

**From the  
Pastor's Desk**

Dear Parishioners,

I will be away from the parish a couple of times in the next few weeks. From July 20 until July 29, I will be on vacation. I will return for the weekend of July 30/31. Then, from Monday afternoon, August 1, until Friday, August 5, I will be on my annual retreat, which is required for all priests. Fr. Chuck Swanson will be here for the weekday Masses. For confessions and Masses on the weekend of July 23/24, Fr. Michael Dodd, a Columban Missionary priest stationed at the Columban Center in Bellevue, NE, will be celebrant for the Masses at which he will tell you about the work of the Columbans. He will be here for our annual mission appeal as a second collection is taken up for the work of the Columban Fathers and Brothers. Please use the envelope that is provided in this week's bulletin into which to place your contribution for this and return it next weekend to put it into the second collection. You may also place loose money into this collection. Thank you in advance for your generosity in contributing to the mission appeal.

On another note, thank you to those who have given me feedback on the church renovation. Some have expressed concern about leveling off the floor. This is necessary for the correct installment of the radial pews that we have chosen. Having the radial pews will allow us to seat more persons than is possible presently. One of the parish council's and my desires in regards to the replacement of the pews has been this goal to increase seating, so we will be able to realize this. In response to the concern and questioning about how the flattening of the floor will affect visibility of the altar and sanctuary area, I discussed this with the architect and we decided to raise the sanctuary platform some more, increasing the number of steps up into the sanctuary to three from the previous plan for two. Doing such should provide ample visibility of the altar. Even with the current slope of the floor, I have had some persons tell me that they cannot always see ceremonies that are happening up front. Hence, depending upon persons' heights, no matter what the floor configuration some will have difficulty seeing. Probably the only perfect solution, no matter which floor arrangement, would be to require the shortest persons to sit in the front pew and the tallest persons to sit in the back pew, but I doubt that we want things that regimented! Regarding the new pews, we will be ordering solid wood ones and will forgo the ordering of pew-length cushions as this will save

on cost. I think that most will find the new pews to be plenty comfortable without cushions. For those who do need cushions, individual ones will be provided, so there is no need to be alarmed. As is the case now with current pews, the kneelers of the new ones will be padded.

Finally, in the feedback that I have received over the last several months, some have expressed that we should be spending the money going into the church renovation rather on an education center. In answer to this, as I already stated a few months ago, remember that a church environment that bespeaks of the sacred and that is visually special is the beginning of religious education. The Holy Eucharist and the Sacred Liturgy are the very center of our lives as Catholics. A beautiful and dignified worship space communicates and teaches the utmost importance of God in our lives and helps us, especially our children, to gain a sense of the sacred. Remember, too, that the amount that we are taking from parish savings covers the basics that we would have had to do in order to be in conformity with the current *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

That we are able now to have the altar, other sanctuary furnishings, and the sanctuary floor fabricated in marble as well as to install new pews is because of the generous and special donations that we have received from some parishioners who would not have otherwise given these monies. They took the initiative to approach me to specify these donations for these purposes. Hence any concern that we are taking away from the needs of the religious education of our children and youth is an unfounded one. The parish council and I have not forgotten the education center and will now be turning to address this need once the church renovation gets underway, which will commence as soon as approval is received from the Archdiocese. I and the parish council have labored for almost a year now and we have given parishioners ample opportunity and time to provide feedback, so it is time to get going on the renovation. I sense that the majority of the parish is pleased or, at least, accepting of the plan since overall feedback has been positive. So, realizing that probably not all will be in 100% agreement no matter which decisions are ultimately made, I ask that everyone unite in spirit now and appreciate the gift and blessing that the church renovation will be to the life of the parish.

God bless and have a great week.

Fr. Gutowski