All Saints Put in Work for New Church

by Andrew Cabrera

Turlock is constantly expanding and updating its roads and buildings. From construction on freeways to schools and even some churches, Turlock is elevating its appearance. One church, in particular, is the University Parish across the street on Christoffersen Way.

All Saints is currently increasing its grounds with five new meeting rooms, a bigger chapel, and 159 new parking spots for church-goers. This project was approved early February and broke ground early July.

There was a short ceremony where Father Tom, a new priest to the University Parish, blessed the grounds and spoke a few words. Since then, the new buildings are quickly taking shape as frames were put up late last month.

Prior to the frames, Jose Zamudio and his team helped install all the necessary parts that aren’t as visible. He is part of Phase 1 Construction, a subcontracted company that is taking on about three-fourths of this entire project.

Zamudio said that “we are part of the underground part of work, like the graft work and foundation. We are going to also do all the side work like the sidewalks, street gutters, and paving.”

With the summer heat still rolling into the early portions of fall, construction looked like it would slow down, but it didn’t. Zamudio said that they take the heat very serious. “We have weekly safety meetings to remind everyone to get some shade and stay hydrated while they’re out here.”

As a result of both the Student Center and Campus Library currently out of use, students are looking for other places to study when the heat is not so welcoming. One of these students is Josue Montoya (senior, Kinesiology) who often goes to the church for some peace and quiet.

Montoya is currently the president of CSA (Catholic Student Association) and is very excited for the construction to end. He says, “right now CSA is packed in a room over here but soon there will be a room for CSA members to use for our meetings and just to hangout. We’re going to have so much space, our own little snack room, and a place to study. There is just going to be so much room altogether.”

He went on to say that “finding a place on campus to study now is tough and is only going to get tougher. I have a small space where I study here at church but even that, it’s pretty cramped and tight but with this room, there will be a lot more space for me and others to study.”

Another eager parishioner is currently working in the office and was able to explain both the layout and the reasoning behind this expansion.

Marie Lorenzi has been attending All Saints for about 15 years and has known about the construction for “well over ten years.” She said it has been a slow start mainly because “the processes you have to go through and there’s a lot of planning that you need to do. Then there’s planning on when the best time to get everything started.”
Lorenzi explained that “the parish council created a building committee that was the group of people that were working with the architect for the design and what we were doing. Of course, they did a consultation with the priest and the necessary consultations with the various departments in the diocese offices that have input on building projects.”

She added that as of right now, the overall budget for the project is 3.4 million dollars and that “The diocese required us to have so much in funds on-hand before we could start the project. They don’t let you get financing for the entire project, so the monthly building collections helped us get the funds we needed.”

Father Tom said that it took the parish a few years to raise enough money, and now “they are able to see that the end result will be good. The fruits of their labor, their prayers, and their planning are happening.”

Father Tom Orlando believes that with growth, expansion is necessary. “Just in the month, I’ve been here people have been registering as parishioners so you can see at all the masses that it’s packed. So the fact that we will have more worship space is huge.”

Like Montoya said earlier, there will be a room dedicated for CSA students and Orlando added that these rooms will also house “the Knights of Columbus and the Young Ladies Institute, all those people they will have a good place to meet now. I assume that they will have their own space and can permanently be set up, instead of having to put stuff back every time they are finished with a meeting.”

Coming from a construction background, Orlando can respect all the work that is going on outside his office. He said, “Before I became a priest I was a civil engineer for about seven years so I have partaken in a lot of this stuff. I know that this is not easy work and it is a lot of hard work.”

The parish signed a contract with Simile which, according to their website, “is a faith-based, family-owned-and-operated business with a strong commitment to giving back to the community.”

Orlando has been meeting with Simile is both impressed and optimistic to see what the end result will look like. “This is the first project I’ve worked with them but I’ve definitely seen them around town. They’re a good contractor, a good Catholic family, and we’re happy that they’re the ones that were chosen. It’s a blessing to have them.”

Simile has 30 years of experience and has completed over 100 projects, including five other churches. Orlando, with the rest at All Saints, are eager to see the finished project.

Orlando meets with Simile and Jim Shaw, the contractor, every other week and if everything stays on track, they are looking to have everything done by February 2020. He went on to say, “it’s exciting for the parish to see everything come about, after all those years of praying for it and saving up all that money, it’s like their dreams are coming together.”

Father Tom closed with a comparison of the current process of construction to the end. “We do have to put up with the idea of ‘pardon our dust’ but it’s all temporary. It’s kind of like being down here on Earth, it’s temporary with aches and pains but the end goal is what we’re shooting for. We need to stay grateful for what we have and where we’re headed.”