



Bellarmino Conference

Report to the Parish

November 7, 2020

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

Our last quarter, ended September 30, 2020, ended where it began. Our lives were altered by all the considerations necessary to avoid a very contagious virus that we all hope would end. Our poor neighbors suffered the most severe consequences of this virus. Jobs just begun abruptly ended. Sickness rates higher than normal. To them always falls, the worst of a bad situation.

Many of our neighbors lived the family life to which they had become accustomed, scraping by on very low or no wages or a government SSDI payment of \$750 per month, fearing the day when some random event will take from them the fragile life they live. Bellarmine Conference helped 175 of these families last quarter to hold onto the scrap of civilized life they had from the threat of eviction and utility disconnection. Mothers fearing separation from their children, old women and old men fearing homelessness with the knowledge that they can't go through that again. This is the real fragility of life.

Next week we observe the Fourth World Day of the Poor and His Holiness Pope Francis tells us, in his "Stretch forth your hand to the poor" message, that "Encountering the poor and those in need constantly challenges us and forces us to think. How can we help to eliminate or at least alleviate their marginalization and suffering? How can we help them in their spiritual need? The Christian community is called to be involved in this kind of sharing and to recognize that it cannot be delegated to others."

The 394 people in those 175 families experience the hope life can bring them when we inform them that, yes, we can help you. You helped many of these families directly by donating to the parish Coronavirus Community Assistance Fund Bellarmine. You gave us \$6,800 last quarter and \$21,185 since March to

allow us to give more assistance to families directly affected by Covid than we normally could.

The joy our members feel in delivering that help to these people is the amazing gift we receive from the Holy Spirit. Fr. Eric has invited us to lean into uncertainty. How often we make a phone visit uncertain how we can help this neighbor, burdened with an enormous utility bill or an impossible past due rent, and are able to give the neighbor the news that a solution has been found to keep that neighbor in their fragile life. Lean into uncertainty.

This quarter we spent over \$4000 average per week on rent and Duke Payments and furniture for our poor neighbors. This is an increase of 18% from the prior quarter. We are spending more because the government is slowing down its direct rental supports and the utility companies are ending their moratoriums on disconnections. The increase in need that we expected is here.

I am asking you now to support us with your financial help. We spend over \$3,000 every week of the year in our mission efforts, not including the \$1,400 per week in furniture and clothing vouchers (paid for by the Cincinnati District of SVDP) that we give to our neighbors. This is a huge financial burden that Jesus has asked us all to share and I ask you to give from your excess to rescue those who have none. Thank you for your past support and thank you for your present gift.

Seeing the face of Christ in every neighbor we assist.



Jim Doerger, President

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