

SERMON ON THE AMOUNT

What I learned in my first six months as National Treasurer

By Jerry Rousseau, OFS

We recently celebrated the wonderful Easter Season and have been reminded that Christ is Risen, has Ascended to the Father, and has sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and guide us in all that we say and do (if we will allow ourselves to be open to His promptings). May the Father's will be done in our lives!

I now share with you what, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, I have learned these past six months. For followers of Francis, who accepted no money and possessed nothing, we sure have a different mode of being and living — checking and savings accounts, trust funds, restricted funds, income, expenses, etc.

1. Are we solvent? Emphatically, Yes.
2. What is the answer to the \$64,000 question? This is the total amount expended over the past two years for the cancelled venue for the 2016 Q. These funds came directly from our checking/savings account and represent the accumulation of “net income” during 2013 and 2014. In other words, we were substantially under budget during this time (+ \$99,000). Therefore, the impact was not as great as it might have been. We were also blessed with a substantial bequest during calendar year 2015 that affirmed God's providence.
3. How to avoid a similar problem? No contracts will be signed without full discussion and approval of the entire NEC (and, if warranted, of the National Fraternity Council).
4. Will the 2016 Q be a success (financially and otherwise)? A momentous event is anticipated for all who are fortunate enough to attend. Expected to be self-sustaining financially and possibly show some positive income. 505 registered as of this writing.
5. Was NAFRA able to assist with Q scholarships? 15% of those attending are receiving scholarships awarded by NAFRA. Also, several Regions have provided financial support directly to their members.
6. What success did our H2O Lenten Appeal enjoy? To date, \$3,732 has been received from fraternities, Regions, and individuals.
7. What is required of the Treasurer? As an elected Councilor on the NEC — to be available and responsible, help animate and guide the National Fraternity, attend meetings, preside at elections,

serve as fraternal visitor, and represent NEC at other gatherings. In the role of Treasurer — assist with preparation of the budgets (NAFRA, the Q, National Events, etc.), deposit all received checks and keep records of same, reimburse members for expenses incurred for the good of the Order, pay all bills received, keep accurate records of all expenditures by account and serve on the Duns Scotus Trust Fund Board. Respond to inquiries from members. Prepare quarterly and annual reports. Maintain accurate records of all donations and bequests. Review quarterly financial reports from Trust Fund providers and reconcile monthly bank statements. Record sales of formation books and calculate royalties paid quarterly.

8. Any surprises? Yes, it appears that some of our members procrastinate when it comes to paying for formation books from Smoky Valley Printing. I have uncovered a number of delinquent accounts dating back to 2012.
9. What, if anything, is being done regarding this? I have acquired copies of all delinquent invoices from Smoky Valley and have sent out requests for payment to all those still outstanding for calendar year 2015. Once this is complete, I intend to send out requests for payment for delinquent accounts in 2014, 2013, and 2012.
10. How much time is required to accomplish all requirements of the National Treasurer? For the past six months, 20–30 hours a week. No complaints — it is a joy to serve the Order and utilize the gifts that God has given me.

A final note, the Fair Share contributions from the Regions are beginning to trickle in. These funds (81 percent of our income) are the basis for much of the work being accomplished in the Order. May I remind all Regional Fraternities that you do not have an option to send in less than the \$17 per professed and candidate upon which the budget was constructed and approved. In other words, you cannot pick and choose what parts of the National Fraternity Budget you will support. The National Fraternity Council, which consists of all Regional Ministers (or delegates) along with the NEC members, voted (October 16, 2015) to approve this budget including the amount for Fair Share.