

From the desk of Fr. Tim

STEWARDSHIP AND THE FUTURE

One of the wonderful things about constructing a new building is that the financial goals and our goals for giving are pretty easy to identify. When we build a building we can see the effect of our giving. We witness a dramatic change in our parish and share the encouragement that such success brings. When these initial goals have been met and the building is up, we face the long plodding payoff of a mortgage. Dramatic goals are hard to find, but that won't last long. Our parish continues to grow and develop, and this is truly a year to listen to God's direction. We have presented to our new Bishop the idea of a parochial school and he has asked us to look forward to participating in the development of an "inter-parochial school," the responsibility for which will be shared among several parishes. This plan will likely not develop for some time as other needs are pressing upon our Diocese. It also means that a school will not be constructed on our parish grounds. With that direction, we are looking for a new understanding of our future. We need space. We knew that the time would come when our parish facility would be full, but it has come much more quickly than we anticipated.

We have nothing to complain about in all this. In fact we are witnesses and participants in a wonderfully exciting time in the life of our parish and our Diocese. To be part of a parish that is serving a growing population challenges our creativity and our ability to listen to God's direction. Giving our money in response to a plan or a vision is much more exciting. It is like saving money in our personal finances in order to make an exciting purchase or to take a once-in-a-lifetime vacation. It is decidedly easier than "saving for a rainy day," or as studies show, even saving for retirement.

Our personal support of our parish makes an enormous difference. Our continued payment of building fund pledges and contributions to our Building Trust allows us to make important progress in preparation for the next steps in our parish's development. This year is truly a time of discernment for us. The parish will continue to grow and we will be challenged to respond to that growth by expanding our facility. Our regular contributions re-strengthen the parish's financial foundation so that such a response is even possible.

It might be helpful here to review the needs so that we can all share in discerning God's direction for us. There are six pressure points in our current parish life. These are not necessarily in any order:

First, the needs for our Children's Ministry Program will become critical soon. There is very little space left in the weekly calendar for class times. We will need more classroom space within less than two years. Of course, it will take almost that long to raise funds, gain approval of the Diocese and to construct expanded religious education space.

Second, because of the success of our adult education program, we also need space to support this ever-growing ministry. Our vision and the needs for adult education space are on a collision course as well. While this oftentimes becomes secondary to parish programs, it has proven very important for us. We cannot let these programs and future programs slip.

Third, we ran out of staff office space years ago. We used a storage shed for offices for a while, until the new building opened the old sanctuary to be used as office cubicles for youth and music.

This temporary space is working but there are enormous calendar conflicts. A strong staff serving the needs of our parish has been the key to our continued development, and having adequate office space is critical.

Fourth, our new Church is designed for expansion. As the attendance continues to increase it will be necessary to utilize this feature and expand the seating capacity by at least 300 to 400 seats, bringing the capacity to almost 1500.

Fifth, currently, the parking is believed to be inadequate. We are studying this now by counting empty spaces at the Masses. It is possible that this expansion will need to be undertaken sooner rather than later.

Finally, there has been a long-held desire to include in our new construction a bell tower. This traditional announcement of our presence and of the joy of our community's life continues to remain in the plan of our development.

We will begin our parish stewardship campaign soon. Please be attentive to the bulletin and to the mail so that we can communicate our needs and our encouragement regarding this important part of our life as Catholics. May God strengthen you that you may share the blessings that he has given you.

Movies

We occasionally receive inquiries concerning movies that have questionable content. It is undoubtedly the responsibility of parents to protect our children from movies that may disturb their faith or moral foundation. It is with warped intentions that Hollywood has in the past targeted Catholic Faith or traditional family and moral values, and we should view such efforts with genuine skepticism. Since our parish staff cannot spend our time policing the movie or television industry, we encourage you to utilize the rating and review material that is available on the U.S. Conference of Bishops' website. Their reviews are comprehensive:

<http://www.usccb.org/movies/weekly.shtml>

New Altar Server Vestments

Our altar server vestments were in need of replacement. We have decided to return to the use of cassocks and surplices. While the alb was a popular acknowledgment of liturgical reform (which your pastor fully supports) it has not proven durable or easy for our servers to use. The new vestments are easier to keep straight and dignified.