



Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul and the Shrine of Saint Katharine Drexel

Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Eighteenth Street and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

October 2022

Dear Parishioner(s),

Greetings in the Lord!

I hope and pray you and your loved ones are well. This letter gives me the opportunity to encourage you in your Christian life with a deeper awareness of the need for a relationship with God. The non-negotiable for all of us is the worship of God on Sunday with participation in Sunday Mass. Have you made a good Confession recently? Are you taking time to pray each day? Please take advantage of all the Cathedral Parish offers you in meeting your spiritual needs.

This letter also is an appeal to you to contribute to our annual *Parish Fall Collection* (formerly known as the *Block Collection*). This year again, with the recommendation of our Parish Finance Council, the proceeds of the *Parish Fall Collection* will be directed to the established fund for the much-needed painting of the interior of the Cathedral Basilica. This painting project will cost several million dollars and will require other funding sources in addition to the annual *Parish Fall Collection*. Please consider a gift contribution of at least \$250 to this *Parish Fall Collection*. Your contribution, no matter the amount, is truly appreciated and is a great help. Your contribution can be made electronically. It can also be returned by mail or in the Sunday collection basket with the enclosed envelope.

Please consider making your weekly offering to the Cathedral Parish electronically. You can do this by following the steps outlined on the Cathedral Parish website, <https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=b48f44>. You can also make your contribution to the annual *Parish Fall Collection* in the same way. Thank you so very much for your generous assistance to our Cathedral Parish. Let us keep one another in our prayers. Saints Peter and Paul, pray for us! Saint Katharine Drexel, pray for us!

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Reverend Gerald Dennis Gill".

Reverend Gerald Dennis Gill, Rector

P.S. Please see the reverse side of this letter for a parish financial update.

The Parish is grateful that so many faithful have returned to the Cathedral to worship and have resumed or increased their financial support of the Parish. We also thank the many visitors who have come to participate at Mass at the Cathedral and to pray at the Shrine of Saint Katharine Drexel and have offered financial gifts as well.

The results for the fiscal year, which ended on June 30th, 2022, reflect the financial impact of the pandemic. Compared to the fiscal year 2020, Parish income in 2021 decreased by 29% but Parish expenses decreased by only 1%. Regular collections decreased by only 4% from 2020 to 2021, which reflects the generosity of our Parishioners even in very difficult times. Unfortunately, major fundraising efforts such as the Keys and Sword Event had to be postponed; consequently, the deficit in 2021 increased to 270% of that in 2020.

To address this record deficit, the Parish has taken steps to reduce operating expenses without impacting Parish life substantially. Some difficult choices have been made in order to balance the mission of the Parish with the fiscal realities of the present time. The Parish has also started a Cathedral Development Committee, which has already begun diligent efforts to access new sources of income, especially with respect to the preservation of the historic structure.

The completion of the HVAC renovation is quite a blessing in many respects, and the Parish is very grateful for all of the hard work contributed by all those associated with the success of the project. The temperature and humidity of both the Basilica and the Chapel interior will now be much more uniform year-round, and this will ensure the comfort of those who seek to be in the Presence of God in these spaces. The conditioned air will also slow down the deterioration rate of the wood, metal, and painted surfaces.

Although the HVAC project is complete, much necessary work to repair and preserve the historic structure remains. A project to renovate the antiquated lighting system is underway. The interior paint of the Basilica is in poor condition, and a massive effort is needed to raise the estimated \$3 million for the repainting project. Likewise, the historic pipe organ, which has faithfully served the Parish for over 100 years, is in dire need of a complete restoration. The estimated cost for such a project is \$12 to \$15 million. At present, the Parish does not have access to funds to cover these critical needs.

As with our own individual spiritual lives, the financial life of the Parish faces many challenges. Hope is not lost, however, because as Parish life returns to the vitality of pre-pandemic times, it is anticipated that the Parish financial condition will improve as well. The Parish continues to thrive spiritually and this is only made possible by the sacrifices of the many parishioners who provide constant and generous financial and volunteer support.