



Living The Paschal Mystery

Getting to the crux of the matter can be an important exercise. Pruning away extraneous detail to reveal the core issue is essential in many cases. For Christians, we recall that Jesus' teachings were rooted in Mosaic Law and the prophets. Yet He emphasized or combined aspects of each that made them seem to come alive, or to be read and understood in a new way. It's certainly true that loving God and love one's neighbor were commandments in Mosaic Law. But who had ever combined them like this before? Ultimately, it's a good reminder of the core of the religious message. All of our actions ought to flow from this twofold love. Loving God and loving neighbor go together, and they cannot be reduced one to the other or one over the other. When we live by this guiding principle, we are living the paschal mystery.

As always, if we read the scripture passages carefully and reflect upon them, they will raise new questions that perhaps we have not thought of before. How is God speaking to you today through the Word?

The first reading from Exodus exhorts the people to be merciful to foreigners seeking refuge. How does your family or our parish minister to immigrants or refugees?

Today's psalm refrain is "I Love You, Lord, my strength." How has God given you strength in the life of discipleship? In his first letter to the Thessalonians, St. Paul

writes, "you became imitators of us and of the Lord." What saint or person of faith do you hope to imitate?

Jesus tells us the greatest and first commandment is "you shall love the Lord, your God. How do you keep your life centered around this commandment?"



About Liturgy: Do Catholic Piety And Social Justice Go Together?

That is a question some devout Catholics actually have asked. However, in light of today's scripture, it seems the answer is quite obvious. Catholic piety without social justice is neither Catholic nor pious.

Devotion in prayer and acts of worship without concrete works of mercy is simply abstract and empty ritualism. The greatest commandment, which we hear today in the gospel, combines both love of God and love of neighbor. One without the other negates both. Recall, also, that Luke's version of this same gospel passage, includes the parable of the Good Samaritan as Jesus' response to the scholar's question, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29)

For those of us who are homilists/preachers, we cannot fulfill our responsibility to preach the gospel without reminding all of us that ritual devotion and practice, no matter how pious, are never complete until they are reflected by acts of justice for immigrants, migrants, refugees, and strangers. Knowing the laws of our faith and its doctrines is

insufficient unless we practice them by caring for the widow, the orphan, and the least among our society. And piety in prayer is empty until it is filled with concern and protection for those exploited by unjust systems and societal attitudes.

Church offers guidance on issues, not candidates

By Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ

I couldn't stand watching the first presidential debate. I had to leave the TV room where my fellow priests and I were watching after 15 minutes.



Most Rev.
Michael C. Barber, SJ

Some parishioners have been asking me, “Who should I vote for? I don't like either candidate.” The Church does not take sides on persons running for office. But the Church does have clear teachings on some of the issues at stake that we offer for your consideration as you make your voting decisions. The Church does not tell Catholics which candidates to vote for. We may take an official stand as a Church on an issue put to the voters, but not on people.

Where can I find this guidance?

Go to USCCB.org — and you will find all the materials right there on the opening page. I especially recommend three short videos that summarize Catholic teaching on “Protecting Human Life and Dignity,” “Promoting the Common Good” and “Love of Neighbor.”

Across the country, some priests have

gotten carried away and have endorsed particular candidates (of both parties) “from the pulpit.” Some priests have gone further and said that “You're not a good Catholic if you vote for X.”

Some people are so rooted in their particular political party that their hearts are not open to the message of Christ and the teaching of His Church. They look for pastors and bishops to endorse their candidates. May I make a suggestion? Be a Christian first, before you are a member of your political party. Pope Francis said that neither political party in the US supports Catholic social teaching on all the issues. True. But you will have to decide which one comes closest.

I was impressed with Cardinal Seán O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston, who issued a brief but clear statement on the election, with which I agree:

“The Catholic community has the right to expect the priests of the Archdiocese and those entrusted with handing on the faith to be clear and unequivocal on the Church's teaching concerning respect and protection for life from the first moment of conception to natural death. This teaching is of the highest priority for the Church.

“With regard to statements of the clergy and religious and laity who minister or serve in the Archdiocese of Boston, following the guidance of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as representatives of the Archdiocese they may not endorse or oppose candidates for election or political parties. This directive also applies to parishes and organizations directly connected to the Archdiocese.

“The teaching role of the Catholic Church brings religious and moral principles to the

life of our society, our Commonwealth, and our nation. Our advocacy addresses protection of human life at all stages and in all circumstances, including issues of social and economic equality, the pervasive influence of systemic racism and welcoming immigrants and refugees.

“Catholics are urged to play an active role in our public life and to fulfill the basic obligation of a democracy, to vote. We are called to bring the light of faith and reason to our civic responsibilities as we strive to build a civilization of love.”

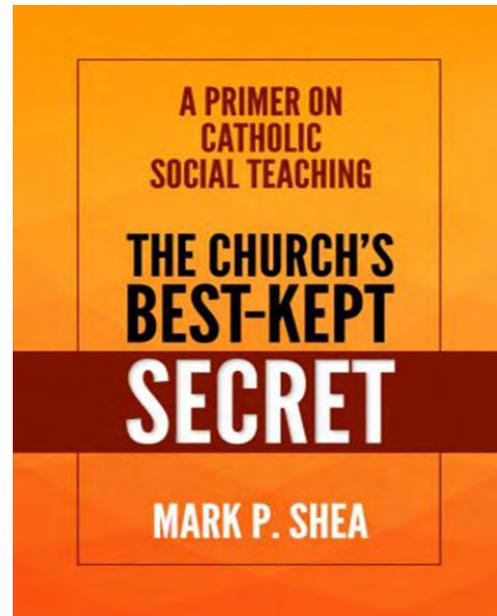
I hope you will consider Christ’s and the Church’s teaching as you make your voting decisions. Please DO vote. That is a duty of all good Catholics.

Shea explains how politics, culture distort our understanding of Catholicism

Oct 16, 2020

by [Michael Sean Winters](#)

Mark Shea's new book *The Church's Best-Kept Secret: A Primer on Catholic Social Teaching* is not the most sophisticated theological book you will read this year. But, if you were starting a conversation in your parish, and your parish is filled with right-of-center Catholics like Shea, this is a great book to help people realize the ways our politics and culture in the U.S. has distorted our self-understanding of Catholicism.



Shea's particular gift is to state clearly what the church teaches, and then expose those distortions of the teaching. So, for example, he explains the complex theology of cooperation with evil and that we cannot do evil, even if good comes from it. Shea distinguishes the moral belief that "we may ... try to *lessen* evil in an imperfect world without achieving perfection, but we cannot deliberately choose to do evil on the theory that our opposition to some other greater evil (like abortion) gives us license to indulge an evil we are willing to tolerate."

He then writes: "This subtle distinction eludes many people, who have effectively embraced a theory of morality which holds that opposition to abortion taketh away the sins of the world." You can sense his exasperation and, at the same time, admire his turn of phrase.

Shea has equally snarky words for those who equate defending the church's teaching on abortion with Catholic identity itself. "Somebody who says, 'We need to address the sadistic cruelty being meted out to refugee children, snatched from their parents at the border and disappeared into a

concentration camp system that cannot even figure out how to unite them with those parents again' is not 'diluting the brand' of the Church's teaching, nor 'distracting' from abortion. They are simply being consistent about the Dignity of the Human Person from conception to natural death."

His analysis is spot-on as he considers other morally important issues that get shunted aside by the "abortion-only" crowd, and his snark is completely warranted.

Turning to the church's teaching on the common good, Shea explains how it is distorted by people determined to resist it. "[M]any fear that the Common Good is the Church's trendy nod to Marxism. In other words, they fear the concept of the Common Good is 1) a novelty (probably invented by Vatican II) and 2) something 'liberals' in the Church pit *against* the Dignity of the Human Person as the Marxist pits the collective against the individual." He then unpacks the ways church teaching is rooted in the Scripture, not in *Das Kapital*.

When Shea turns to consideration of the relationship between justice and charity, he continues his countercultural, supremely Catholic critique of many of the tropes adopted by conservative U.S. Catholics:

At this point, many get confused because they imagine that all help given to the poor is therefore "charity." So (the argument goes), it is fine for Christians to be personally generous to the poor. But what is the sense of involving the state in helping the poor? Aren't taxes just theft at gunpoint? And don't they simply mean that those who would have been able to freely give to the poor are now deprived of that opportunity by an overbearing state that forces them to be virtuous instead of letting them

choose? Such arguments get repeated ad infinitum. But it is not Catholic teaching.

I am not sure whom Shea hangs around with, but I can assure him that in my circle of friends, such lame arguments are not repeated *ad infinitum*!

The fact that Shea does move in conservative circles, however, is what makes his book so refreshing. When he continues the discussion of the relationship between justice and charity by observing, "Here's the biblical truth: according to the Church, much of what we do for the least of these is *owed*, not charity," and goes on to cite Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and the Compendium of Catholic Social Teaching promulgated by St. Pope John Paul II, you can close your eyes and imagining his conservative friends scratching their heads and, hopefully, rethinking their politics.

As noted, this book is not without its flaws. For example, in discussing subsidiarity, Shea contends that the church models this bedrock principle of Catholic social teaching in its own structure. "Again, the Church models what it seeks," he writes. "Each diocese on the planet is the local expression of the Church governed by the local bishop; nonetheless the Church is a global unity in union with the Holy Father."

Alas, we still live in the long shadow of the long 19th-century ecclesiology in which local churches exercise the authority they are permitted and Rome can intervene when it wishes. How much more quickly might the U.S. bishops have responded to the clergy sex abuse crisis in the 1990s, if John Paul II had not made it virtually impossible to laicize clergy who abuse children!

Similarly, I was glad to see that Shea examined the issue of structural sin, but I am not sure he recognized exactly why it is so pernicious. "Structures of sin make it hard to be good and often punish us for trying while blinding us from even being able to see the good," he writes. His example of Paul getting attacked by the Ephesians falls flat. Structural sin happens when virtuous decisions yield sinful consequences, for example when the desire to live in a nice neighborhood reifies segregated housing patterns, which, in turn, keep schools segregated in ways that disadvantage poorer children. Shea is right that the Gospel calls us to confront structural sin, but I think it is more pernicious than he allows.

In the final chapter, Shea provides a lengthy quote from C.S. Lewis, about how the devil seeks to ensnare souls, the key sentence of which is this: "On the other hand, we do want, and want very much, to make men treat Christianity as a means; preferably, of course, as a means to their own advancement, but, failing that, as a means to anything — even to social justice." These are words for all Catholic progressives to ponder.

Shea draws an equally challenging conclusion, writing, "If human beings are not a means to an end, still infinitely less is God himself a means to an end. And if we treat him as such, it will not be long before we treat human beings — made in his image — in the same way."

Whatever the minor difficulties with this text, they are easily overlooked when you consider the source and his usually more conservative audience. Shea is fed up with much of what he has heard on the right field bleachers of the church, and he shares his frustrations with the rest of us. He speaks for a growing cohort of Catholics who, for example, are profoundly pro-life and

thoroughly disgusted with the pro-life movement. He speaks to those who have caused the disenchantment. My hope is that they will listen to him, but my fear is that he will merely be branded a traitor to their political cause. There are worse fates for a writer to endure.

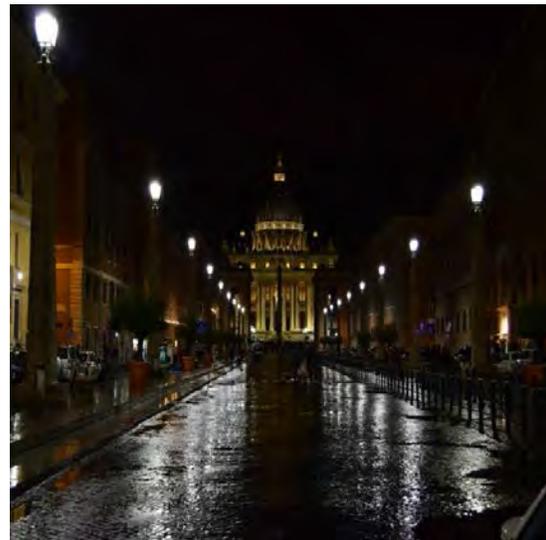
[Michael Sean Winters covers the nexus of religion and politics for NCR.]

'Fratelli Tutti': Papal dreams or Vatican diversion?

Oct 19, 2020

by [Ilia Delio](#)

[Spirituality](#)
[Social Justice](#)



On Oct. 3, the feast of the [transitus](#) of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis signed his new encyclical, [Fratelli Tutti](#), on social order and universal brotherhood. As in his previous encyclical, "[Laudato Si'](#), on [Care for Our Common Home](#)," the pope calls attention to the world's problems, the radical disparity between rich and poor, the bloated consumer culture that is enhancing global

warming, and the rampant individualism associated with excess wealth. The encyclical aims to promote a universal movement toward fraternity and social friendship grounded in compassionate love, following the parable of the good Samaritan ([Luke 10:29-37](#)).

Who could argue against the valiant efforts of a world leader trying to restore a sense of moral goodness and rightness in the world? Indeed, my purpose is not to belie the pope, whose heart seems to be in the right place; however, it is to call attention to the deeper problem underlying the world's problems, namely, the evaporation of religion. On this note, the pope's encyclical is alarming. Jesus of Nazareth admonished his disciples not to take the splinter out of their brother's eye without first removing the plank from their own eye ([Matthew 7:3-5](#)). This admonition bears reflection in light of the pope's advice to the world.

St. Clare of Assisi, who was the spiritual partner of Francis of Assisi and known as the strongest stone of the whole Franciscan movement, wrote to her sisters: "We must be mirrors and examples to one another so that we may be mirrors and examples to the world."

If we preach the Gospel ideals of Jesus, then we must first be willing to put them into practice. After all, if we want the world to overcome its addiction to power, money and progress, then we must be willing to disengage ourselves from these things, for where else shall the world find its image?

Francis of Assisi was aware that to live a God-filled life he would have to undergo conversion of heart. All the great world religions promote some type of self-discipline in order to reflect divinity. Each religion, in its own way, realizes that we do

not change the world, we change ourselves and the way we see the world. A changed life changes the world. This is the essence of Francis of Assisi.

The pope advocates grand ideas that stop short of mandating public policies: justice, community, compassion and, best of all, brotherhood and sisterhood. The irony of his message is that the Roman Catholic Church is the most homophobic institution in the world today. With a plea for human solidarity and fraternity, the pope seeks to establish equity in the world, describing a vision of universal brotherhood where "all people are my brothers and sisters, and ... the world truly belongs to everyone."

Without significant theological revisioning and without dismantling the patriarchy of the institutional church, the pope is speaking to a few close friends while the rest of the world lines up for the newest iPhone.

How do we make sense of this in a church that does not regard women as equal? A church that will not allow the ordination of women or even the ability of women to preach? A church that insists on mandating the rights of a woman's body? A church that excludes LGBTQ persons from full acceptance and does not allow divorced and remarried persons to participate in the liturgy?

How does the pope tell the world what it needs to do when he spearheads an institution grounded in patriarchy, hierarchy and ontological differences?

Some of the best critical scholarship on racism today points to the Catholic Church as the very source of the problem of racism, early Christians distinguishing themselves from the Jews as the pure and saved ones.

How does the pope seek to establish a world of equity when theological doctrine is rooted in a metaphysics of substance, where maleness is ontologically superior to femaleness and whiteness is salvific?

According to a recent *Forbe's* [article](#), the Vatican is hardly a model of fraternity; rather it is ensnared in power struggles, including ideological differences, financial abuse and an unresolved clerical pedophilia crisis that has redefined justice as reprimand or loss of job without criminal prosecution.

The Vatican is [steeped](#) in secrecy and clericalism and there seems to be no real efforts to clean out the cobwebs stifling the institution. While Francis laments the problems of the world, he does not acknowledge that, in many areas, including health care and education, global life has been [improving](#). The overall poverty rate has [decreased](#) in the last 10 years and, while there is a long way to go to equilibrate a global standard of living, the efforts to do so are not entirely absent.

The fact is, technology has sped up the rate of evolution in the last 30 years, and countries where technology has grown significantly have also seen a reduction in poverty, and improvements in education and health care. China is a case in point; so too is [India](#).

The fact that computer technology has changed the global landscape so quickly begs consideration. [Margaret Wertheim](#) notes that cyberspace began to fill a void in the mid-20th century. We began to study matter, learn about quantum physics, and invented ways to extend human intelligence.

It is interesting to note that Vatican II and the birth of the cyborg are cotemporaneous

events; yet Vatican II was never implemented sufficiently to effect real change in the church. Cyborgs on the other hand, spawned a new philosophy of [transhumanism](#) and a new culture of human transcendence. For all practical purposes, technology supplanted religion in the 20th century.

We are on a technological speed-dial but we do not know where we are going, if we are going together, or whether we should advance at all. The rate of technological evolution is outpacing the capacity for human reflection and critical choices, and the speed of progress is breathless. The pope wants universal brotherhood, but the human community wants new life.

Novelty and creativity mark human transcendence. Following the thesis of the late Canadian historian David Noble, creativity is the mark of divinization. To become like God is to transcend ourselves, to invent, create, go beyond what we are to become what we are not. This is as true in North America as it is in Cochabamba or the Sudan.

Unfortunately, the West has stamped its giant footprint over the face of the globe and it wants the world to follow its maxim: God is in the machine and no longer in the churches. The rest of the world follows because the God of institutional religion is too white, male, old and practically dead.

Technology drives the markets today and to slow down neoliberal economics is to reframe technology along religious and ethical lines. To do so requires much more than proposing a common good ethic or rearranging the ideas of Thomas Aquinas to meet the needs of the world.

We need a metaphysics that adequately engages a world of process and change. We need a theology that is at home in evolution, as Teilhard de Chardin asked: "Who will give evolution its own God?"

Without significant theological revisioning and without dismantling the patriarchy of the institutional church, the pope is speaking to a few close friends while the rest of the world lines up for the newest iPhone. The pandemic is a mirror of global dysfunction, as the pope recognizes, but it also shows a world bereft of a credible God and a vitalizing faith, one as innovative and creative as the latest technology.

I suspect Francis is speaking to the world because no one is listening to him at home, or perhaps because he is afraid to speak to his own brothers, afraid to dismantle the cult of a patriarchal priesthood and open the doors of the church to real community, one in which women are granted full rights and full freedom.

The world is begging for some type of direction, for a credible God, for a vitality of faith that does not stifle growth and progress. The world will change when human persons change, when the human is empowered by the spark of love within, when religion becomes not stifling but the source of novelty and creativity. We need a new religion of the Earth, Teilhard de Chardin wrote, a religion of evolution, a God who is at home with incompleteness, chaos and complexity. I am waiting for the pope to address this concern.

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Consciousness (Orbis Books 2015), and the general editor of the series *Catholicity in an Evolving Universe*.]

RENDERING
A Reflection from the
Christian Traditions
Matthew 22: 15-21
by Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.

Jesus' confrontation with religious and political leaders took on more and more intensity as he drew nearer to the consequences of his words and actions. The powers of the State will soon execute him to deter the justice for which he lived his life. It is not unknown that powerful and greedy people will slaughter the innocent to preserve their status and wealth. When Jesus spoke, he had the courage to say what needed to be said even if no one was listening. The Bible in general teaches the goodness of justice will prevail when all is said and done.

Jesus "dialogued" with those who were threatened by his teachings. On one occasion, religious and political opponents found common cause in pursuing the demise of Jesus. They plotted a trap so Jesus could be formally charged with sedition. It is more than interesting to hear the charge of treason leveled against someone who calls out for the rights of the poor and disenfranchised. The powers to be clearly understood the threat Jesus posed to their power, wealth, and control.

With slick and polite language, representatives from government and

religion confronted Jesus on the crucial matter of taxation. There is no attempt to engage in dialogue. They were trying to trap Jesus so they could use his own words (and actions) against him. Motivated by entrapment, they sought no justice for the oppressed and marginalized. The deadly conspiracy of religious self-righteousness and political expediency married at the altar of deceit to destroy the voice of the poor (see Matthew 22: 15-16).

They posed the question in a rather direct way, "Is it lawful to pay tribute (taxes) to Caesar?" It is fascinating when a government claims it is motivated by religious values as it violates every code of human decency. Jesus did nothing to save his own neck. Calling his investigators "hypocrites," he confronted them to their face. Recall the taxes often benefited the building desires of Herod and Rome at the expense of the poor. After examining a coin with Caesar's image and inscription on it, Jesus declared what belongs to Caesar should be given back to Caesar but what is God's should be given back to God (Matthew 22: 20-21). His would-be enemies were struck with amazement at so bold a teaching.

The time has come to stop interpreting this teaching of Jesus as supporting the separation of Church and State. What belongs to God is love and justice, care and dignity, for the hurting among us. The time has come for the State to stop using religion so it can hurt people, deny their rights, and dehumanize their existence. What ultimately belongs to Caesar is the privilege of caring for God's people

by feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and caring for the sick. No State is exempt from doing what is right for all its people. No religion can be disinterested in the issues affecting people by claiming such concerns are merely political. The People of God, no matter who they are, must stand together for what is right, just, good, and true. Nothing belongs to Caesar since Caesar and everyone else belongs to God.

Blessings to you, Holy Community, who render to God your heart dedicated to the loving caring service of all.



Friday, October 16th was a great success again. With a superb group of helpers, we again were able to supply 37 families with some of the basic food items that were donated by the Food Bank of Contra Costa County: cantaloupes, pears, apples, carrots, and onions.

Although the thermometer climbed to 93 degrees, we managed just fine. So many families thanked us for doing what we do. Distributing food is what makes volunteering so extra special. Just to hear one person say "thank you" really makes my day.

What better place could I be than right here helping people getting back on their feet? Apparently, there is no such thing as normal anymore. Everyone could use a helping hand now and then and that is the reason for us to be here giving out food to the needy.

I look forward to Fridays and helping out right here where I am needed the most. Thanks to all who came and helped. It is a wonderful example of the Stewardship of Time.
Gratefully,
Werner . 🏠



Last Sunday, we held our Drive-Thru Tri-Tip Sandwich Meal event as part of the Parish Festival. It started on Wednesday with the trimming of the meat which was done by **Clem Bushman, Bob Plurkowski, and Dave Simpson**. Then, starting early Sunday morning, and continuing until the last sandwich was served, we had a large group of Knights and family members making a great event.

Let us thank **PGK Bill Barbanica, Tom Borja, Clem Bushman, PGK Tim Cox, Charles & Cynthia Frank, Gerry and Daniel Galvan, Jack Goncalves, Tony Gumina, Phil Hadsell, Pat McConnell, Steve Rojek, Steven Rojek, GK Chip Sharpe, PGK Dave Simpson, Isaac Torres, and Ron Yarolimek**.

And all the way from Texas, **PGK Armando and Erica Vasquez**.

Many thanks to those who were very generous with their donations to make this so successful - **Dave & Melody Costanza, Brian McCoy, Teresa Nelms, Steven Rojek, Barbara Jackson, Mena Machado, Doris Radovan, and Fr. Robert**.

The end result of all of this was that we netted \$1,825 to help with our pledge to the parish for the Expansion Project! Again, many thanks to all who made this event so successful.

Be on the lookout for our next project - The Frozen Pie Fundraiser.

Steve Rojek
Financial Secretary

Winter Nights Update

The Winter Nights Rotating Family Shelter reopens on Monday, November 2nd and our parish has a long tradition of supporting this outreach. In previous years, the shelter operated from October through June and rotated every two weeks among various faith communities in East and Central Contra Costa County. Participating congregations provided meals, supplies, volunteers and tutors in support of the families.

Not surprisingly, Covid-19 protocols will significantly impact shelter operations. This year:

- **No volunteers are allowed inside the shelter. No exceptions.**
- **All food must be prepared in commercial, licensed kitchens and delivered with no-contact.**
- As in the past, all clients must be screened before entering the program. New this year, clients must

be COVID-19 tested and found free of the virus before entry into the program.

- To minimize travel and the number of locations, the shelter will remain at each host site for 4 consecutive weeks instead of the normal two weeks.
- The shelter will be open 24/7 with Winter Nights' staff present. In prior years, the shelter was open 24 hours on weekends and from 5:00 pm to 7:00 am on weekdays.
- Clients will shelter in place except for essential trips such as employment, school, and doctor's appointments.
- Social distancing is a priority. Tents will be 12 feet apart, and each family will have their own dining table spaced 6 feet apart. This means half the number of guests compared to a regular year.
- Guests and staff will be screened daily for Covid-19 symptoms.
- Rigorous cleaning and hand-washing protocols are in place. Mask coverings are required.
- Plans are already in place to care for individuals, families and staff if they come down with symptoms.

There may be a need for breakfast and lunch supplies so the families can prepare their own breakfasts and lunches. Watch the bulletin for more information.

If shelter-in-place requirements are lifted before June, the '4-week at a host site schedule' will continue. However, families will leave in the morning and return at 5:00 pm on weekdays and be at the shelter round the clock on weekends, like a "normal" year.

If you would like more information, visit the Winter Nights website at <https://cccwinternights.org/>. Monetary

donations can also be made through the Winter Nights website.

Bishop's Appeal

Message from Diocese of Oakland Office of Mission Advancement: On behalf of everyone at the chancery, we extend our sincere thanks to all parishioners who have supported the 2020 Bishop's Appeal with a gift or pledge. Of course we understand that, for many, charitable giving has been adversely impacted by financial hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic. During such challenging times, a gift of any amount is appreciated more than ever.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this year's Bishop's Appeal. As of August 31, 2020, two hundred ten St. Ignatius of Antioch families have raised \$17,392 (53%) towards our goal of \$34,900. The 2020 Bishop's Appeal hopes to raise \$3,000,000 to support important work of the Diocese and \$1,507,672 has been raised diocese-wide so far.

If you in a position to support the Bishop's Appeal but have not yet done so, please prayerfully consider a gift of any amount. Make your check payable to "Bishop's Appeal" and place in the collection basket at the outdoor liturgy or walk up Holy Communion. You may also mail your donation to the rectory, 209 Tanganyika Ct., Antioch, CA 94509.

Hyperfocus on abortion issue obscures call of common good

Oct 13, 2020
by [M.T. Dávila](#)



Pro-life advocates mark Respect Life Sunday by participating in the 23rd annual “Stand Up for Life” roadside vigil Oct. 4 in Manorville, New York. (CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz)

This is not an argument for reproductive choice. This is not a "Catholic case for abortion" or even a "Catholic case for the Democratic candidate."

That I have to make this clear from the beginning is a point in fact: For the past 45 years, the public voice of the Catholic Church has been progressively limited to the pro-life cause, narrowly defined as resisting and overturning the laws that make abortions legal. This narrow focus was accompanied by the cooptation of this effort by one political party, supported by the agenda of the Christian right.

With just a few weeks to go until the presidential election, we are being challenged to face the fact that the pro-life position, as articulated and defended for years, has had disastrous consequences for the fullness of the Catholic vision of the common good in the public square.

For decades, focus on the right to life of the unborn has shaped the public and political will of many Christians. Undoubtedly, the number of abortions carried out any year is a staggering and painful reminder that we continue to be deeply immersed in a "culture of death." This phrase from St. John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae* is worth reviewing: "it is possible to speak in a certain sense of a war of the powerful against the weak: a life which would require greater acceptance, love and care is considered useless, or held to be an intolerable burden, and is therefore rejected in one way or another" (12).

But this hyper focus, paired with the political manipulation of the issue, draws a false line in the sand and creates a litmus test for the role of people of faith in the public square that obscures the multiple ways in which we participate in a culture of death. Recent church teachings raise up a number of examples:

- The rejection and exclusion of persons with disability and the elderly ([Fratteli Tutti, 19](#)).
- The racial marginalization and racist violence toward African Americans, Latinos and Latinas, Asian Americans (especially since the start of the pandemic) and Native Americans ([Open Wide Our Hearts](#)).
- Environmental destruction, misuse of natural resources and climate change denial ([Laudato Si', especially 6, 14, 66-69](#)).
- The rejection and mistreatment of migrants and refugees at the border and globally ([Fratteli Tutti, 37-41](#)).
- Gender violence, domestic violence and gender inequality, which place many women in crisis situations, especially when becoming pregnant ([Amoris Laetitia, 54](#)).

"Life" issues include all of these and more. Any threat to the inviolable dignity of the person confronts us with the culture of death. The pro-life movement's hyper focus on the dignity of the unborn, misappropriated and distorted for political gain, corrupted the ability of the church to be a voice for the fullness of the Catholic vision of the common good. El Paso Bishop Mark Seitz expresses it best in his thoughtful words published in [America](#) magazine:

We must repudiate any compromise of the church's witness through partisan alignment with single issue political strategies disconnected from an integral ethic of human life. The moral and ontological pre-eminence of human life is gravely undermined by narrow political stratagems corrosive of the common good. Our concern and advocacy for life must embrace all of the marginalized and excluded, or it will ring hollow.

The pro-life movement as it currently stands has lost its flavor. There is no denying that for decades many have continued to work tirelessly for the relief of women in crisis pregnancies and for poor families in addition to their advocacy for the unborn. This labor of good intentioned people of faith, however, has also been co-opted, misused and weaponized against a vision of the common good that requires us to seek to lift up *the least of these* in all their forms. It has become an obstacle to the careful and arduous task of reflecting, organizing and acting for the kinds of political, economic, cultural and social projects that bring life with dignity to all, not just the unborn. The current moment in U.S. political life once again makes a spectacle of the church's advocacy for the marginalized and the weak by manipulating the pro-life label for

political gain. This while we continue to witness unprecedented violations to human dignity and the common good. The global COVID-19 pandemic ravages our country with millions infected and [over 212,000 dead from the disease](#). Staggering statistics that could have easily been prevented with basic public health measures.

[Demonstrations across the nation](#) beginning in May and continuing still lift up the names of black men and women killed at the hands of police in a nation that continues to criminalize black and brown bodies, disintegrate their communities and invisibilize the historical indignities against them. [Migrants continue to be separated from their families](#), with migrant women being subject to [unnecessary sterilization procedures without their consent](#) (clearly a pro-life issue). The imprisoned continue to be [executed](#) at a rate not seen in over 30 years.

A Catholic vision of the common good does not draw hard boundaries around issues of life and the dismantling of the culture of death.

Certainly, all this calls for an alternative way of thinking. Without an attempt to enter into that way of thinking, what I am saying here will sound wildly unrealistic. On the other hand, if we accept the great principle that there are rights born of our inalienable human dignity, we can rise to the challenge of envisaging a new humanity. We can aspire to a world that provides land, housing and work for all. This is the true path of peace, not the senseless and myopic strategy of sowing fear and mistrust in the face of outside threats. (*Fratelli Tutti*, 127)

This "way of thinking" specifically proposes a vision counter to a hyper-polarized U.S. political and public life dominated by a

debilitating and atrophied vision of the common good. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis challenges our imaginations to uncover the fullness of the common good as shaped by the gospel parable of the "Good Samaritan" ([Luke 10:25-37](#)). "The parable clearly does not indulge in abstract moralizing, nor is its message merely social and ethical. It speaks to us of an essential and often forgotten aspect of our common humanity: We were created for a fulfillment that can only be found in love" (68).

The wisdom of [Ecclesiastes](#) reminds us "There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens" (3:1). Perish now the pro-life movement, in its subverted and corrupted mission, mangled by and tangled with political ideologies of hate, fear and death. Make space for the hard work of all persons of faith "who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbors, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good" (*Fratelli Tutti*, 67).

[María Teresa (MT) Dávila is associate professor of Practice, Religious and Theological Studies at Merrimack College, North Andover, Massachusetts.]



Expansion Project Update

As you are already aware, the sewer line that serves the restrooms off of the Narthex is in need of repair. This task must be completed before construction can begin on the Expansion Project. Budgeted estimates ranged as high as \$16,000.

We are pleased to announce that the repairs are tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 26, 2020 and should be completed in one day. The cost will be \$5,895 and American Plumbing of Antioch will perform the repairs.



Thanksgiving Outreach 2020

Thanks to your generosity, this summer's Mary Project and St. Peter Martyr Backpack Project proved to be very successful virtual events. Now the ongoing pandemic is also changing our role with the St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) Thanksgiving distribution – it's going virtual too!

The distribution will be a drive through only event in our parking lot and participants will receive a turkey and a food gift card – no baskets. We are asking our parishioners to make cash/check donations in lieu of creating a basket. Please write

Thanksgiving Outreach in the memo line on the check. All money collected will be forwarded to the SVdP Conference at Holy Rosary. PLEASE DO NOT PURCHASE INDIVIDUAL GIFT CARDS. SVdP will purchase the gift cards and please do not purchase individual turkeys. The parish does not have any capacity to store frozen turkeys. Monetary donations will be accepted through Sunday, November 22.

If you would like to provide a Thanksgiving card with an expression of love and support, feel free to drop them off at the parish office, the rectory or at the weekend liturgy. These will be collected and handed out as part of the distribution process.

We look forward to returning to our traditional outreach efforts next year, filling our sanctuary with baby clothes, diapers and supplies for the Mary Project, backpacks and school supplies for St. Peter Martyr and Thanksgiving baskets for the SVdP outreach.

If you or someone you know would like to receive a turkey and food gift card as part of this outreach, reservations are required. Call 757-7450 (English) or 757-0941 (Español) on Monday, November 2 or Tuesday, November 3 from 9:00am – noon and 1:00pm to 4:00pm on both days. Reservations will be taken only at these numbers and there is a limit of 150 reservations. If the lines are busy, keep trying. You must speak to a representative in order to make a reservation. Antioch residency is required.

***Justice Corner by Carolyn Krantz,
Pastoral Associate***

Ram Dass once said, “We're just walking each other home.” We have two walking sticks: Love God and Love your neighbor. Within these great commandments, all the rest are contained. Everything depends on

them, our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.

In today's Exodus readings, we are exhorted to defend the alien, the widow and the orphan, those who have lost their country and their loved ones. It is easy to imagine loving God who we cannot see, but more difficult to extend love to the neighbor with all the faults that annoy us. That's the rub in this message.

How do I know I love God with all my heart, soul and mind? It is the same way I measure human love. When I love someone, I want to spend time with them, I want to do things that please them. I want to talk to them and tell them about my joys and struggles. This is what we must do with God.

But the Pharisees in the Gospel were not seeing correctly. They were more concerned with the law, with tricking Jesus into which commandment is the greatest, not with the intent of the law which is to challenge us beyond ourselves, to challenge us to think of the other as part of ourselves rather than opposed to who we are.

Recently I had a visit with someone who does trainings about race with organizations. The whole conversation was about different ways to think about race. It was very intense. When the meeting was over, I found myself saying, “Let's talk about something else.” Then I realized that I can say that because I'm white. A person of color does not have that choice because they live in a brown skin and must always be aware of how they are perceived. It's only white folks who don't have to think about it because the world is set up to favor whiteness. Read Peggy MacIntosh's article available on the internet called “White Privilege” to see what I mean. Fr. Richard

Rohr says that “Evil is a social agreement.” We agree to think of the world in certain ways. Evil is not just personal actions, but what we choose to do together as a community.

In this time of COVID, let us bring creativity to our boredom. Do something different to challenge the social evils of our time. Find ways to build community around you. Rules (the law) are for the young to give them structure, to show them the right road. Love is for the rest of us to build a new world. St. Paul says in Gal: 5:18, “If you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” This is what Jesus was getting at. Those in the Spirit are full of “love, joy, peace patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” The duty of a person of prayer is to “be aware of the inner rhythm of the world and to listen with care for the heartbeat of a higher reality.” (1) In prayer we must listen for this higher reality speaking in our world. Politics doesn't have to be about lies and big money. Pope Francis says that, “Politics is the highest form of charity because it serves the common good.” Let us be about political action that calls us to a higher reality and restores the work of the Spirit in our time.

(1) Kathleen Duffy, *Teilhard's Mysticism*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014, p.32.

***Parish Perspective by
Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pastoral Associate
Walking on Water***

I received an email from a former parishioner who moved to Brentwood several years ago yet still maintains contact with St. Ignatius of Antioch parish. The email contained a video clip of a homeless man, a skinny wreck of a man, with a long unkempt beard and a face deeply weathered

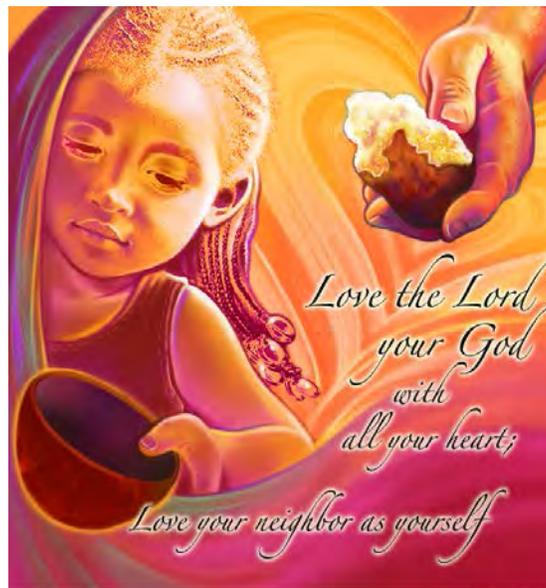
by the sun and wind. The video showed him playing one of several pianos the city had placed around the downtown area for people to use. His playing, without written music to follow, was brilliant. Many people can play wonderfully by “ear,” but it usually lacks the depth of musical content essential for a rich full-sounding performance. The video went viral and soon the man was offered jobs to play for patrons of some of the fancier restaurants in town. People opened a Go Fund Me account for him and his life turned completely around.

Not only is this a heart-warming “Rags to Riches” story, it also allows us to see the Christianity, the Jesus-like parable involved in a true real-life human story. The man, who gave up hope in himself, in his friends and family, and in society never lost the talent that was in him. That was there all the time. He and the people around him just didn't know how valuable he was; to them and himself. It took the “miracle” of playing a certain piece of music that showcased his talent fully, the passerby who bothered to take a video clip of the performance, and the effort to post it to the web to open their eyes, our eyes to the value we can't see in others or ourselves.

The man knew his talent but didn't regard it as anything special. What was special is the actions others took to help this man change his life for the better. That is what God wants us to do with our lives, talents, and hidden treasures; help others live better lives! Jesus walked on water and for him it was no big deal. He didn't walk on the water to show us that he wants us to walk on water too, he did it to instill faith in us about how he wants us to live. Needless to say, ever since Jesus walked on water, humanity has been trying to do the same or explain how he did it. The real miracle is having faith

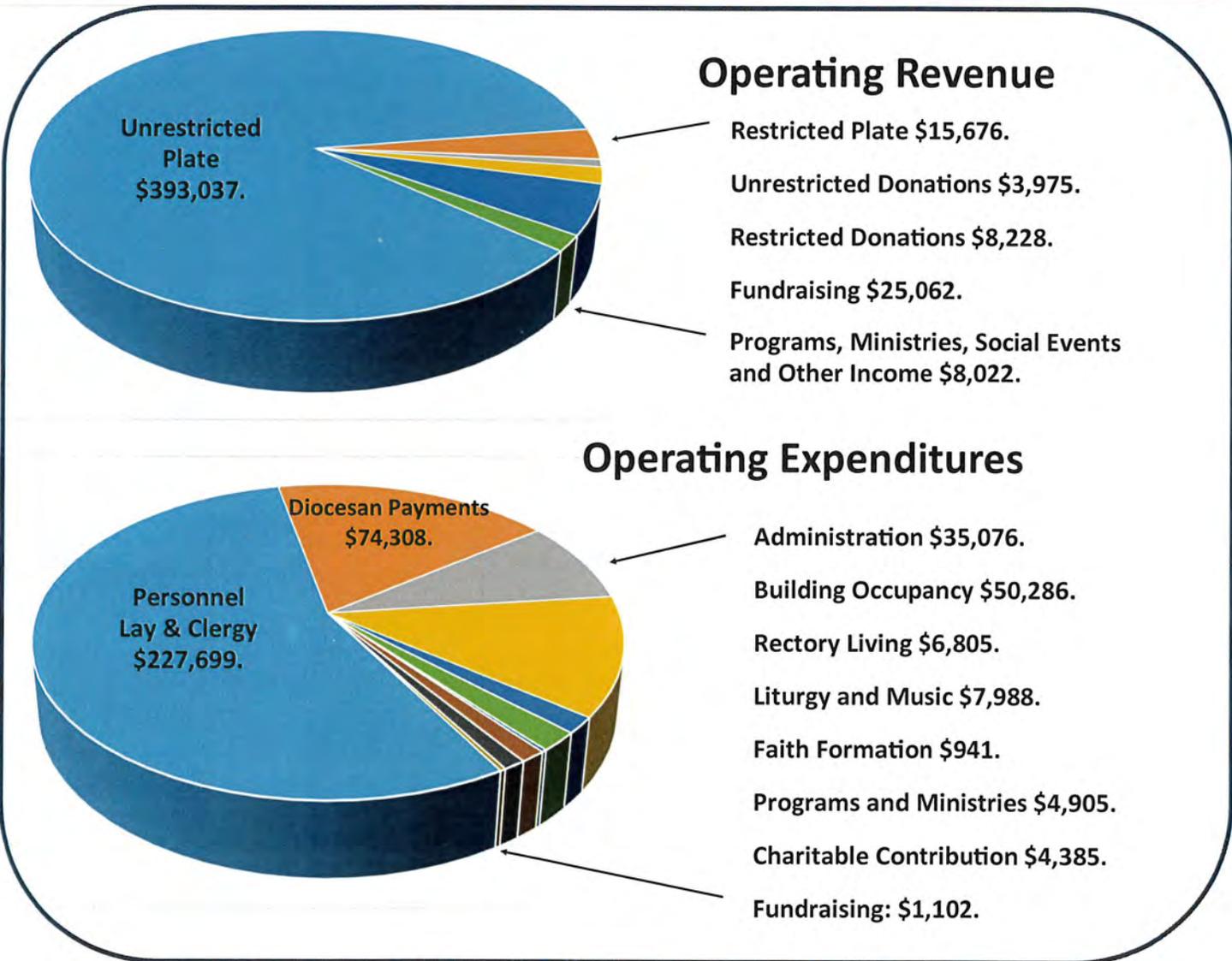
that everyone is valuable to us and especially to God.

Just how much are we valued by God? That question was answered some two thousand plus years ago on a cross just outside of Jerusalem. One life was given so all may have life and the ability to change lives for the better in Jesus' name. Every time we help someone no matter how tattered and beaten, they may appear, every time we do that...we walk on water.



St. Ignatius of Antioch

Financial Report - September 30, 2020



	REGULAR SUNDAY PLATE COLLECTION	
	(includes Easter Sunday)	
	2019 Sunday Plate (39 Sundays):	\$402,684.
2020 Sunday Plate (39 Sundays):	\$383,299.	Avg.: \$ 9,828.

EXPANSION FUND

Cash Balance
\$1,288,738.

P **PARKING LOT LOAN**
(Jan. - Sept. Activity)

Principal Payments: \$ 54,199.
Interest: \$729. Qtr3: not billed
Loan Balance: \$ 5,801.

Operating Fund Balances

Checking Account: \$267,507.
Local Reserve Fund: \$ 60,202.
Diocesan Reserve Fund: \$ 12,109.

St. Ignatius of Antioch

Financial Report - September 30, 2020

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has been able to maintain their financial support during these trying times and certainly look forward to the time when we are all worshipping together as a community of faith.

Summary

All bills and assessments that came due through September were paid in a timely manner.

Operating Income Notes

Revenue continued to be impacted by the ongoing pandemic and health department shelter-in-place directives.

Operating income declined year over year by \$90,000.

Sunday plate collections, the largest source of parish revenue, declined less than 5% as many in our faith community were able to maintain their level of support during this difficult period.

In general, all other income categories also declined year over year. Much of the decrease is attributable to the pandemic's affect on normal parish operations.

Fundraising revenue declined over \$13,000 due primarily to the loss of the Gala Dinner and faith formation bingo events.

Fellowship and Welcome income declined year over year by \$22,000. However, if the one-time income from the 40th Anniversary Celebration in 2019 is excluded, the actual decrease for 2020 is closer to \$12,000.

Fundraising, social events and other events have traditionally served to assist with parish operations.

Total operating income for the period ended September 30, 2020 was \$454,001 vs. \$543,538 for the same period in 2019.

Operation Expense Notes

Reductions in paid hours for the pastoral staff resulted in a year over year decrease of 20.5% (236,295 in 2019 vs. \$187,859 in

2020).

Priest personnel expenses also declined 20% which is attributable to a voluntary decrease in Father Robert's salary and a decrease in extra priest costs due to the elimination of weekday and multiple weekend liturgies.

Restricted parish office hours and the closure of the church resulted in a 55.5% decrease in PG&E costs for the church-\$15,060 in 2019 vs. \$6,708 for the same period in 2020. As the parish office reopens and the parish moves to indoor liturgies, PG&E costs will begin to return to historical levels.

With normal parish operations suspended, expenses related to printing & copying, music & liturgy, education, environment, and programs & ministries also decreased.

Total expenses related to operations for the period ended September 30, 2020 were \$413,495 vs. \$572,978 for the same period last year.

Operating Accounts

Checking Account:	\$267,507.
Local Reserve Fund:	\$60,202.
Diocesan Reserve:	\$12,109.

Capital Expenditures

Capital expenditures refer to costs associated with a significant improvement (e.g. new roof) or the acquisition of a capital asset (e.g. new air conditioning unit). For the third quarter, the following items were charged against the Capital Account:

- \$6,139 to Loving and Campos Architects for Expansion Project fees
- \$2,189 to Contra Costa Health Department for plan review
- \$1,116 to Contra Costa County Fire Protection District for plan review
- \$2,700 to Bay Cities Pyrotector, Inc for fire alarm design

Parish Loans

As of September 30, 2020, the

outstanding parking lot loan balance is \$5,801. ***Thanks to your generous support over the years, this loan will be paid in full by November 2020.***

The parish was able to secure a Payroll Protection Loan of \$38,000. Forgiveness of this loan is anticipated before the end of the year.

Payments to the Diocese

In addition to the parking lot, the following payments were made to the Diocese this year:

- Assessment: \$51,449.
- Catholic Voice: \$ 3,452.
- Insurance: \$18,699.

Bishop's Appeal

The parish was assigned a 2020 goal of \$34,900. The latest information released by the Diocese shows that two hundred ten St. Ignatius of Antioch families have donated \$17,392 to this effort. Thanks to those who support this annual appeal. Gifts of any amount are still gratefully being accepted. Make your check payable to St. Ignatius of Antioch and write Bishop's Appeal in the memo line.

Expansion Project

A current status report on the project was included with the September 20, 2020 bulletin insert. The bulletin insert is available on the parish website:

stignatiusofantioch.org

Designs have been resubmitted to the Health Department to supply additional requested information. We are still awaiting the final construction bid from Oliver and Company.

Thank you to everyone who is supporting this long awaited project with continuing pledge payments and individual gifts. Additional pledges are welcome. Please contact the parish office for information.

\$15

Handmade HOLIDAY FROZEN PIES FUNDRAISER

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS



PLACE YOUR ORDERS EARLY
SALES END NOVEMBER 14TH

Purchase your holiday pies today. These pies
keep up to 1 year in your freezer.

FROZEN PIES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PICK
UP IN THE ST IGNATIUS PARKING LOT
BETWEEN 1:30 & 3PM ON
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

\$15 for your choice of Pumpkin, Apple, Dutch Apple, Apricot,
Blackberry, Boysenberry, Mixed Berry, Peach or
Strawberry Rhubarb 10" Pies.

Apple and Peach Cobbler are also available at \$15 each

Orders should be placed by emailing kofc12587@gmail.com,
giving your contact phone number and your pie order. You may also
place your order by contacting your favorite Brother Knight from
Knights of Columbus 12587 of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Knights will
then email kofc12587@gmail.com to place your order. All profits
from this fundraiser will be used to help our Council meet its financial
obligations for 2020. THANK YOU for your support!





COVID PROGRAM

www.shelterinc.org/renthelp

The new COVID program serves community members affected by the COVID-19 virus.

Available Assistance

- Payment of past due rent
- Payment of current month's rent
- Payment of future month's rent
- Payment of utilities (PG&E, garbage, water)



COVID PROGRAM

- Participants affected by COVID-19
- Able to prove how they are being affected by COVID-19 virus
- No need to prove self-sufficiency
- Not able to pay past, present, and/or future rent

www.shelterinc.org/renthelp



More Info and to apply

A SHELTER, Inc. case manager will analyze the impacts affecting the household's income. Funding decisions will be based on individual needs and funding availability.

www.shelterinc.org/renthelp

INSPIRING PEOPLE • CHANGING LIVES • ENDING HOMELESSNESS