

GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER...

The title of this essay comes from II Corinthians 9:7. You'll not be surprised to know it is in the context of an appeal for a collection! But as I reflect on this past weekend, I have to celebrate with you the reality of the generosity of Our Savior parish.

St. Paul continues: "You are being enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us produces thanksgiving to God, for the administration of this public service is not only supplying the needs of the holy ones but is overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God" (II Cor. 9:11-12).

And here we are, at Our Savior: finishing a record-breaking Catholic Charities collection. **Our official total of \$110,592 is 115% of our goal.** What wonderful things will be done thanks to our love! Beyond that, and even more concretely, we served **over 250 folks** at the post-11:00 Mass pancake brunch, a fund-raiser so our youth can attend a program that forces them to get up early for a week in the summer to work inside houses, on the outside of houses, and in yards—cleaning, fixing, scrubbing, and more. What a mutual gift for those in need—we help enable our youths, and our youths (with many others) help enable people with no ability to help themselves. This is the function of the Body of Christ in all its glory.

The breakfast would not have been a success without the efforts of parents, the Knights of Columbus, and especially our Youth Minister, Tina Lyons, for her ability to attract and motivate. The teens' major tasks were serving and cleaning up—roles with no real glory but with great need to be done. So they did—and they took the lead with us in prayer, as well, with the funkiest "grace" I've heard in a long time.

Beyond their willingness, however, we must see and praise the parish for willing to support our young people in this great endeavor (Catholic Heart Work Camp, I mean—not necessarily just "feeding the hungry"!). You turned out in such great numbers, and you were so enthusiastic: it surely was a foretaste of the Messianic wedding-feast. And (miraculously?) the food did not run out (read I Kings 17:7-16, as well as Mark 6:34-44).

Having said all this, I shudder with delightful anticipation at what might be the results, coming up, of our bake sale, garage sale and appeal for San Francisco de Asis in Temascalapa. God is good, and God is making us better every day...

A footnote: if you are asked about the Catholic Church and the Holocaust and the "break-away" bishops from whom Pope Benedict lifted the ban of excommunication, you might direct them to this past Sunday's *Insight* section, where I have an op-ed piece explaining what actually happened, as opposed to what folks think happened.