



SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

June 15, 2019

Dear Parishioners:

About six months ago we read in the newspaper about the misappropriation of money at St. James School, Torrance. I was both shocked and saddened. My first reaction was that this couldn't happen at St. John Fisher. I had made every effort to be sure that all monies in the parish are handled in a way that precludes abuse.

However, I thought that in light of what happened at St. James School, we should review all our procedures in the handling of money and finance. So I asked members of the parish finance council to do a procedural review of our parish and school accounts as they have been doing every few years. One committee dealt with the parish account and the other with the school account. They were given total access to all accounts and did a thorough review of all procedures.

Members of the parish review committee are CPAs who do audits on a higher level than a parish. The parish review committee was particularly concerned on how we handle the money that is collected at Sunday Masses. They followed it from the time that it is collected at Mass until it is counted, sealed, and sent to the bank for deposit. They reviewed all the procedures on how the bills are recorded and prepared for payment. They examined the paper trail involved in all this. Who has access to the checks? Who cuts the checks? Who signs them? In general, they commended us for our transparency and the ways we handle this. They were pleased that many people are using *Faith Direct*, for that minimizes the handling of cash and checks. Their recommendations were few. I am working on implementing them.

The members of the school review committee include a business owner, a private client banker, and a CPA who is chief finance officer of a large firm. They reviewed the school accounts, ledgers, procedures for collecting tuition, and, mindful of St. James, looked to see if there were any areas subject to misappropriation. They were pleased that almost all tuition was done electronically and recommended that we minimize cash transactions insofar as possible. We are working on implementation of that committee's recommendations as well.

The parish Finance Council reviewed the reports of the two committees and concluded that appropriate financial controls are in effect in the areas reviewed.

As steward of the resources here I want to assure you that I am committed to transparency and careful oversight in the areas of finance in both the parish and school.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork
Pastor