90% of the work.

As you know, there's quite a bit that goes on at a parish and only a few paid employees to cover the core administrative and pastoral tasks. And like many (most?) non-profit organizations, based on our operating income, we are therefore understaffed. There's much more to be done than parish staff can do.

Again, this is not unique to us. In fact, that's the common model of a parish-parishioners contributing to the work of the parish. Although some do so as a means of fulfilling volunteer-hours requirements, many do so an act of love, an expression of their faith.

Having said this, I acknowledge that I and those who work with me have a responsibility to identify our needs and present them, and even to make the appeal to you. We need to give you a sense of what it entails and if helpful, field your questions and points to consider.

Thus, I've begun soliciting input from staff and leaders in the parish, asking what are the needs, in which we do not have enough people to do what needs to be done? Look for that soon to come. In the meantime, please pray about it and perhaps consider the things you already see volunteers doing.

Among the reasons that parishioners (in any parish) don't get involved, is that many are fearful of over-committing. Their lives feel like they're packed to the gills. "Fear not," we're told. Find a way to contribute, even if it's a small amount. I truly believe that God will give you what you need. For others, it's because they're disengaged and disconnected from the life of the parish. I believe that part of what can enliven your faith is through being part of what builds up the life of the parish. Take a step to get engaged and connected.

Father Todd Strange