

ICC Renovation Committee
Pat (Resig) Curtin Remarks
January 31 – February 1, 2015

Thank you, Father. Good evening/morning. It is a pleasure to speak to you today about the work of the Parish Renovation Committee. A very talented group of parishioners has been working for the last 10 months to evaluate the tasks that should be undertaken to enhance the worship space of our church, and support of the mission of our Parish into the future.

Before we talk about the future, let me ask you to think about the past. What was happening in your life during the summer of 1969? Ok, if you are younger than 46 years old, think about something that might have been happening in your grandparents' or parents' lives. This was the summer that Neil Armstrong first walked on the moon, and the summer of Woodstock. Were you married that summer? Did a child receive his/her first Holy Communion? Did you bury a loved one? That summer I attended my Baccalaureate Mass here at IC and was getting ready to head off to college. Here at IC, we dedicated this beautiful "NEW" church during the summer of 1969. It was a very long time ago. During the 1950's Msgr. Dwyer had the foresight to purchase this wonderful campus and the church was moved from the center of the Village of Fayetteville where it had been since 1869.

Very little has been done to refresh or renew the church since it was built 46 years ago. The roof has been repaired and organ has been rebuilt, but very little additional renovation has been undertaken. In preparation for the upcoming project, the Committee has tried to look ahead for 25-30 years to envision what should be done to renew the building and enhance our ministry and worship services. So many life events have been celebrated in this beautiful, sacred space, and we want to respect that heritage. At the same time we want to modernize both the liturgical and artistic aspects of the church, as well as upgrade some practical aspects.

The Committee has taken seriously the "spirit of Pope Francis", which respects the sacredness of our worship spaces, while cautioning against extravagance. The Committee has also focused on our responsibility for Stewardship – that role of being good caretakers of the gifts that God has given us. While some maintenance items were deferred during difficult financial times, our buildings and grounds need to be refurbished as we are able. We assessed all the buildings and grounds on the campus, and we want the church to remain an elegant worship space, with enhancements that reflect the times.

While our Committee's work was underway, the PCA Committee was working as well with the other 3 churches that make up our pastoral care area. The Diocese has now made it clear that our Parish will remain an independent parish for the foreseeable future. The four parishes will be working toward new ways of being faith communities. As we have fewer priests to cover existing parishes, we expect more of the faithful from other villages to be joining us here at IC, thereby needing some reconfigured space.

The primary liturgical development that affects the church has been the location of the baptismal font. The beautiful marble font in the baptistery has not been used for many years. And we are planning to relocate it to the side of the sanctuary where the crystal bowl has been used during Masses. This will allow the Congregation to welcome the new members of the Parish during Mass using the old marble font that matches the altar marble. The next liturgical consideration is to enhance the area around the tabernacle in order to highlight its central significance in the celebration of Eucharist. As a practical matter, the background wall will come down in order to remove the deteriorated acoustic mesh that covers the organ pipes behind the wall.

Now that the baptistery is no longer used for baptism, we feel that we can better utilize that space by taking down the brick wall and using that space for our wonderful music ministry. The plan is to move the various choirs and instruments back and up into the newly opened space, and return pews to the front part of the congregation for additional seating. This change will also allow us to bring the church up to code with additional seating for the congregation that is handicapped accessible. We will also be looking at enhancing the devotional items in the Church, including repurposing a confessional into a devotional space with statues and candles, and enhancing the Stations of the Cross.

At a more practical level, the tile floor under the pews has asbestos and should be abated before a major problem develops. The pews and kneelers are in disrepair and will either be refinished or replaced. The mechanical items in the church that will be addressed are the sound system, the addition of a retractable audio/visual system and new lighting. The lighting change will result in enriched space as well as significant energy savings.

As we all know the weather in Fayetteville, can be unpleasant at times, and we would like to be more welcoming to both guests and parishioners. We are planning to expand the gathering space at the front of the church to allow more guests to comfortably gather indoors before and after Mass; as well as for use during weddings and funerals. In addition, we will add restrooms that are handicapped accessible in that foyer. There is a potential that we will add more handicapped parking across the driveway from the main doors.

While we have incorporated the needs in the cemetery and all the buildings on the campus, including the convent and rectory, the last major item that I want to speak about today is the replacement of the 60 year old heating and ventilation system at the school. This should result in more reliable heating, energy efficiency and cost savings. The school itself is one of our parish's main ministries, used in forming the faith of thousands of children over the years. The building is also used for religious education, many parish meetings and social and sporting events as well. We have done many upgrades to the school over the last 7 years, several of which have been accomplished through the Mercedes-Benz car raffles. The heating and ventilation system is the final project that needs to be addressed in that building to be ready for use in the future.

We have consulted with many professionals in arriving at the position where we are now – architects, engineers, financial consultants and fund raisers. The Diocese of Syracuse has provided much technical support, and they are in agreement with the direction in which we are moving.

As you can probably guess by now, we will be recommending that the Parish undertake a Capital Campaign which will be in the range of 2 and a half to 3 million dollars. We are optimistic that we can achieve this goal because of your past generosity, and the enthusiasm we have for our various ministries in the Parish. We expect to increase our ministries in the future by enhancing the sacred space and growing our faith community. Our goal is to have the church renovations and gathering space completed by the year 2019, in time for our 50th anniversary celebration of this campus, and the 150th anniversary of the Parish. We would like to have the required funds in place before it is needed for construction. And we do not want to incur long term debt in order to complete this project. We see this as an important investment in the future of our faith community.

So before we finalize our design plans we would like to get some impressions from each of you. I invite you to come to Dwyer Hall after Mass to see some of the architectural designs and the pew choices, and use the opportunity to ask questions, and to provide us with your written feedback. Members of the Committee will be there for this conversation. You may also submit your feedback electronically through the Parish website. After we consider your comments, we will finalize the designs and pricing over the next few months.

In closing, I want to thank each member of the Committee who has worked so diligently on this project. And, of course, thank Father Ryan for his leadership. And a heartfelt thanks to each of you for your participation as we move our ministry forward. I think you will agree that it is an exciting time to be a parishioner in this vibrant faith community.