

**Things are changing around here! Last week at our town hall meeting after mass last, we talked about the upcoming sale of most of the property at the IHM Center which will call us to face major adjustments. How we choose to face those challenges will have a profound effect the future of the Church in Northwest Detroit. We need to carefully reflect on our new parish mission statement: to witness the presence of Jesus Christ in our parish and community and invite others to join us on our journey.**

**That is why this weekend we are beginning an effort called INVEST IN CORPUS CHRISTI. Put simply, we are asking each household to consider increasing their contribution Corpus Christi by 10% and by donating at least one hour of service each week.**

**You may be asking, why, with the income from the impending sale of much of the IHM Center, do we need to increase our contributions? The answer is twofold. I would ask you to pass down the sheets you will find at the end of your pews. As you can see from the chart, our Sunday collections have been falling for the last five years. Our offertory collections were \$50,000 less last year than they were in 2006. The second reason is that we will be losing \$400,000 of annual income from the leases on the charter school when the leases on the two buildings end next June.**

**And so, today I invite you to invest in Corpus Christi. I would like to take some time today to share with you why **I** choose to invest in Corpus Christi.**

**The first reason I choose to invest in Corpus Christi is that we**

are the only Catholic parish I know of in the city which has a full time Christian Service staff member. Because of Nalani's Bradford's work and the work of the St. Vincent De Paul Society and the food depot volunteers, over the last five years our parish has been able to distribute more than one and half million dollars of funds and services for food, housing foreclosures, rent, heat, medical assistance and transportation to those in need. Other parishes simply do not invest in staff the way Corpus Christi Parish does. While we cannot help everyone, we try to live out the words of Jesus, "When I was hungry you gave me to eat, when I was naked you clothed me, sick or in prison you visited me."

Why am I considering an increase in my investment here? Because we also have some of the best faith formation programs in the Archdiocese. I know of no parish our size which offers the combined opportunities for faith growth such as Generations of Faith, Alpha, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and sacramental preparation programs. We are able to offer these opportunities because we fund the position of Director of Formation and because, among a large number of volunteers, we are blessed with TEN parishioners who have their masters in theology, many of whom donate their expertise and time. Their combined energy allows us to share the good news and grow in knowledge and wisdom of God.

Why do I choose to invest in Corpus Christi? Because we have vibrant liturgical experiences and committed corps of volunteers who serve as liturgical ministers. In our prayer life, we carry out the commandment of Jesus, "Do this in memory of me".

Why do I choose to invest in Corpus Christi? Because being a member here allows me to be part of the legacy of a people who

**have lived through slavery and immigration and poverty and urban challenges, but still shines forth the glory of God.**

**Why do I choose to invest in Corpus Christi? Because we have a parish dedicated to serve our youth. Many here were present for our special youth mass this summer on the day of our parish picnic. We see a large number of youth taking active leadership in the community. As I speak, ten of our teens are on a weekend retreat. They are being invited to ask the same question a young man asked in Matthew's gospel asked Jesus, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"**

**This is why I choose to increase my giving by 10% and look for ways to volunteer my time more effectively. How about you? Will you up your investment in Corpus Christi?**

**You will find a special envelope in the end of your pew marked "Invest in Corpus Christi." Please pass them out. Over the next few weeks I ask you to prayerfully consider what you can contribute to support the work of Christ at Corpus Christi. Then mark on this special envelope the weekly or monthly commitment you wish to make to support our parish. Then simply place the envelope in the collection as an indication of your investment in Corpus Christi.**

**Also, you will find slips of paper in the holders at the end of the pews.**

**Please pass them out. Written on it are volunteer opportunities which we need immediate help with to carry out the ministry of Jesus here at Corpus Christi. They are offered as ways in which each of us can give at least one hour in serve to our community. (Review it with them) Just fill them out and make an offering of your time and talent in the offertory basket.**

**In today's gospel, Jesus tells us about the story of two sons. The first says yes to the Father's invitation to go out and work in the vineyard and the second says he will not. I am sure that as I invite you this morning to up your investment in Corpus Christi, you may feel more like the second son who resisted the Father's invitation.**

**I always wondered what changed the mind of the second son who so adamantly refused, yet changed his mind and worked in the vineyard.**

**Maybe...just maybe... it was that the second son reflected on how much the father had poured out his life for him... given his son life, a home to live in and food on the table. Just maybe the son's decision to participate in the work of the Father was a grateful response for all the blessings his father had bestowed on him.**

**In the end, what is the greatest reason for investing in Corpus Christi? For me, it is one more simple way of expressing my gratitude to God for all he has done for me.**

**(Pause)**

**And the Lord said, "My son, my daughter, go out with me and work in the vineyard today. After thinking it over, what will your response be?"**

