



ST. MARY & ST. STEPHEN PROTOMARTYR PARISH CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dear Parishioners,

Today, on the feast of the Assumption of Mary, we honor her as an inspiration to live out our faith and to thank her for her continuous intercession upon us. As we begin this journey of one parish, I submitted to the Cardinal the three suggested names that received more votes for the new name for our parish: Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Sacred Heart of Mary, and Our Lady of all Martyrs. Once we receive the decision of the Cardinal, I hope to plan a Mass and have a gathering to celebrate this milestone of our new parish.

As I mentioned in my previous letter, I want to inform you of the capital projects we need to consider for our parish's buildings.

- As we worked with ComEd by replacing the LED lighting of St. Stephen's school, we are installing LED lighting at the church of St. Mary's lobby to save on electricity costs.
- As you may recall, in 2010, the Archdiocese launched the To Teach Who Christ Is Campaign to help the parishes accomplish capital projects and other improvements to the church environment. 40% of what is collected is destined to support archdiocesan programs. Part of the available funds will be used to improve St. Mary's sound system and replace the entrance doors of St. Mary's church and the entrance doors of St. Stephen's school, which have deteriorated over the years. The replacement of these doors also secures more of our buildings in this time when vandalism is more frequent. When these projects are completed, a detailed report will be published in the bulletin.
- During the pandemic, the church pews deteriorated with disinfection products. I hope we can begin the process of sanding and staining them to give a decent presentation. The replacement of the carpet of St. Mary's church should be considered soon. I hope that in the near future, we can address the issue of implementing a ramp on the sanctuary areas of both churches to allow access to ministers of communion, sacristans, lectors, or clergy with walking disabilities.
- The exterior of the buildings also must be addressed. The tuckpointing of St. Mary's rectory garage and the fascia of the perimeter of St. Mary's church are in dread need and require immediate attention. In addition, the maintenance of the roofs of St. Mary and St. Stephen's churches should be done soon. The replacement of the roof of St. Stephen's school must be done this year. Finally, the lighting and pavement of the St. Mary's parking lot is another project to be done. At this point, we are contacting some vendors to give us estimates.

To kick start all these projects, the finance council suggested utilizing \$ 157,000 of the savings, representing about 30% of the total cost. Thus, I appeal to your generous hearts to participate in a monthly donation from **September 2022 to December 2024** to complete these projects' funding. God calls us to be good stewards of the goods entrusted to us, particularly at the places where we worship him. As we come and nourish our faith in the celebrations we have at St. Mary and St. Stephen, we also need to be committed to taking care of our church's buildings.

I ask you to prayerfully consider donating a monthly amount of \$ 200, \$ 100, \$ 50, or another amount you can commit as a small sacrifice that will benefit all and ensure a lasting presence of our parish buildings. We include with this mailing the monthly envelopes of Sep, Oct, Nov, and Dec 2022. Beginning in 2023, you will receive them in the usual package of the church collection's envelopes.

I am confident that the Lord blesses us all as we generously offer Him part of the talents He has given us.

Faternally yours,

Rev. David Arcila, Pastor