

Sunday, November 16, 2014  
Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Parishioners:

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am writing to inform each of you in detail about the structural integrity of the Parish Hall and Classroom Building at Sacred Heart in Alva. The original portion of this building was constructed in 1969. This older part of the building houses the parish hall, Daily Mass chapel, kitchen, two classrooms, and a storage room. In 1992 five classrooms, one of which is used as our parish office, and two bathrooms were added to onto the east side of the original 1969 building. These two buildings are connected by the large hallway which is part of the 1992 addition.

The design of the roof on the 1992 addition unfortunately has allowed significant amounts of water to leak into the building through the years, especially during heavy rains, but the following information concerns the more significant problems affecting the 1969 portion of the building.

On July 7, 2011 Brueggemann Engineering of Enid completed a structural inspection of the 1969 portion of this building. This initial inspection called for a more detailed study which would verify the integrity of the roof. Brueggemann Engineering issued this final report on June 23, 2014. These reports are both available on our website.

These reports reveal that the trusses of the 1969 building seem to have been built on site. The plywood gussets, meant to strengthen the trusses in key areas, were simply glued and stapled into place. Today, trusses manufactured at a plant would utilize light gauge steel gussets with spikes pressed into the wood in key areas.

Forty plus years of extreme temperatures in the attic area have caused some of these plywood gussets to delaminate (the bonded layers composing them are separating) and the glue attaching these gussets to the trusses is becoming brittle and failing. This leaves only the staples to bear the weight and the shear forces, and they are not capable of doing this successfully. These failures are causing some of the wooden beams to crush together and others to separate from each other. In some places in the parish hall, there is a gap of over 1.5 inches in the middle of the bottom chord of the trusses. At least 23 out of the 50 trusses in the building are plagued with various failures. The final result is that the roof in some places is sagging from 2 to 3.5 inches. The greatest vertical deflections are near the center of the parish hall.

Mr. Brueggemann concludes that “the structural integrity of the roof has worsened since 2011 when it was first inspected. Based on the damage seen, I believe the roof structure is not capable of safely resisting the heavy snow loads” typical to this area over the last years. He says, “Reinforcing the roof structure is not an adequate option. In my opinion the roof structure [over the 1969 part of the building] should be completely replaced before this next winter [of 2014].”

Upon arriving at Sacred Heart, I shared these reports with our Chancellor, Mrs. Loutitia Eason, and with Mr. David Johnson in our Archdiocesan Business Office. Our Chancellor agreed that we should discontinue use of the parish hall. Mr. Johnson put me in touch with Mr. John Ward of the Archdiocesan Building Committee.

Mr. Ward visited us in mid-July and within a month, he sent a letter to me to assist our parish in determining the best way to resolve these issues. He agrees with the latest engineering assessment that the roof is in danger of failure with the next major weather event, “whether it be high winds or snow.” He recommends that the original 1969 parts of the building be “condemned to use by the public until the roof structure is replaced” when use of the building can be restored. He also recommends “that measures be taken to provide temporary shoring of the roof structure to better secure the structure from collapse as plans are made for replacement.” He attached plans which he says can be carried out by qualified parishioners. This letter and these plans from Mr. Ward are accessible on our website.

Parishioner Mr. Kenny King who has a background and experience in construction has worked together with other qualified parishioners to execute these plans. We have called this project “Phase One”. Steel posts and wooden beams have been installed in the parish hall. In the next week, those will be reinforced according to the architect’s design. Afterward the new support structure will be inspected by an engineer. This structure should provide the support needed to preserve our building until the final plans to repair the roof can be carried out. Our goal is to complete this project by the fall of 2015.

In his report Mr. Ward states that it is desirable to address the problems facing the two structures (the 1969 building and its 1992 addition) at this time. He suggests three possible solutions.

I spoke to Mr. Johnson and based on our annual collections, which over the last three years average out to about \$100,000 a year, only one of these three solutions is economically feasible. This is the option which will allow us to cover both the 1969 building and its 1992 addition with one roof – thus eliminating the “dead valley” which exists between the 1969 and 1992 buildings. The newly constructed trusses will be joined onto the existing 1992 trusses. This option includes remodeling of the interior of the 1969 building which is necessary to bring everything in that half of the building up to code. Mr. Ward suggests that a reasonable budget for this option is \$540,600.

The options, which are not possible for us, called for the demolition of the existing building (both the 1969 and 1992 parts), replacing them on the current site with a new building of similar square footage. These options were estimated to cost approximately \$1.4 million or \$1.2 million. Thankfully, the one roof option described above is within our reach.

With the permission of Archbishop Coakley this weekend I am announcing the launch of a capital campaign which will be composed of two phases. First, we will have a “quiet phase” where I will solicit larger donations both from within our parish and from individuals outside of our parish. Then, once we have reached a goal of at least \$100,000, we will have a “pledge drive” in the pews, and I will ask each of you to make a three-year pledge in order to attain our goal. Based on our yearly collections, we should be able to reach this goal.

Currently in savings we have \$100,000 which can be immediately applied to the capital campaign, still leaving around \$100,000 in the bank. In the upcoming weeks the bulletin will contain a report which will help everyone to understand better our parish’s finances.

When we bring this capital campaign to the pews, we will likely have a goal of \$340,600 or less. Once we have collected \$70,300 of that amount, we will be at the half-way mark and once the rest of the amount is accounted for in pledges, we can seek permission to execute the project. As I mentioned earlier, our goal is to complete this project by the fall of 2015.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or one of the members of either our Pastoral Council or the Ad Hoc Committee formed in August to oversee these projects concerning our roof.

The Pastoral Council members are:

Rev. Cory Stanley  
Mr. Tim Ohm  
Mr. Brandon Cook  
Mr. Steve Foster  
Mrs. Jo Ann Isenbart  
Dr. Frederick Jungman  
Mrs. Charlotte Selfridge  
Ms. Sarita Simon

The members of the Ad Hoc Committee for the repair of the roof are:

Mr. Paul Barton  
Mr. Kenny King  
Mr. Tim Ohm  
Ms. Lenette Shelite  
Rev. Cory Stanley

Each of these parishioners should be able to answer your questions concerning this project. During the next weeks I ask that you please be open to visiting with me, giving me the gift of your time, as we move forward with the quiet phase of this capital campaign. If anyone would like to contribute during this phase, in particular if you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution before the end of the year, please contact me and I would be more than happy to visit with you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Cory Stanley, Pastor