

"Now you are the body of Christ and each of you is a member" 1 COR 12:27

Dear Parishioners,

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul tells us that the Church is Christ's body on earth and by virtue of Baptism, we are all connected to Christ through his Church. Each of us has our unique part to play in building up the Lord's Church on earth. The heart of any parish – the reason why any parish exists – is for life in Christ and witness on his behalf. In my nine years as pastor of St. Joseph Parish, I am continually amazed to see how this calling is lived out here: in how we care for others in need, in participation in the various ministries, in the schools and Religious Education program, and most beautifully in the sacraments and our life of worship. It is with gratitude and humility that I share this update with you, the people of St. Joseph Parish.

Property Enhancements

As we approach the end of the *Building for Tomorrow* campaign that was launched in 2016, I want to say thank you to all who made these wonderful improvements possible. Through your generous support, the renovations to the lower level of St. Joseph Elementary School and the outdoor space have greatly enhanced our programs for the school children. The Church construction is proceeding according to plan, with work on the expanded narthex (vestibule), new handicap-accessible bathroom and replacement fire safety system nearly complete. The much-anticipated elevator is scheduled to be operational in the near future. These enhancements make our Church a truly accessible and welcoming place for all.

Parish Life

St. Joseph's is a very active and blessed community. I am grateful to the many individuals who dedicate their lives to this Parish – the clergy, rectory and Religious Education staff, development office, principals, teachers, maintenance workers, as well as many who volunteer on the Pastoral and Finance Councils and the various ministries such as the evangelization committee, homebound ministry, and recently formed family ministry, to name just a few. Over the past year, we welcomed 58 new families; baptized 42 children; received two catechumens into the Church at the Easter Vigil; administered First Penance and First Communion to 126 children; confirmed 67 tenth graders; and celebrated 64 funeral Masses. This year our two schools are engaged in the intellectual and religious development of 450 children. There are also over 600 children receiving instruction in the faith in our Religious Education program. I think you can appreciate the scale and vibrancy of our Parish.

And yet, a good number of registered parishioners are not as involved in the life of the Parish as they used to be. Perhaps you have been away from the Church for a little

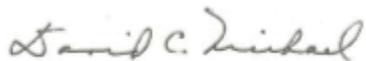
while. Our Parish is not the same without you. Our Father in heaven always wants us to come home, and so do your fellow members of Christ's body, the Church. You are always most welcome to return to the life of the faith community, the practice of the sacraments and the fullness of a lived relationship with Jesus Christ. My role as Pastor is to provide for the spiritual well-being of all families in our community. It is in that spirit that I encourage you to renew your relationship with the God who loves each one of you unconditionally!

Financial Status

The financial situation of St. Joseph's is more complex and challenging than in past years. The cumulative effect of several years of declining overall contributions and increased expenses for salaries, benefits, building maintenance and utilities has depleted the reserves we once had. As a result, the current level of contributions does not meet the Parish's obligations (see enclosed Financial Summary). Consequently, we needed to take a loan from the Archdiocese in order to cover the remaining balances for the Church construction, elementary school roof, middle school boiler and other building repairs totaling \$550,000. We will need to address this shortfall in the near future. Members of the Finance Council will give an update at all Masses on the weekend of October 5/6 and be available for questions after Mass.

However, my focus in this update is on the day-to-day operating expenses which are funded primarily through the Offertory and Grand Annual appeal. Contrary to what some may assume, the purpose of the Grand Annual is not for "extra" or "discretionary" things, but rather it is a vital source of funds to run the Parish in areas such as payroll, liturgical expenses, building maintenance, and support of Religious Education. In consultation with the Finance Council, we have set a goal of **\$200,000** for this year's appeal. Last year over 330 out of 2,000 households contributed to the Grand Annual with an average gift of \$530. We thank you for your generosity. It would be wonderful if more families and individuals could participate this year, and if those annual givers could increase their amount. Would you consider a 10% increase over last year's gift? If you have not supported the appeal in the past, could you prayerfully consider a gift this year? A burden shared by everyone is a burden to no one. Once again, I will make my own personal donation to the Grand Annual collection. I ask every parishioner to join me in doing your best. We need your help.

With God's blessings, and our shared commitment in faith, let us go forward together to continue building the Body of Christ at Saint Joseph Parish.



Rev. David C. Michael, Pastor