



ST LAWRENCE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

PLANNED GIVING DRIVE

HOMILY - 'THE MISSION'

The beautiful fresco behind me, in the sanctuary, depicts various scenes from the life and mission of St Lawrence, and when we think about mission, as Catholics, St. Lawrence gives us a powerful example. As a deacon of the Church in Rome, his mission was clear: to serve God by serving the poor and to witness to Christ even when it cost him everything. We know that when asked to hand over the treasures of the Church, Lawrence gathered the poor, the widows, and the outcast, declaring, “Here are the true treasures.” His mission, his faith, was ultimately to help others meet Christ and to get to Heaven, in the hope that he, too, one day would attain the gift of Heaven.

This weekend’s readings echo that same call for us as ‘missionary disciples.’ The Prophet Habakkuk, in our first reading, reminds us that faith is not easy—we may cry out, “How long, O Lord?” when life feels heavy. But God assures us that the vision still has its time; the righteous live by faith. St. Paul, in his letter to Timothy, in our second reading, encourages us to “fan into flame” the gift of faith we’ve been given, not with timidity but with courage and trust in God’s Spirit. Finally, in St Luke’s Gospel, today, the disciples ask Jesus to increase their faith, but look at Our Lord’s answer: ‘Even the tiniest faith, like a mustard seed, can do great things’—because it’s God who brings the growth. Think, also, of the Wedding Feast at Cana, when Jesus turned ordinary water into extraordinary wine, a sign of how Christ takes everything we bring him, no matter how small, and transforms it into something, richer, deeper, lasting; He turns the ‘metaphorical’ water of our lives into the wine of renewed joy.

As you know, today, we step onto the platform of our parish Planned Giving drive, which we are asked to undertake around every 3-4 years. Planned giving is part of our mission as Catholic disciples today. Yes, it includes paying our church bills and maintaining our parish buildings—but, it’s also about trusting that even our small sacrifices, offered in faith, allow the Church to keep serving, keep proclaiming, keep loving, keep being there as a treasure for our community. In this, like St. Lawrence, we are called to see the true treasures of our Church: the people, the community, the mission.

At every Mass, every liturgy, every living moment that we are in this stunning church – our spiritual home - St Lawrence watches over us, not in a mural, a fresco or a painting, but from

Heaven; that place where, please God, when we arrive there one day, like St Lawrence, we will all joyfully cry out, with the Lord, ‘mission accomplished.’

Planning for this time, as we live out, now, the call to be missionary disciples, we must care for our church and for our parish as ‘Stewards for the Lord’ and as ‘Pilgrims of Hope.’ This is a gifted time, then, for us to embark on our Planned Giving Drive, in this Jubilee Year of Hope, as we celebrate what has already been achieved in the parish, yet, recommit and re-energise ourselves to strengthening it going forward, for generations to come. As the leaflet for this first week of our parish Planned Giving Drive emphasises, *‘almost a century of continuous activity [here in our parish church], along with a significant growth, [especially numbers attending Mass], is calling for us, now, to be more prudent, responsible and resilient stewards for a more secure, fertile future, as we care for our church and parish.’*

We have discerned three priorities for this particular Planned Giving Drive, which you can read about more fully in the leaflet for this week one, as well as in our newsletter and parish website, but they include, first and foremost, the significant upgrade to our church lighting system, that is very much needed, and which is going to be a very large project in itself. We will also focus on ongoing formation, especially concerning Youth and Pilgrimage, and, finally, we hope to strengthen our church’s liturgical character, drawing hearts and minds to the Lord through our liturgies. Again, please read about these things in the documents you have been given as you entered church [or online], and you shall hear more about these priorities in the coming weeks from members of our Parish Finance Committee.

One of parishioners wrote to us this week, encouraging this Planned Giving Drive, and in his letter he reminds us that *‘nobody can outdo God for generosity. God has a mountain of gifts for us. Following God’s ways and His decrees will give us complete peace of mind and prosperity in our lives.’* And, so, today, we commend this Planned Giving Drive to your prayers, your reflection and discernment, as well as to the prayers of our patron, St Lawrence, himself a ‘cheerful giver’ to the end (2 Cor 9:7), in all his acts of faith. It is in our acts of faith, in all our giving, we say “Lord, I believe You are at work here. I trust that You can take whatever I offer and make it fruitful, as we strive always for Heaven and help others do the same.” That’s the mission, dear friends—and together, we live it.

St Lawrence, pray for us.

With our best wishes and prayers,
Father Mike and Father Andrew, and the Parish Team.