

More Good News to Share

Jesus Christ: Yesterday, Today, and Forever ~

This Sunday we celebrate the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica, a church in Rome. As odd as that sounds, celebrating a church, you will have heard about it in my homily, and hopefully have some deeper insight into the connection between the physical and spiritual. However, it does line up nicely with this pastor's column on campus projects. I meant to have this in the October 19 pastor's column entitled "Share the Good News," but I ran out of room. So here is the follow-up to that with some great things to know and share with others about our physical campuses.

Holy Redeemer's Campus

As you can see, our storage building is up and standing. We



hope to start moving things into it by the end of this month. This will be a great help for us, as Holy Redeemer to date has not had storage space. This was made possible from our 2024 Annual Catholic Appeal rebate.

Thank you for your contribution to that Annual Catholic Appeal and to all the others down through the years. They have helped out Holy Redeemer substantially over the twenty years of our existence.

Speaking of building on Holy Redeemer's campus: our hope is to one day have two new buildings on the campus: a new parish center where the current one is (think Marian Hall at St. Joseph Parish), and a multipurpose building capable of hosting a school on our open field. I am not certain as to which one comes first, probably the new center, but we don't have permission to pursue either one at this time. A proposal for either will be part of the discernment that will come out Partners in the Gospel over the next two years. They would both cost millions and necessitate a five-year-long capital campaign for each (in the case of the multipurpose building, just to do the first phase). So, those are projects many years in the making.

Last spring we purchased a house immediately adjacent to the campus that we are using for faith formation classes and meeting space. We now have two neighborhood houses that we are using for the same purpose, the big green one on the west end of the campus and this new one on the north end. To direct people to the right one, we needed to name them.

So, the green one on the west end of the parking lot is now called the *Sacred Heart* building, and the one on the north end of the campus is called the *Good Shepherd* building. There is a new sidewalk leading to the Good Shepherd building and the causeway between it and the parish center is closed between 9:30am – 11am on those Sundays when we have faith formation classes there.

On the east side of the Good Shepherd building is another house that we have the means and permission to purchase. We are in discussions with the owner who wants to sell, but we haven't yet come to an agreement on the terms. If that happens, then Holy Redeemer will have the space we need for our staff and programming until we can build on site years down the road. Prayers in this regard are appreciated.

We intend to pursue redoing our northeast parking lot, and the driveway between the parish center and our northern boundary. The rebate from this past year's Annual Catholic Appeal will go a long way to help us with this. We hope to be able to place a gigantic bowl underneath the west end of the northeast parking lot, next to the parish center, to catch groundwater and direct it into the city's watershed. When we do this, we should be able to cover over the two bioswales on either side of the lane between the parish center and the northern boundary. This would give us the opportunity to move the lane to the northern boundary (where a bioswale is now), and to dramatically expand the footprint of the future parish center to the north over the existing bioswale and road. It will also give us a chance to redesign the northeast parking lot for greater ease of access and a pickup and drop-off spot for the handicapped.

St. Thomas Aquinas Campus

The Church

Last September we replaced the furnace. Fortunately, the previous one died in the summer, so few noticed. The new one should last for decades.

We get used to everything and so we often don't notice the obvious, such as dim lighting in the church (it's pretty dim in there). We have contracted with a parishioner to rectify that.

We are also going to restore the old confessional to reuse it. The confessional in use now is the original baptistry, which in time became the usher's closet. When we get the original confessional up and running again, we'll be able to restore the current

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confessional back to an usher's closet which is sorely needed. Our narthex is way too small and being able to use the current confessional for ushers and storage will be a big help. Regarding the old confessional under restoration, we



are reconfiguring it to be able to accommodate someone in a wheelchair or walker. It will be anonymous only, as most priests under sixty are not comfortable with face-to-face confessions with their own parishioners. In this day

and age of accusations against priests, we priests feel so much more comfortable being in a space that the penitent doesn't have access to, and to be able to get in and out of a confessional without having to get past a penitent. It's also my experience that penitents are generally better off not having face-to-face confessions, as face-to-face confessions can lead to unhealthy attachments, expectations, and uncomfortable feelings on one or both people's part.

At some point this year we are going to have new racks placed in the pews that will run the length of the pews. The racks we have now are not long enough to accommodate the books and envelopes that we need in the pews. Enough said.

We have stabilized the office building (former rectory) with pilings as the foundation was slightly tipping. So, the back end of the building still tilts but it has now been stabilized and shouldn't get worse. We are also doing some work on the curbs to our parking lot. This project is underway now.

St. Thomas has about 120 school-age students meeting on campus at different times during the school year. Regina Caeli Catholic homeschool has about 93 students on campus Mondays and Thursdays, and Columbia River Catholic's Preschool and Kindergarten has another 20. The two schools, as well as parish staff and parishioners, are learning to share St. Thomas' ample school building space, but learning to share can be a challenge especially when you didn't have to in the past. I share this because learning to share is a project in itself. Related to our schools, is a need for increased safety and security on campus when school is in session. We are working on both.

Our Lady Star of the Sea Campus

The sacristy, the room where the clergy vest and the supplies for Mass are prepared and stored, has always been too small. It is something that was noted by everyone as soon as the church was built in 1995. Last summer we converted the old adoration chapel adjacent to the sacristy into a dramatically improved sacristy! Ever since the tabernacle was moved behind the altar in the sanctuary almost twenty years ago, that room has effectively sat empty. Now for the first time in thirty years we have the space we need for clergy, altar servers, vestments, and vessels.

The seal on the window over the top of the sanctuary has failed causing it to fog. When the contractors who are doing the siding (see below) are up there with their lift, we'll be able to get a closer look at the problem. It may be as simple as a new insulated glass unit, or it may be as bad as a full window replacement if the frame is in bad shape. There is also the possibility of inserting stained glass into the interior of the existing window. We'll see.

One of the biggest projects since the church was built in the 1990's is the siding on the outside of the church. The original workmanship and materials were of poor quality, and we began to see problems with it right away. For thirty years those problems have only gotten worse. This project had been delayed for all those years because of cost concerns, while the cost of replacing the siding just kept getting bigger and bigger. We have the money now in savings, a little over \$100,000, so the pastoral council and I decided to get it fixed at last. Work has begun on replacing the siding of the church which had begun to rot and fall apart. This should be finished by the end of the month. Since this project will empty Star of the Sea's savings account, I am going to be making a special request for people to personally contribute to this project. Starting with myself. You'll hear more about this special ask in the coming weeks.



May Almighty God Bless You,

Fr. Thomas Nathe