

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
St. Michael's
Isaiah 25:6-10a
Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20
Matthew 22:1-14
October 9, 2011

CMA

Paul writes to the Philippians that 'it was kind of them to share in his distress.' He speaks of living at times in *humble* circumstances and at other times living in *abundance*. What about Paul living in *distress* or humble circumstances is it that the Philippians have shared in?

Well, what the Philippians have done since he visited them was to take up a collection and to send it to Paul to support him in his ministry to proclaim the good news.

Paul did his best to not to have to ask for money because there were 'prophets' at that time who claimed to be ministers but expected to be paid for their work. They were more concerned with saying what the people wanted to hear so they would give them money rather than proclaim the good news according to Jesus.

Paul does not ask for money. That is why he is willing to live in humble circumstances. He wants it clear that he does not minister in order to make a big salary and to live in *abundance*. He takes only what he needs because God is his priority, not earthly things.

How many earthly things do you have? Do you live in abundance or in humble circumstances? There are people who are poor and/or out of work that are forced to live in poverty. Poverty is not the same as living in humble circumstances. To live in humble circumstances is a choice. To live in poverty can be something one gets stuck with.

Is living in abundance a bad thing? Elsewhere Paul writes that the *love of money* is the root of all evils. It doesn't say money is evil, rather the love of money is the root of evil. If you work hard and make a good salary is not the problem.

It becomes a problem when making a lot of money is your priority and you use it for selfish gain.

What do you do with the money you receive? Do you hoard it? Or do you live like Paul in humility and use what you have to help others.

Of course, money is the only way to help others. Some people really have no money to give. You can also help others by giving of your time or by using your talents to help others who can't do what you do for themselves.

Each gives according to their means and abilities. But the bottom line is that it takes some money to do ministry. That is why Paul is willing to accept the money the Philippians have sent him.

The same is true today and so it's that time of year again when we start our annual diocesan Catholic Ministries Appeal (CMA).

This year's theme is *The Power of Many, Stronger As One*. I believe this theme captures how God is calling us to be good stewards of what he has given us. God has given each of us different gifts. Alone sometimes we can do many things but by

working together, pooling our different gifts we can do even more, stronger as one.

So I ask you to be praying about making a contribution to this year's appeal. Note that I said "making a contribution" not "giving money." We shouldn't see it as "giving money." Rather, we are making a contribution to ensure that the mission Jesus has given us to proclaim the good news and share God's love.

Then, the obvious question is what is it that we are contributing too?

Some goes to Catholic Charities to support their programs for the needy. Some goes to support hospital and prison chaplains along with college ministers. Some goes to support youth ministry in our diocese.

Some goes to support the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as they pool the resources to help each diocese in its ministry. Some goes to support the Vatican.

Some of it is used to support us as a parish. The diocese provides us administrative support to keep us up on civil laws and

regulations. Our diocese has an office of Evangelization and Catechesis that supports our parishes and schools in educating our children. They provide resources for our RCIA program for people who wish to become Catholic. They help us provide marriage preparation for couples preparing to marry.

Ask yourself what is God calling you to contribute?

Last year we moved from having six separate goals to one combined goal. We also stepped up our efforts to promote the CMA. The results were incredible. We went from raising around \$36,700 the year before to raising over \$56,000 in one year. Many people increased their contributions. Others who hadn't giving recent years gave. People who had never given gave (including one very large donation.) Coming together as one we met our goal for the first time.

Now we face a new year. Each year the diocese calculates the goals based on number of households, past contributions, number of people attending church, and median income data. The

way this works out this year is our goal is actually down about \$500 to \$54,442.

Does that mean we can all give less? Not really. Each year a few parishioners pass away and some might move away decreasing the number of contributors. Of course, hopefully some new people have also joined our parish in the last year.

There may be some people who, because of lost jobs or other changes, might not be able to contribute as much, if at all, this year. Of course, some might be able to give more.

Pray about it. What is God calling you to contribute? It's not about seeing what is left over after you have a lot of fun. Pay your own bills, take of your own needs, but then give according to what God calls you to give.

Whatever you might be able to give, more, less, or the same it is appreciated.