

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Raymond,

As we all know by now, the Catholic Charity Fund has begun. The Diocese raised our goal by 5% to \$37,407. I fully realize that all of us are spending more money on groceries, utilities, heat, etc., and I feel somewhat guilty to be writing this letter to you. First, if we can all kick in a little more than last year, that would be great because the need is there in our state. Many are ill-clad, ill-fed, and homeless. One can only imagine the circumstances where poverty leads so many people.

Often people ask (or complain) what the Charity Fund does concretely. Well, here at St. Raymond's, I am living proof of where the monies go. Because I work at The Miriam Hospital, the Charity Fund pays half of my wages and benefit package (Health care, retirement, etc.). When all is said and done, that is \$35,579 which St. Raymond parishioners do not have to contribute. While the Diocese sets a parish goal, mine is that we can show downtown that we have the capacity to pay for me, if the hospital ever closed, or if they asked me to do a second parish.

I know that we can count on everyone coming through as we work towards our financial goal, as we have done in the past.

Having said all that, there are those in our own parish who may be in need of assistance. So often you hear me announce from the pulpit that we do not want parishioners making choices between health care or food or electricity. There have been times in my life when I was flat broke, too. Please, if anyone has a need, see me. I promise it will be confidential.

Thanks for listening/reading.