

SAINT FRANCIS  
OF  
ASSISI  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
HENDERSON, NEVADA



My Dear Friends in Christ,

I would like to thank you for your continued support of St. Francis of Assisi parish and St. Anthony of Padua School, especially throughout this very challenging pandemic year! Last February we never could have predicted the events of the past twelve months, and I want you to know I greatly appreciate the fortitude, generosity, and patience you have demonstrated throughout these difficult times. This coronavirus pandemic has shown us some of the fissures and weaknesses in our social fabric and has caused widespread suffering and loss. For me it has also been a time of reflection to contemplate the meaning of suffering and the Lord's plan for our lives. Our social isolation over these past months has brought to the fore our interdependence and innate need for community.

Despite all the upheaval and disruption caused by the pandemic, our parish family has remained strong and active. We have successfully opened the brand new state-of-the-art St. Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic School, offering high-quality Catholic education to over 340 students in class and online since August 17<sup>th</sup>. We have continued to provide the sacraments and catechesis to our parishioners and students; and have adapted to be able to offer Masses to you all, both at home by livestream and in person following all the recommended safety guidelines.

Like all parishes across the Diocese, and indeed across the country, we have felt the effects of the pandemic in reduced offertory income. However, through your faithful stewardship, we at St. Francis of Assisi have weathered this tumultuous year and been able to meet our basic expenses. In past years, it has been our practice to pay many of our various diocesan obligations including our Catholic Stewardship Appeal (a.k.a. CSA) tax share by reserving a sizeable portion of the weekly offertory for that purpose. This has been much more difficult this year, as we have had to meet our immediate expenses out of an, understandably, smaller offertory income. Any additional contribution you can make to help offset the CSA taxes will be very much appreciated. Your CSA gifts go directly to strengthen the Diocese's outreach programs and capabilities by supporting vocations, faith formation, continuing education, campus ministry, pastoral outreach, and Catholic education. Better-funded programs and better-educated clergy and lay people will in turn be better equipped to help the poor and marginalized in the Las Vegas valley and bring more people into the community of the faithful.

This year the diocese's CSA seems to me an answer to the question "What can I do to best serve the Lord?" during the pandemic. Our sacrifices will be a reflection of God's sacrifice of his only Son and our gifts a reflection of God's gift to us of his everlasting mercy and love. As Catholics we believe all life is a gift and all good things come from God. Please consider whether you are able to share some of the bounty in your lives with the sick, the weak, the poor, and the friendless. Simply complete the CSA pledge card and return it to the parish office by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Most of all, please pray for our parish family, for our diocese, for our nation and world. As always, I continue to keep all of you in my daily prayers. I pray that you stay protected and safe, and that you are brought closer to God through your sacrifice and will be welcomed into the Lord's eternal embrace.

Peace and blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John', followed by a long horizontal line.

Fr. John  
Pastor