

New Season Campaign Update

Text of Mass Announcement from March 8-9, 2008

Below is the announcement that was made at all masses this weekend concerning the progress of the “New Season Campaign”

During the month of February the Parish Council and the Steering Committee held two joint meetings with our architects and general contractor. During those meetings two important decisions were made. First, we decided to expand the size of the lower level by 3600 sq. ft., extending it under the entire first floor, giving us a total area of 11,800 sq. ft. in the lower level. For comparison purposes, this will be over two and a half times the size of the current church lower level. The expanded space will give us greater flexibility in meeting the needs of the parish, in particular for Religious Education. The decision to enlarge the lower level had to be made now: once the phase 1 building is constructed, the size of the lower level will be fixed and additional space cannot be added.

During the meetings we held with the architects and contractor we learned that construction costs are rising, especially for structural steel. We also received more precise and higher construction cost estimates for our project. In light of this new information and taking into account the status of the fund raising campaign and the overall financial picture of the parish, the Parish Council and Steering Committee made its second important decision: initially the lower level of the new church will remain unfinished, reducing costs by \$490,000. Even so, the new project budget is now \$4,475,000.

In making these decisions the Parish Council and Steering Committee asked themselves two questions: “How can we be the best stewards of our resources, both now and in the future?”, and “What construction elements can be delayed until later without affecting the overall quality of the facility?” We did not want to reduce the size of the building but rather provide the parish with as much space as possible by enlarging the lower level. We also wanted to continue with our plans for a brick exterior and an environmentally friendly, energy-efficient building incorporating a geothermal heating system and other green building practices. Including these features in the initial construction will save us substantial amounts in operating costs later. Finishing the lower level at a later time allows us to do all this. The decision to leave the lower level unfinished does present us with new challenges. We are already meeting with the architects to determine how the main level of our new church can be configured to meet our space needs, especially that of Religious Education. We are confident that a good solution will be found.

As always, our fund raising efforts continue. We have raised nearly \$1,800,000 in pledges thus far. If you have not yet made a pledge, please consider doing so. If you have made a pledge, thank you. If you would consider increasing your pledge, thank you again. Money raised now will reduce our financing cost later and allow us to finish the lower level sooner, adding space for Religious Education as well as a social hall. Any pledge, no matter how small or how large, will be valuable and appreciated.

Finally, we are still on track to break ground this summer. We have applied for a construction loan from a local bank and will soon receive the bank’s decision regarding the loan. The church building and parish center have been listed for sale. The listing stipulates a closing date in the last part of 2009, after our new church will be dedicated. We have received purchase offers on both properties, and the Finance Council is currently considering those offers. The Parish Council will discuss the offers as presented by the Finance Council and give final approval. In addition our building and financing plans will be presented to the Diocese for its approval later this month.

I will be available after Mass to answer any questions you may have. Let us now join together in praying for the success of our New Season Campaign using the prayer that is found on the back of the worship aid: