

Mailing

#382

Title of the mailing *

A Statement Regarding the Program Budget and the Ministries of the Diocese of Pennsylvania – October, 2010

Body text of the mailing *

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

As a Diocese we are facing a financial crisis that threatens to undercut the vital ministries which define our corporate mission and identity. These are the ministries of the Program Budget and they are funded by your voluntary pledges to the Diocese. Although we have progressively reduced our expectations for this income, the actual amount pledged has continued to drop. We are now at the point where there is nothing left to cut that is not absolutely essential to our most vital ministries. Yet despite this reality we are again facing the possibility of a significant shortfall of pledges.

Of course we understand that there are various reasons why vestries and clergy are considering such action. To begin with money is tight and some parishes are struggling to meet their own expenses. Others wish to find some means to express their displeasure or to protest certain realities within our Diocese. To date, at least one parish has already pulled the remainder of its pledge for 2010 for such reasons.

As your parish considers what to do in terms of paying the remainder of its 2010 pledge and what to pledge for 2011, it is critical that you understand that the ministries of the Program Budget are a statement of our collective faith. They have been painstakingly crafted by a Program Budget Committee that reflects the whole of our Diocese. The proposed Program Budget is then approved by the Diocesan Council, which is comprised of lay and clergy representatives elected by each Deanery; it is then approved by the Diocesan Convention--the lay members and clergy that represent each parish in the Diocese. As such, the Program Budget does not represent the agenda of any one group or individual, but is reflective of our mutual commitment to mission and ministry. Moreover you need not be worried that monies pledged to this budget will somehow be diverted to another purpose. Indeed, over the past several years the Diocesan Council, the Program Budget Committee, the Committee on Finance and Property and the Treasurer of the Diocese have taken great strides towards insuring communication between leadership bodies, including with the Standing Committee, and fiscal transparency in regard to the Program Budget.

With this in mind we ask and pray for your continued support so that we might continue to minister to the poor in our inner cities, to our youth and to support parishes in need. However, should the pledges fall significantly short of the budgeted amount, you need to be prepared for significant cuts in some of our critical ministries. These could include the reduction of funding for DCMM mission congregations, slashing the amount of money available to assist parishes and/or the elimination of other programs and staff dealing with youth, campus ministry, education or anti-racism.

While we sincerely hope that such a bleak reality does not come to pass, you need to know now that we cannot and will not engage in deficit spending. Therefore the Diocesan Council and the Program Budget Committee ask that you consider the enormous impact your pledge will have on our collective identity and ability to carry out the work of the Gospel. Should you have any questions about the specifics of the Program Budget, we are reachable by email at fatherkirk@comcast.net.

May God guide us all in the momentous decisions that lie ahead of us.

On behalf of the Program Budget Committee,

The Reverend Kirk T. Berlenbach, Chair

On behalf of the Diocesan Council,

The Reverend Kathryn A. Andonian, Vice-Chair

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