

**St. Maria Goretti Parish
4712 Liberty Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa 15224**

February 2, 2021

Dear Parishioners of Saint Maria Goretti,

I am writing first to assure you of my thoughts and prayers for you and your loved ones, especially as we continue to deal with the challenging effects of COVID-19. Who of us could ever have imagined that we would still be in the midst of these difficult times? Please know that each time I celebrate Mass your intentions are remembered at the Altar.

I am also writing to announce an important update related to the work of the Resource Task Force. You might remember that I established the Task Force in June of 2020 to begin assessing and studying the needs of our parish related to properties located in Bloomfield.

As a reminder the members of the Task Force are: Bob Bachner, Gary Donatelli, Dan Friday, Kathy Homrok, Gene Mariani, and Carlo Schiaretta.

During the last seven months the task force has engaged in a process of investigation and study, through the use of diocesan guidelines and resources, to propose a recommendation to me as to the future use of our church buildings. The study included the following:

- 1) Evaluation of short and long-term costs of church building maintenance and repair;
- 2) Review of financial realities including income, expenses, assets and liabilities;
- 3) Analysis of church building costs (daily operations costs);
- 4) Evaluation and discussion of impact on mission and ministry;
- 5) Concern for preserving unity and building up the Body of Christ in our parish.

As part of the process, the Task Force also presented their recommendation to both the Finance and Pastoral Councils, whose members then offered their feedback.

It is important for me to now inform you of the recommendation and announce the next steps in the process that involve you.

After thorough study, thoughtful prayer and discernment, and proper consultation with the advisory councils of our parish, the recommendation of the Task Force is:

That our parish maintain the use of all buildings at Immaculate Conception campus and that I petition Bishop Zubik to relegate Saint Joseph church to profane but not sordid use (meaning to close Saint Joseph).

During this process the members of the Task Force were very concerned about the financial sustainability of the Immaculate Conception campus given the much higher insurance and utility costs. But given the last two elements of our evaluation criteria listed above, we have decided that this recommendation gives the best chance to bring about the “unity and the building of the Body of Christ in our parish”.

PLEASE NOTE: No final decisions have been made. The next step is for me to conduct a Parish Assembly for all parishioners at which time the details of the recommendation will be presented. At the Parish Assembly, parishioners will also be given the opportunity to offer their feedback before I send a formal petition to Bishop Zubik.

I send this letter now to mitigate any miscommunication or rumors that may develop as we journey through the final stages of this process. Please keep in mind that Bishop Zubik is the only one who makes the final decision about the use of church buildings and nothing is final until a decision comes from him.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions currently in place, which prohibit us from convening meetings of more than 10 people, we realistically need to look to having a virtual Parish Assembly. The plan is to schedule a more detailed presentation on this recommendation in a recorded format sometime in March and ways to gather the input from all of you will be established. How and when this will take place is yet to be determined, but all of you will be informed as to when it will happen.

Even with this letter I invite you to express any hopes, questions and/or concerns about this proposed recommendation. You are welcome to send an email or give a call to the parish office to offer suggestions or insights. We will not be able to respond to all the individual questions or concerns but we will try to respond to as many as possible through the bulletin and website. You can email me at: brojohn.smg@gmail.com or you can call the parish office at 412-682-2354 and leave your comment.

In closing, I wish to thank the members of the Resource Task Force for their tireless effort, their honest and open discussion and their concern in making this recommendation. I also express my gratitude to the members of the Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils who offered their counsel on this important matter.

Finally, I thank you for being a member of Saint Maria Goretti Parish and am most grateful to you for your consideration and support as we continue to discern together this important recommendation.

Peace & Blessings,

Bro. John D. Harvey, OFM Cap.
Administrator