



Dear Parishioners,

Good News! The contract with the general contractor, Vrana Construction, for the building of the Religious Education Center was approved by the Archdiocese this last week. This means that construction can begin. Vrana wants to begin some work immediately, so you probably will see things beginning to happen this week. Next Sunday, on October 13, there will be a ceremony in which I will bless the building site and a ceremonial groundbreaking will occur. This will take place after the 9:00 A.M. Mass. All are invited to attend. I know that this announcement comes quickly, but Vrana wants to get the project started while there is still enough good weather this fall. When the project was proposed a year ago and the survey of the parishioners showed over 90% in favor to move ahead with it, the architect estimated that the cost of the project would be around \$1.1 million knowing that once bids were received it could be slightly more. In terms of the firm numbers that we now have (architect fees, the contractor's fees, and allowing for a flexibility in contingency costs and furnishings) the cost ends up around \$1.17 million. So we were able basically to hit the target on the cost of the project. In order to keep the project in the neighborhood of what the original estimate was, it took this whole year to hone down the design to where we met the needed criteria but kept items to the basics. I thank the parish and finance council members for all the time that they put into this process that helped to keep the project within line. Next weekend at the Masses, our Parish Council president, Ted Boro, and our Finance Council Chair, Ken Patry, will present to everyone the final details of the project. I thank all of you for your patience and prayers during this time that it took to arrive at this point that we are now ready to begin construction. It will take sacrifice as we pay off the debt of the loan that we will be taking out for the remainder of the cost beyond the funds that we already have to apply for the project. I thank you for

your support of this investment that we are making to provide the facilities that allow us to provide a conducive environment for the religious education of our children and youth and that will have the added benefit of our having extra space for other types of parish activities and meetings.

On next Sunday, Pope Francis, in the presence of the pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima, which will be brought to Rome from Fatima, will consecrate the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is the day of the 96th anniversary of the last apparition of our Blessed Mother to the three children of Fatima in 1917. At Fatima, Our Lady asked all persons to pray the Rosary for the conversion of sinners and for peace. Our Holy Father realizes that this need for prayer is still so necessary today. To join in on the Holy Father's consecration, I will lead a Rosary and a prayer that consecrates our parish to the Immaculate Heart, which will take place in the church following the groundbreaking ceremony next Sunday. All are encouraged and welcome to come in order to join spiritually with Pope Francis as he entrusts the world to our Lady's Heart next Sunday.

By the way, in November, the National Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima will be here at St. Joseph Parish on November 11. There will be special prayer times that day for which we will need persons in attendance. I will soon be providing more details regarding this special opportunity for us to know the intercession and protection of our Blessed Mother.

Have a wonderful and grace-filled week.

God bless you, Fr. Gutowski

THANK YOU

We want to thank the following for agreeing to be our money counters: Team 1: Mary Johnson, Dave Kulm and Angie Carlson, Team 2: Mr. & Mrs. Galen Glennon and Sharon Carrasco, and our long-standing team of Loretta DeMarco, Dorothy Hilleman and Tom Ramm who have done it for the past 5 years. We are still seeking one person to replace Tom Ramm who can no longer serve on the team. We appreciate all your help.

Good News Reflection

October 6, 2013

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Habakkuk 1: 2-3; 2: 2-4

Psalm 95:1-2,6-9

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Luke 17:5-10

This Sunday's Gospel reading is disturbing. After doing a lot of hard work and offering it for the glory of God, the last thing we want to hear from him is: "You're an unprofitable servant."

Think of how hard you work. Whether it's at home or for a business or in ministry, we're never rewarded enough, right? Instead, we're given more work! At home, we try to relax after a busy day but one of the kids or an elderly relative needs help. On the job, we're given more work because our colleagues are either too lazy or they've been laid off. In the parish, most of the work gets done by only 10 to 20% of the people.

Jesus says that our reaction to all this should be: "Lord, I'm an unworthy servant of your kingdom, because I've only done what's expected of me." Is he implying that it's right to be burdened with more to do when we're tired? Not at all! What he is telling us is that there's a difference between doing what's required out of mere obedience and volunteering to go the extra mile because we love and we care.

Resting is important. Jesus took time out to pray and to recover his energy. Delegating work to others is right, too, so that we don't burn out. Jesus is the supreme example of a delegator who is also a servant. Balance is healthy and necessary.

When we stop short of going the extra mile, it's usually because we have an unbalanced

view of faith. Unaware that we're serving Christ in our everyday tasks, and unaware that we're serving others with Christ, we settle for a mediocre, half-hearted attitude. We limit our potential. And then we're astonished that Jesus would suggest that we can command trees to cast themselves into the sea! When was the last time you saw that happen?

Here's the connection between doing more than the minimum and having a supernatural faith: For both to occur, we have to know that God's love is complete and unconditional and available all the time and that from this comes his desire to serve us. Knowing this, we're confident that he can accomplish anything he wants in us and through us. If we care like he cares, we want to go the extra mile with him. And then when we get hurt or tired, he restores us. Do you believe that yet?

Questions for Personal Reflection:

What's the mulberry tree in your life? What problem is so deeply rooted that it seems immovable? Who in your life is so stuck in sin that you've lost hope for change? Can you be a worthy servant of God and surprise that person with gestures of love that are unexpected and unrequested?

Questions for Family & Community Faith Sharing:

Describe examples of service that show the difference between doing our duty and doing more. How does volunteering to serve above and beyond what's expected reveal God's love?

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