



Nothing will separate us
from the Love of God in Christ Jesus

– Romans 8:38-39

Annual Giving 2021 A Discussion about a Narrative Budget

Some folks, when they examine the budget, love to see the numbers and know how much it costs to keep the building open. They love pie charts and bar graphs and all those amazing things available to try and make numbers more interesting. But some folks don't do numbers – they prefer words. They prefer photos. **They prefer an opportunity to be shown HOW the money they donate is spent – giving them the WHY for donating in the first place.** This is where the narrative budget comes in.

If you have photos of the good work your parish has done in staying connected to one another in worship, work, and wisdom, show folks, and share what happened – how many folks it took and how much time they gave. Whatever you have done to stay connected to each other and the world around you, **show it.** Our connections to God and each other are shown by the work we do in our communities. This is another way for us to tell our stories, not just for our current parishioners, but for individuals in your area who are looking for a way to do this kind of work and haven't found it yet. **This is your WHY – your reason for doing what you do.** Share it.

This doesn't have to take an enormous amount of time. Decide on areas of ministry where you want to tell your story – for example, worship; Christian formation; pastoral care; outreach; fellowship – whatever is important in your context. Ask your staff members for a ROUGH ESTIMATE of the amount of time they spend on each of these areas by percentage – have them spend no more than five minutes. Then average those percentages, take your operating budget and break it down using the averages. Using photos in each area and a brief description of the ministries in each area, people can see how the money they donate is used to benefit your parish and the community around you. This can be done on an 8.5 x 11 trifold brochure or on an 8.5 x 11 piece of paper. There are more elaborate ways of doing a narrative budget. But if you have never done one before, then this is the simplest way to begin that process.