



## The Annual Fund for St. Ignatius Loyola

22 April 2022

Dear Parishioners,

“Will they return to the pews?” This question has preoccupied the church’s hierarchy, countless pastors, and leaders of other faith traditions since March 2020. At the darkest period of the pandemic, when places of worship were closed for health reasons, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass was suspended. The livestreaming of religious services became ubiquitous, and, in the process, people began to question the relevance of attending Mass in person, if at all.

I am happy to report that this feared consequence of the pandemic has not been our experience. There was understandably a significant drop-off in the numbers of people attending daily and Sunday Mass before vaccinations became widely available. Our numbers trended upward as more and more people were vaccinated. Since Labor Day of last year, the number of parishioners attending Sunday Mass has steadily increased. Those attending Mass on Ash Wednesday and, more recently, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday, are approaching pre-pandemic numbers.

In reflecting on our parish’s experience, I was reminded of Shoeless Joe Jackson whose story was the inspiration for the movie, *Field of Dreams*, and the oft-quoted line, “If you build it, they will come.” In a sense, since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been building something that I have referred to as “a new way of being a church.” With a rich history and strong foundation, we confidently look to the future, while honoring those traditions that distinguish who we are as a parish. The successful completion of our capital campaign, *Your Parish, Your Home*, during the bleakest days of the pandemic, and the drafting of a *vision statement* for our future are proof of our firm commitment to remain actively involved in the mission of our parish. In other words, we have returned to the pews.

While the number of parishioners returning to the pews continues to increase, the level of financial support from the Offertory collections has not kept in step with that trend. The vital importance of the *Annual Fund for St. Ignatius Loyola* is unquestionable. Your help is needed for us to continue the ordinary operations of the parish, pay the bills, and fund all the ministries, programs, and activities of the parish.

I am writing to you now to ask you to contribute to the Spring Appeal of the *Annual Fund for St. Ignatius Loyola*. Your contribution, at whatever level you can afford, is needed now more than ever, as we plan for the future both by sustaining the current operations of the parish and by responding to Pope Francis’s call to walk together with the Holy Spirit. Together we will build something extraordinary, and they will come and fill our pews to their capacity and beyond.

God bless you!

Sincerely in the Lord,

Dennis J. Yesalonia, S.J.  
Pastor