

FROM THE PASTOR'S



Third Sunday of Advent, December 17, 2006 C

FAITH IN OUR FUTURE CAMPAIGN UPDATE

In the Spring of 2005, we had a Capital Campaign to raise funds for several renovation projects to our facilities. The following is an update on the projects and their actual cost:

The Chiller Project \$619,662

This was a very costly project, but one which will serve the parish well for the next 20+ years.

Renovation of Ministry Center - (after damages from Hurricane Jeanne) Cost \$174,000 — Insurance paid \$130,000.

Parish Hall Projects

- **Kitchen & Bathroom Renovation** **\$147,435**
- **Kitchen Equipment** **30,443**
- **Terrazzo Floor** **27,000**
- **New Windows** **74,828**
- **Painting of inside walls** **7,700**

I imagine the windows figure is the one that might cause some of you to say “very expensive”. I would agree. After looking at a lot of options, we decided to go with a very good and strong window. Given the width and height, the design pressures on the frames we have installed a +/-90 pounds per square foot, and will afford wind protection in excess of 155 miles per hour. As with the new chillers, we have new windows that should last us for a long, long time.

We hope that the smaller part of the parish hall will be painted prior to Christmas. I hope you love the ‘new look’ in the parish hall as much as I do. Once again, a big thank you to Dick Cross and Don Foy for being project mangers for *all* of the above mentioned jobs.

Beautification of the Front of the Church

This is the final project of our *Faith In Our Future Campaign*. Our committee is made up of the following parishioners: Howard Buescher, Tom & Charlotte Wienckoski, Mickey & Jan Hill, Dick Cross, Don Foy, and myself. Our guide is Bruce Blackman a *Liturgical Design Consultant* from Orlando. Bruce has been the guiding light for several similar projects in our Diocese. He was highly recommended to me by several priests whose judgment I very much respect.

All of them love the work Bruce did for them. Our talented committee have been very impressed with the suggestions Bruce has for the beautification of our church. We are *looking* at raising the covered gathering area outside the front doors of the church. We are *looking* at a covered walkway from church to the parish hall and a covered pick-up/drop off area in front of the church for wet days and for people with walking difficulties. We are also *looking* at beautiful dropped lighting fixtures in the church. Finally, we are *looking* at a beautiful landscaped courtyard between the church and the parish hall. If we have the money, we would consider a 40 foot Bell Tower right of the front doors. Presently, we are *exploring* all of these possibilities. All of our committee members, including myself are very excited about these possibilities. We think that they would add dramatically to the beautification of our lovely church.

In January we hope that we will be ready to have a Town Hall meeting so that you can see our proposed plans. We will also have to present our plans to the Diocese building committee. How much will all these projects cost? At this time we do not know. Our design consultant estimates about \$750,000. Do we have the money? Not yet. Presently, we have about \$450,000 in our building fund. This includes money from Monday night bingo and monthly donations from parishioners who did not make a pledge to our campaign, but consistently support our building fund by utilizing the yellow envelope in our monthly packages and parishioners who have completed their pledge and continue to contribute to our building fund. If you become as excited as we, the committee, are about the renovations, we hope that you may be willing to extend your *Faith in Our Future* commitment for an extra year. Recently our good neighbors Holy Name of Jesus raised an *extra* million dollars for a project that cost more than they estimated.

Remembering your Parish in Your Last Will And Testament

Recently, when reading one of the church related magazines I get, I came across a bulletin announcement that a Pastor in upstate New York periodically places in his bulletin. I have substituted Ascension parish for the name of his parish. The announcement reads.

Most of you may own more than you realize. But no matter the size of your estate, if you want to provide for your surviving relatives, friends and others, you need to have a will.

If you die without making will, you lose the ability to control the disposition of your assets. The law of the state will tell your family where your money and property goes. Furthermore, potential savings on income tax and estate tax, which can be arranged when preparing your will or estate plan, will be lost if there is no will.

So as a matter of prudence and good care for your family, we urge everyone to make a will. And when you do that, after you have provided for your loved ones, we hope that you will designate a gift for the good works of Ascension parish.

Naming our parish as a charitable beneficiary is simple. Your bequest can be a specific amount of money, property or stock. Just tell your lawyer or your pastor what you want to do. You can also name our parish as a contingency beneficiary if someone named in your will is no longer living.

I would add: consider remembering not only your parish in your Will, but also agencies and ministries who work hard to give the poor a leg up or to some other worthy cause. Many parishes across America, including Ascension, have been blessed by parishioners who remember them in their Will. For most of us, our Will offers us the best opportunity to make a sizable gift to our church and some ministry that extends God's compassion to the poor. We do well to remember in our prayers people who are benefactors to our parish.

Mass Schedule next weekend.

Next weekend is the fourth Sunday of Advent. It is also Christmas Eve. So, we decided to cut down on the number of Sunday *morning* Masses in light of the fact that we will have five Masses Sunday evening—Christmas Eve.

Fourth Sunday of Advent Mass Schedule

Saturday, Dec. 23rd Vigil Masses - 4:00 & 6:00 PM
Sunday, Dec. 24th - 10:00 AM Mass

Attendance at Christmas Eve Masses will *not* fulfill your obligation to attend Mass on the Fourth Sunday of Advent. You will need to attend one of the above three Masses.

Christmas Eve Masses

4:00 PM Mass in church and school cafeteria. Both are usually packed. Fr. Mike will preside at the Eucharist in Church and I will preside at the Eucharist in the cafeteria. The Eucharist in church will have a special focus for children.

6:30 PM Mass: in church—usually full. Presider: Fr. Mike

9:00 PM Mass in church usually three quarters full. Presider: Fr. Eamon

Midnight Mass—usually full. Presider: Fr. Eamon

Christmas Day 9:00 AM. The church is usually about half full. Presider: Fr. Dan.

Christmas Day 11:00 AM: The church usually almost full. Presider: Fr. Don Kirby, S.J. Fr. Don's parents live in our parish.

During the Vigil Mass last Saturday I mentioned about having a crèche outside our church on US1. Unfortunately, some people misunderstood my request. The parish would be willing to pay for the expenses. My request was for someone to get the job done—to coordinate the effort. Anyone interested?

On Christmas Day, I leave for Ireland to spend some time with my family and especially with my sister who is recovering from heart surgery. This will be my second time to go home for Christmas since coming to our Diocese in 1972. I return New Year's Eve.

When I Ask You to Listen

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice you have not done what I asked.
When I ask you to listen to me, and you begin to tell me that I shouldn't feel that way,
your are trampling on my feelings.
When I ask you to listen to me,
and you feel that you have something to solve my problem,
then you have failed me, strange as that may seem.
Listen! All I ask is that you listen,
not talk, no do: just hear me.
Advice is cheap, and I can do things for myself.
I'm not helpless
you contribute to my fear and weakness.
But when you accept as a simple fact
that I do feel what I feel, no matter how irrational,
then I can stop trying to convince you,
and get on with the business of understanding
what's behind my feelings.
Perhaps that's why prayer works, sometime,
for some people, because God is quiet,
and He doesn't give advice or try to fix things.
He just listens and lets you work it out for yourself.
So please listen and just hear me.
And if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn,
and I'll listen to you.

Have a blessed Advent,

Fr. Eamon