**27 APR 2021 Pastoral Council Notes**

All members of the pastoral Council were present except Deacon James and Dave Talbot.

Father Tetzel announced that Gene Pfeifer and several other parish members had asked to address the council tonight with their concerns about the parish remodeling project. The planned discussion on the update to the St. Paul Pastoral plan would start after hearing their concerns.

Father Tetzel opened the meeting with a prayer.

**Gene was asked to share his concerns.**

Gene described his families’ long history in the parish, his leadership of the Pastoral Council in the early 1990’s, and his past professional accomplishments as a design/build specialist, including several Catholic churches and Mormon meetinghouses.

Gene’s concerns about the remodel are:

1.    Spending $750,000 on the remodel.

a.    He states that based on the bulletin reports the parish’s finances are behind at this time due to Covid-19. He believes that the parish should have a half year of money set aside for expenses (at least $100,000) to fall back upon, if needed, before beginning a remodel. That way, when the economy falters, and when monthly contributions decrease, the staff will not have to be laid off (as he stated happened in the last major recession).

b.    He wants a more conservative remodeling plan, and questioned the need to rebuild the windows and refinish or upholster the pews. He said a coat of paint significantly helped the aging windows in the multipurpose building. He did say he was in favor of tiling the entries, moving the tabernacle and installing a crucifix, but we need to utilize parishioners to complete the work.

c.    He questioned the value of spending any money on a remodel, and asked how beautifying the church building would meet the goals of saving souls, educating children, or helping the homeless. He says the “administration” is not focusing on the spiritual care of the parish.

d.    He made a comment that the school building sits empty and could be used to house the homeless. He also states he thinks a school should return to the parish and described plans he had drawn up to make it more functional as a school.

2.    No master plan for the parish and create a stronger family.

a.    He said that historically (in the early 1990’s), the multipurpose building was the primary concern of parishioners, went on to describe how we could have done that project (or built a brand new larger church) but then that plan was changed to complete the new Narthex instead. He mentioned that the remodel of the Narthex cost one million dollars and resulted in a gain of only 16 seats.

b.    He stated that he has communicated with many parishioners who are worried. They are exasperated, feel abandoned, and are disillusioned with how things are going. They want a pastor running the parish, not an administrator – who will run our parish in a spiritual manner.

c.    He thinks that with the growth that the parish is experiencing in the number of parishioners, that, rather than remodeling the small church, a new, bigger church should be built.

3.    The parish has not sought to use the talents of our Hispanic community, specifically those that are licensed contractors, inviting them to volunteer their labor on the remodel projects to keep the cost down.

        Gene implied that not doing so harkened back to the divisions that occurred between the Hispanic and Anglo communities in the parish before Father Tetzel arrived. Recently Gene had independently attended a San Juan Diego meeting to share his concerns and opinions with members of the Hispanic community.

**Mathew Buchheit asked to speak. His concerns are**:

1.    The remodel project is not fiscally responsible in the middle of a pandemic.

2.   He says he has spoken to lots of people who don’t know were planning this project. They are parishioners that don’t come to church, or did not return to church.

3.    Saint Paul parish is not St. Paul anymore – not what he envisioned it being, doesn’t have the same feel. People are expressing they are looking to go elsewhere due to this. He feels it is important to keep people here happy at St. Paul Parish.

The three other men who came with Gene declined to speak to the council.

**Father Tetzel primarily, and other members of the Pastoral Council, addressed the concerns as follows:**

With the Narthex remodel loan paid off, $500,000 already in hand for this remodel, many parishioners offering more contributions even without having been asked, and with 200 positive written responses to the four initial design options, Father Tetzel feels very fiscally and pastorally comfortable proceeding. The collection totals in this difficult financial year have met 99% of the parish expenses – we have fared much better than most parishes.

The remodel project contains many necessary and previously put off repairs and updates that comprise the greatest majority of the project expense. The design review process is ongoing and not yet finalized. Initial plans have already been altered in an effort to utilize volunteer parishioner labor to help lower project costs and provide opportunity for community members to more directly assist with the work. Additional changes may be made where opportunities present themselves to further lower costs. Building costs continue to rise every year. Money can be saved by remodeling sooner rather than later.

1a.      The parish was bequeathed $500,000 by a parishioner that was only be spent on Capital Improvements. This money cannot be spent on staff salaries or other causes, no matter how worthy they might be.

1b.      The windows need to be replaced because years of inadequate maintenance have resulted in the windows themselves or their frames rotting to the point that some are in danger of falling out. A coat of paint will not fix this, and the most cost effective solutions are being explored. The pews are made of plywood with an oak veneer. They have been refinished once already. They may be able to be sanded down once more and refinished again, but if not, they may need to be upholstered due to the high cost of full replacement.

1c.       Having a beautiful, welcoming and liturgically accurate Catholic church building will encourage the right praise of God in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith - it fills us with grace and provides our hope. It bonds us together in Christian community so that we can go out into the world living a life that glorifies God through the example of love in sharing, service, and drawing souls to him who sustains us.

1d.       Father stated that our school building is not sitting empty all the time. He said rarely a day goes by that there is not one or more events/meetings taking place there, and if not for Covid, it would be even busier. For a school to reopen here, significant changes and remodeling would have to take place i.e. asbestos remediation and elevator issues among others. Staff would have to be hired. The money available cannot be used for hiring or paying school staff. There is no guarantee students would attend, because many are already enrolled in other Catholic school programs available in the area. Economic downturns also affect parishioners’ abilities to pay the extra expense of private schooling for their children. As for housing the homeless in the school, by Archdiocese guidelines, the parish can only have one homeless person living at the parish, so that would not be an option.

2a.        We agree that working to form a master plan would be a good idea, and stated that in fact the Pastoral Council has been working to discern how we might utilize Archdiocesan materials we have recently been reviewing to improve our Pastoral Plan for the parish. This plan would then be the guide for evangelization within and outside of our faith community.

2b.      Our next priest may be a pastor, we trust in the Archdiocese to provide us with the best arrangement possible.

2c.       A new, bigger church would be a great solution. However, we cannot afford that huge expense, and at this time the building we have is providing sufficient accommodation for those attending amid a serious national decline in the number of regularly practicing Catholics.

3.         Father stated that he was specifically tasked by the Archbishop to heal the hurts caused by the rift between the Hispanic and Anglo communities before he arrived. By his own assessment, and that of the Spanish Speaking Community Council Representatives, he has made great progress doing so, even amidst the challenges brought on by Covid-19 restrictions. Gene’s action of going to the San Juan Diego Society and saying that they are only being “tolerated” and implying that the Hispanic community is somehow looked down upon by the English Speaking Community was entirely incorrect, hurt Father’s three year effort to heal previous hurts, literally “tearing the scabs off wounds that were healing and already forgiven”, and personally hurt Father Tetzel greatly.

            Current construction laws and Archdiocesan Policies prevent volunteers from performing certain work and being on construction sites, primarily due to the fact that liability laws prohibit it. If injured, the volunteers are not covered. The Renovation Committee has been, and remains, dedicated to offering volunteer project work for skilled parishioners to participate in as they are able based on these constraints.

**Matthew’s Concerns:**

Pastoral Council continues to discuss and plan ways for the parish to reach out to those parishioners who are not currently attending Mass, and to the greater community in which we live. There is a weekly bulletin that is available in hand and by email, as well as a weekly Email news blast that is sent to those who are able to utilize that technology. Also, Mass is broadcast via the intranet every Sunday. Lists have been made of those who do not have access to this technology and are supported by other means through parishioners and the office. All parishioners are encouraged to inquire about and speak to those who they see are missing from Mass and help reconnect them with the parish. Share what you know with them and encourage them to come back as soon as they feel able to do so.

**Fr. Tetzel Updates:**

Since the requested meeting about the remodel project took most of the allotted meeting time, the planned discussion of the Parish Pastoral plan was delayed to next month.

Faith formation classes are coming to a close. 43 kids, an increase from last year, completed First Holy Communion. 25 youth, the same as last year, will soon be Confirmed.

The Renovation Committee will meet this Friday to review updated sketches based on the remodel comments that were received, and to continue to refine the final design so that more detailed cost analysis may be completed. The revised plan will be presented to the entire parish.

Pray the Novena of Surrender for the success of the Archdiocese Priestly Convocation 4-7 MAY to discuss the Acts XXIX Whitepaper. Father John Riccardo, the founder and executive director of ACTS XXIX will be attending.