

### Floors in the Church

I hope, like me, that you have been enjoying our newly renovated sanctuary. It has been such a joy to see the vision that this parish had come to fruition and the support of the parishioners to make it happen. What a beautiful space we are privileged to worship the Lord our God in! However, the recent renovations, though substantially concluded, must continue, as we have some repairs that need to be made. Anyone who has ever done a large — or even small — project to remodel or renovate knows that not everything is done right the first time around. Such is the case with our recently restored floors. Though they have been adequate and have served our purposes since the conclusion of the renovation, our Facilities Team, made up of experts in the field, have determined that certain aspects are not up to the standard that should be expected of this level of professional work. Therefore, we are taking the opportunity to correct the floors now, rather than “kick the can” to later years. This does mean, however, that we will once again be in a temporary exile from our beautiful sanctuary, for the better part of a month this summer, and perhaps longer. We are setting aside the moths of July and August for this task, and we will be setting up our familiar refuge in Varallo Parish Hall for that timeframe. It will, of course, be inconvenient and will not be as pleasant, but it is our hope that doing this now will save us future headaches, as well as be as minimally impactful on the life of the parish as possible. It will also give us an opportunity to address certain fire safety concerns and improvements, especially in light of the recent fire at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Note that this project is still under the budget of our previous renovation, and we do not expect to incur any debt from this. I invite everyone to please pray for its successful conclusion and that we might all have patience as a community, as we go over this bump in the road. Good things come to those who wait!

### Forty Hours Devotion

Before we close down the sanctuary for the renovation I mentioned above, we are going to have an opportunity to celebrate a traditional practice called the Forty Hours Devotion. It is a practice that came to us from Italy, especially popularized by St. Charles Borromeo in the city of Milan, and which spread to the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century. Notable saints including St. Francis de Sales, St. Ignatius of Loyola, and St. Philip Neri utilized this practice in their efforts to evangelize. It was heavily promoted by the first American Bishop-Saint, St. John Neumann, in the city of Philadelphia. It centers around the Eucharist and Eucharistic Adoration. There are processions, litanies, confessions, and sermons interspersed throughout this time for the edification of the faithful. It is a sort of mini-retreat for the parish, akin to our Baptist brothers and sisters’ “tent revival.” We are looking to have this devotion take place in the 40 hours building up to our patronal feast day Mass, which will be held on Saturday, June 29th at 5:30 pm, with Most Rev. Richard F. Stika, our Bishop, coming to celebrate the Mass and offer the Sacrament of Confirmation to our young people. But of course the heart and soul of the devotion itself will be the extended Adoration from Thursday evening until Saturday’s Mass, all through the day and all through the night. Many volunteers will be needed to devote themselves to specific hours so that we can keep this vigil before the Lord. I pray that we will be greatly enriched by this spiritual opportunity. Stay tuned for more.

### Looking Forward to Our 130th Anniversary of the Church Building

Another exciting thing coming up for us, especially in the year 2020, is the 130th Anniversary of our current church building. It is great, then, that we have been working so hard at renovating this beautiful church to get it ready for the next 130 years of serving the People of God here in Chattanooga. The reality is the parish as an entity has existed since the Bishop of Nashville founded it in 1852. Thus we are approaching our 168th Anniversary as a parish. However, due to the nature of a fledgling community starting off small, and of course the very colorful history between the founding of the parish and the completion of our current church, we have this gap in years. Now, this gap is not something to sneeze at, as during that intervening time, notable things such as the Civil War and the Yellow Fever epidemic came through Chattanooga. This is the time of the great Servant of God, Fr. Patrick Ryan, whose memory and heroic witness is coming back to us as a particularly poignant example of priestly life and witness for our age. It was also the time of the founding of Notre Dame High School, of which there are many alumni in our congregation, and which originated on our campus. There will be much more about this later in the year, as things progress.

*Rev. J. David Carter*