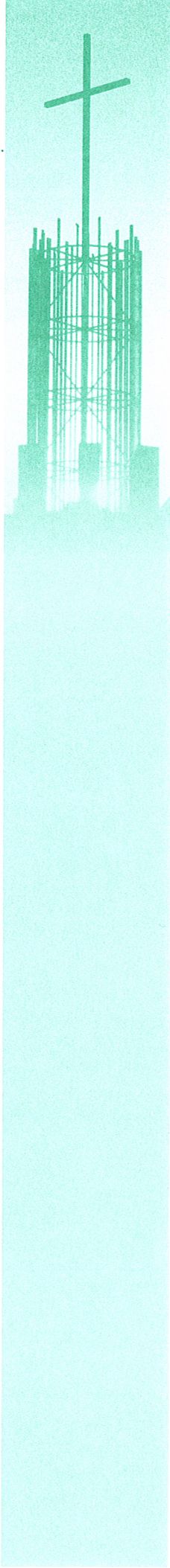


SAINT JOHN VIANNEY PARISH

growing together in faith



May 8, 2008

Dear Parishioners:

Do you recall two of the priorities that I set forth when I returned to the parish last December? One was to be as candid and transparent as possible about matters related to the parish. Another was to work to keep rumors and speculations to a minimum. After the very sad events of December 8th, 2007, many of you also spoke of these two things as priorities.

After Christmas, I set myself to one of the questions that was floating through the parish. In the bulletin I wrote of the need for an audit of the parish financial records. At the time, my goal was to put rumors to rest and to reassure all that our finances were in order. Following consultations with Archbishop Dolan and parish leadership it was felt that an audit, performed by three capable parishioners, would suffice. Also, as parishioners, they would bring your concerns to their work.

My hope was that their inquiry would yield no issues of concern. Unfortunately, (standing by my commitment to be honest with you) the report provided to me, the Archbishop, and the parish trustees indicates grave concerns about cash intake though the weekly offertories over an extended period of time. At the request of all the auditors, it was decided that their work serve as a preliminary report and that the task of further investigation be turned over to outside professionals. Admittedly, it could be said that the causes for concern are circumstantial, but they are of sufficient gravity that archdiocesan officials, legal counsel, our insurer, and possibly civil authorities will need to be involved.

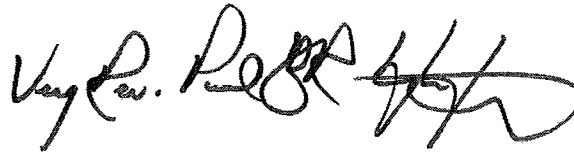
I cannot express how sad I am to have to make this report. Since Easter, I have felt among us a growing sense of hope and optimism. These were steps forward that now seem undermined by a big step backwards. It must be said, though, that whatever was present last weekend that inspired optimism and hope remains present now. Yes, we now have another challenge to overcome, but it concerns things of the past. The hope and optimism for the future that I know is within this parish is far greater than even this situation could exhaust.

You have a right to know that this matter is being further investigated. Sadly, since there are yet no definitive proofs about the degree of the problem or who, if anyone, is culpable, the very act of keeping you informed sets the stage for more speculation and rumors. I implore all of you: please do not start down that path. A more intensive and focused investigation will take some weeks to complete. Please allow that process to provide us with good and accurate information...speculation will serve no one.

As always, let me close by restating my commitment to openness and candor. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will answer to the extent that I am able. (frpaul@stjohnv.org)

A few weeks ago when Pope Benedict XVI visited the United States, his theme was "Christ Our Hope." While not wanting to be naïve about the gravity of this situation, we must never lose sight of that essential message of our faith – no matter what, Christ is Our Hope! Please keep this parish, and all concerned with this investigation in your prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Very Rev. Paul B. R. Hartmann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Very Reverend Paul B. R. Hartmann
Parish Administrator