

Immaculate Conception Parish

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IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

FAYETTEVILLE, NEW YORK

April 2015

Dear Friends,

We are pleased to forward this letter to you regarding the progress of our plans for the upgrading of our parish campus. It is our hope to keep you informed and up-to-date as well as to respond to some pertinent questions. One year ago, the *Immaculate Conception Renovation Steering Committee* was formed. This committee is advising our Pastor and the Parish leadership regarding potential renovations for our entire campus in anticipation of our 150th Anniversary. The Committee members represent the Trustees, Parish Council, Finance Committee, Parish-at-Large, Staff, and a consultant from the Diocese. Over the past year, the Committee has met monthly with architects and other professionals, along with a Diocesan representative. This past January, at the request of the Parish Council, the Committee reported to the parish community on the current state of the project. The purpose was to seek feedback on the overall direction of the proposed enhancements and renovations. This included several coordinated elements:

- a presentation at each of the Masses by Chairperson, Patricia Curtin, on the major design proposals along with the liturgical and financial rationale;
- an open forum presentation in Dwyer Hall following each Mass where designs were shared and parishioners were encouraged to ask questions of the architect and committee members;
- and finally, a survey was distributed to gather data on the overall support for the project, along with questions and comments.

The Parish Renovations Feedback Survey was created to measure reaction to the main elements of the proposed Church renovation with a scale ranging from **Strongly Supportive (5)** to **Strongly Opposed (1)**. Surveys were collected following the Dwyer Hall presentations. Over the following seven weeks, these survey forms were available at Church along with the designs. There was also an online version which parishioners could access from the Parish website. Almost 300 surveys were completed and the data was entered by a third party organization. The summarized data was presented to the Committee. The quantitative data was compiled and averaged. The qualitative feedback was transcribed and organized into a single document. Several lengthier responses were submitted, and these were presented in their entirety to the group to preserve the integrity of the submissions (names were removed to preserve objective consideration of the submission).

In general, the overall support can be summarized as **Supportive to Strongly Supportive**, with the scores ranging from approximately 4.3-4.6 on the 5-point scale. Analysis of the qualitative feedback is not easily summarized, since many of the suggestions or comments submitted were countered with the opposite sentiment expressed by others. However, there were some common themes and questions for further consideration which the committee has taken additional time to respond to and to seek further input on. Some of the most common or pressing questions are answered below. In addition, the Committee is discussing the plans with a professional Liturgical Architect. This person consults with Parishes on alignment between their renovations plans and Church liturgical guidelines.

It is the strong desire of the Committee, the Parish leadership, and Father Ryan that the parish community be engaged in the important work of updating our Church and the entire campus in a way that enhances our worship and demonstrates a welcoming, hospitable community for years to come. We sincerely appreciate the feedback, engagement and enthusiastic support of the Parish. The feedback has enriched the process greatly and will help to guide us into the next phase of planning. Inclusive of this planning is a **Capital Campaign** to raise the necessary funds. *Our total budget and goal for the entire campus is \$3 million.* We are very pleased to announce that the *Honorary Chairs* for this campaign are Msgr. James McCloskey and Msgr. Ronald Bill. The *General Chairs* Gwyn Mannion and Bill McAvoy. We are grateful to these people and to all of you for your feedback and support. Together, we can look forward to a strong, vibrant future at I.C.

Sincerely,



Rev. Thomas J. Ryan
Pastor



Patricia Curtin
Chair, Renovation Steering Committee

PROPOSED IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH GATHERING AREA



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. How disruptive will the construction be for Mass and other worship services?

Construction can be most efficiently completed by closing the Church for two or three months during the summer of 2016. Mass attendance is lowest while many of our parishioners are on vacation, and we can accommodate Mass in Dwyer Hall which is air-conditioned. (An additional Sunday Mass for that summer is possible; we will be taking an accurate count of people this summer.) Weddings and funerals would be held at one of our neighboring parishes during that time. Our priests will still celebrate these Masses and make the necessary arrangements.

2. What was the result of the surveys?

We received almost 300 surveys. Surveys were completed at Church as well as online. The overall reaction was very positive. Every area of the Church building enhancement averaged between 4 ("Support") and 5 ("Strongly Support"). The Steering Committee reviewed all of the surveys and considered all comments, positive and negative. We are very appreciative that so many took the time to respond.

3. How does the Project Cost break down by building?

The \$2.9 million total covers the entire campus. The Church (interior work and expanded gathering space) is estimated to be \$1.67 million, the school HVAC is \$675,000, the 2015 HOPE APPEAL is \$125,000 and all other (convent, rectory, cemetery and grounds) is \$440,000.

4. Why don't we just seal the asbestos under the floor to reduce costs?

Several professionals, including the Diocese of Syracuse, have advised against that approach and recommend that the asbestos be abated when the pews are removed. This would be the moral thing to do and not leave a potential health problem or liability issue for future generations to deal with.

5. Are the architectural drawings we viewed the final drawings?

No. While the main gathering area is fairly set, the area of the sanctuary may still be tweaked a bit. We want to consider the feedback we received from parishioners in February. We are also consulting with a Liturgical Planner to ascertain proper liturgical requirements.

6. How will the lighting be improved?

Lighting will be enhanced with the addition of windows on either side of the altar, removal of the back wall and closet in the center of the existing vestibule, enhancement of the soffit over the altar, and additional new light fixtures throughout the church. The new lighting fixtures will generate energy efficiency and cost savings in the future.

7. To what extent are we planning to use the Audio/Visual system?

It can be a distraction during the liturgy. There are no specific plans to use the A/V system during Mass, but the Parish Liturgical Committee will address that issue. The Church has one of the largest seating capacities in the Diocese and it is used as a meeting space for other functions where the A/V system would be helpful. It may also be used for special presentations and announcements.

8. Have the new acoustics been considered with the change in the music dais and new wall behind the altar?

Acoustical engineers have been consulted regarding the removal of the acoustic mesh behind the altar and the new music dais. Now that the major architectural designs have been supported by the Parish, acoustical recommendations will be included with the final designs.

9. Why does the expanded vestibule have an indentation in shape where the old doors are located?

Why isn't it one large rectangle? The design of the roof of the main Church generated leakage problems in the early years of the church. The problem was solved in the 1980's and we don't want to impact the drainage off the main church roof. Leaving the existing church roof line in place was a major objective for our architect.

10. How was the size of the gathering space determined?

The new space allows a nice gathering area for our parishioners before and after Mass, to grow our sense of community at I.C. This area will allow enough space for brides and attendants to prepare before weddings, as well as family members to gather before funerals. We wanted to include restrooms for visitors on that side of the building, and didn't want the addition to be just a restroom area. The alcove area on the east side will also have some seating to allow elderly people to rest while waiting for services or for rides.

11. Can the parents of the children who attend the school pay for the new HVAC system in their tuition payments, rather than the entire parish?

The school HVAC replacement is one of the single biggest cost items in the renovation project. The school is one of our parish's primary 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. Since this ministry has been a key part of our parish life, we feel the cost should be shared by the Parish. The Diocese of Syracuse sets the tuition for all of the schools in the Diocese; IC would not be able to increase the tuition for this purpose. This system should result in more reliable heating, energy efficiency and cost savings, thus reducing the future subsidy that the parish provides each year in its operating budget.

12. Has additional parking been considered?

In order to focus people to the main entrance, we are hoping to add parking in the area directly across from that entrance. However, we are very sensitive to the "green space" and want to keep as much of that as possible, while still adding parking, particularly for disabled individuals.

13. How do our plans reflect Pope Francis' call for simplicity and concern for the poor?

The committee has taken this concern very seriously throughout the process. Our plans call for upgrading the Church to enhance devotional areas, to provide necessary services for our parishioners and guests, as well as our ability to provide a hospitable gathering area for our community. In light of the Holy Father's concerns, we have been very careful about choosing the building materials so that we will provide a worship space that is beautiful and of good quality without being extravagant. We emphasize that our mission to the poor is in no way minimized through this process. It remains integral to our parish ministry as we continue our tithing and hands-on service through our many committees and youth ministry.

PROJECT TIMELINE

