



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each day, I pray that Our Lord deepens His presence in your hearts and souls. I am profoundly grateful for the honor of being your pastor, witnessing countless moments of conversion, discipleship, friendship, and love. It is a constant source of joy and inspiration, and I praise God daily for His blessings upon you and our parish. Over the past five years, I have seen not only individual transformations but also our community's growth through the Holy Spirit. We warmly welcome the many new faces who have joined us, grateful to share our faith together.

Over the past year, through the tireless efforts of our staff, we have worked, collaborating with our parish and finance councils, to look to our *future* as well as our *present*. In a community as dynamic as Our Lady of the Lake, at times, it is important to take a step back and focus on the fundamentals. We have, with our *Amazing Parish* partners, formed a healthy leadership team to ensure stable leadership and a focus on the mission and vision of the parish. The leadership team with our parish and finance councils have also spent a good deal of time looking at our financial health and the future health of our facilities.

Our parish is a vibrant community of over 2,600 families. As Christians, we are called to contribute to the physical and spiritual needs of the Church, including supporting the formation and education of our community. Our church has long been a spiritual home, but as our parish has grown, so have the needs of our facilities. Some necessary maintenance has been delayed, and we must save for future needs and upgrades identified through our Legacy of Faith, Hope, and Love campaign.

Thanks to the leadership of Ms. Laura Sardagna, Mr. Terry Wallace, and Mr. Brian Silkwood, we are planning for the future of Our Lady of the Lake's facilities. However, to address current needs and prepare for the future, we need to *Step-Up* our giving and I humbly invite you to join me in a *Step-Up initiative*; a simple way for each of us to prayerfully consider a stable, weekly, increase in our offering for the building up of the church. Several critical maintenance projects are overdue, including roof repairs, HVAC system upgrades, parking lot lighting and other necessary projects that are essential to preserving the spiritual home we cherish.

Alongside the *Step-Up initiative*, our parish is transitioning to a new online giving platform called PushPay. Online giving has been an incredible blessing for our parish over the past several years, providing stability and support. My hope is that even more parishioners will take advantage of this new platform to give regularly and sustain our community.

I recognize that every family has its own financial constraints, and I ask only that you prayerfully consider how you can participate. Whether your commitment is large or small, your generosity will make a lasting impact. Together, as one Body of Christ, we can ensure that our church remains a beacon of faith for generations to come.

Let us trust in God, knowing He blesses those who give with a joyful heart. May we *Step-Up* together in faith, hope, and love and please know of my constant love and prayers for each of you and your families.

Fr. Austin R. Gilstrap, Pastor