



11 May 2020

Dear Parishioner,

Trust in the Lord. Our response: gratitude to the Lord. These are reminders our Staff, Parish and Finance Council members discussed in our meetings last week. The main thrust of our gratitude is that we have trusted the Lord would get us through some difficult decisions as Parish, especially in light of our Parish's Strategic Pastoral Plan. The content of this letter is to summarize the progress in demolishing our former Parish Center (a.k.a. Saint Patrick School Building). My intent is to be succinct and complete in providing this summary. To the point, we are likely going to have a new parking lot at our Saint Patrick Church site by spring of 2021.

- ❖ 1999 – prior to, at the time of, and since the merger of Sacred Heart – Saint Patrick Parish, we have had an abundance of buildings with increasing maintenance and utility costs.
- ❖ Since the merger, several plans for building usage, building renovations, or building remodeling have been formed. The plans were met with significant expenses which often deterred making changes, and capital campaigns which caused potential for donor fatigue from Parishioners.
- ❖ Since the merger, several pastoral plans were presented and, for any sorts of reasons, did not get enough traction to move forward or be brought to completion.
- ❖ A more recent Strategic Plan was presented in October 2018 which outlined partial demolition of the Parish Center and expansion of the parking lot to increase parking spaces leased to Mayo Clinic Health System – Luther Campus. That plan called for a Parish capital campaign in addition to a loan from the Diocese of La Crosse to complete. At that time, Pastoral and Finance Council members did not think the Parishioners had the resources to meet the funding goal, nor the stable fiscal future to take on debt.
- ❖ In subsequent months, Parish and Finance Council members worked, with honest conversations and unity, to put together the current Strategic Pastoral Plan which also included nurturing our prayer and community life. The current Plan was presented in August 2019.
- ❖ The current Plan gives attention to demolishing the former Parish Center.
- ❖ Based upon estimated parking rental income, accounting for increased spaces to rent, we thought it was feasible to solicit estimates from contractors for the demolition of the building and installation of a new parking lot. Three contractors were called, two of them submitted bids, and we chose the bid which appeared to be the most comprehensive.

- ❖ The most comprehensive bid includes asbestos removal, complete project management and adhering to regulations from the City of Eau Claire for the project. The bid is \$504,000.
- ❖ A benefactor made the offer to fund the project, asking to be paid back through rental income from the expanded number of parking spaces. After the funds are paid back, the Parish will benefit from the parking space rental income.
- ❖ On May 5, 2020, the Finance Council agreed to move forward with the offer from the benefactor. On the same date, the Parish Council agreed to move forward with the same plan.
- ❖ On May 8, 2020, formal documentation was sent to our Diocesan Offices for approval of the project. We are awaiting approval from our Diocesan Offices.
- ❖ The demolition is scheduled to be done during the winter of 2020-2021. The new parking lot would be paved in the spring of 2021.
- ❖ Before the project begins, the Parish will go through the Parish Center and take what we need for our Parish. Parishioners will then be given chance to do the same. Local Catholic organizations will also be given this opportunity.
- ❖ Our considerations will include: enhancing the Kitchen in our Parish Hall (at Sacred Heart Church); relocating liturgical decorations into the Saint Patrick Church basement (or Sacred Heart Church Garage) so the Saint Patrick Garage can be demolished; future construction, after a number of years, of a small meeting area or gathering hall and storage area at Saint Patrick Church (possible spaces include behind the Sacristy or in the space between the Church and Rectory).
- ❖ Currently we save approximately \$55,000 annually, through no maintenance or utilities costs and reduced insurance coverage, due to having vacated the Saint Patrick School building.
- ❖ Parking space rental is estimated to be 260 stalls at \$30 per month, totaling \$93,600 annually.
- ❖ Total estimated benefit to the Parish at year 5½ (after the funds are paid back to the benefactor) is \$148,600 annually.

In conclusion, I am thankful to the spirit of openness and progress to move our parish forward in this project and other parish planning. I know that big changes outlined in our Parish Strategic Pastoral Plan bring about all sorts of responses and reactions – and the range varies on a very broad continuum. Know that the sacrifices you make for our parish: spiritually, emotionally and monetarily, are all what makes our parish an amazing Catholic church of the past, present and future. Thank you for your support and I look forward with you to the grace-filled future God has in store for us. Our faithfulness and trust in God will continue to radiate from our lives and attract people to the Lord. May the intercession of Saints Joseph, Mary and Patrick continue to help us keep Jesus at the center of our lives.

Sincerely,

Rev. Brian J. Jazdzewski