



IMMACULATE HEART^{OF}MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR FEBRUARY 3, 2019

Dear friends in the Lord,

After 7 months of waiting, the DeKalb County building permit for our new rectory finally came through on Christmas Eve—making it one of my best Christmas presents! Our builder immediately set about scheduling his crews. As you can see, the site has been cleared and, as I write this on Wednesday, the footings and foundation walls have been poured. I am told that it will take about 7 months to finish the project; experience teaches me that I should set my hopes on Christmas instead!

I am grateful to many souls for bringing the project to this stage: IHM's own Ryan Webb is the architect for the house, and he has been heroically generous and patient; those who donated on Giving Tuesday through the iGiveCatholic campaign have enabled us to incorporate solar power into the house, which is very exciting; every one of you continues to help build the new rectory, since it is being funded out of our regular Sunday offertory, rather than a special capital campaign. And my special gratitude goes to Father Carlos, who is spending his first year of priesthood living alone in an apartment rather than in priestly fraternity. Responsibility for that is entirely mine; in my naiveté I sincerely believed that we would be in the new house by the time he was ordained back in June.

This will be the third rectory that I have been asked to build in 35 years as a priest; it will also be the smallest and, in relative terms, the least expensive. But I learned long ago that rectories are the least popular capital projects in parish life, regardless of cost. It's not that Catholics don't support their priests and want them to have a decent place to live. It's just that relatively few understand the nature of celibate priestly life or the many purposes a rectory serves.

The IHM rectory will have rooms for the pastor and one parochial vicar. It will also have two guest rooms, so that we can welcome traveling priests, seminarian interns and our own family members when they visit. It will have a common area—living room, dining room and kitchen—sufficient to host occasional gatherings to promote priestly fraternity and spirituality.

I remain very grateful for the care and support you offer Father Carlos and me and all your priests. I look forward to welcoming you to the new rectory—sooner rather than later!

Your brother in Christ's word and work,