

5th Sunday per Annum - B
Job 7:1-4, 6-7;
I Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23;
Mark 1:29-39
Little Flower - 2/8/15

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today I would like to speak to you about our capital campaign *Together*—Plant. Grow. Bloom. You should have already received your capital campaign packet in the mail. Within the next few days, you will be receiving your pledge cards in the mail. We are asking you to return them the weekend of February 21-22 or February 28-March 1.

According to our school mission statement, “Little Flower Catholic School, an educational ministry of Little Flower Parish, exists to provide quality Catholic education for the Eastside and beyond as it has since 1926....We welcome all families who share our philosophy and mission.”

Two weeks ago, Kevin Gawrys, our principal, shared with you some of the good news from Little Flower Catholic School. First, our enrollment is increasing. In 2010-2011, our enrollment was 189. This year our enrollment is 263. In addition, we have made many improvements in our facility and in our instruction, many of which Kevin highlighted two weeks ago. All of these improvements are due to your generosity.

Overall, despite their age, our facilities are very well maintained. Currently, our biggest challenge is our school HVAC system. This is why a successful capital campaign is so important. Our boiler and our school roof probably have no more than four or five years of useful life left.

Simply replacing the boiler will not be a viable option for several reasons. First, currently there are only two thermostats in the building. One controls the cafeteria and gym. The other controls the rest of the building. Some classrooms are always hot; others are always cold; some are hot one day and cold the next, which I do not understand. Second, because of the age of the steam pipes throughout the building, we frequently have steam leaks. When steam leaks occur, the heat throughout the building has to be shut off. If we simply replace the boiler, we will have to remove and replace all the pipes. Third, because the heating units in the rooms are so old and outdated, when they break down, we frequently have a hard time finding parts and have to pay a premium for them. This problem will only get worse in the future.

Finally, Little Flower School does not have air conditioning. This is increasingly a problem as school starts earlier in August, and there is the possibility that at some point we will have to go to year-round school. Our lack of air conditioning already deters some families from sending their children to Little Flower.

I completely understand that \$800,000 is a lot of money to raise. However, because of your commitment to Little Flower parish, I am convinced that it will be possible to raise this money. I have never been in a parish where the parishioners are as committed to the parish school as you are. Also, we will have the help of our alumni with this campaign. However, for us to be successful, all of us, including me, will need to make a sacrificial gift to this campaign. I have already made my pledge. After prayerful consideration, I have pledged approximately 20% of my annual salary over the next two years. Of course, I realize that I do not have many of the expenses you have. **All we are asking is that you make the most sacrificial gift you can, preferably in the form of a two-year pledge, while continuing to support the parish as you currently do.**

My brothers and sisters, I hope the campaign packet and the talks you have heard at Mass have made a compelling case for our capital campaign. Instead of asking yourselves what you want to do in this campaign, I hope that all of you will prayerfully consider what God is asking you to do to help make our campaign successful. Thank you for your continued generosity to Little Flower.