

Capital Campaign Talk

I will be talking at all of the masses this weekend with some exciting news asking all of us to take some time to dream forward once again.

Many of you are aware that last spring we began exploring the possibility of beginning the second phase of our Master Plan.

This opportunity came about because we, along with all of our 173 sister parishes of the diocese, will be conducting ***Rooted in Faith, Forward in Hope***, a long-range program to help prepare our church for the future.

From the onset of Phase I of our Master Plan in 2006, our ultimate goal has been the expansion of the heart of our parish life -- namely, Our Church.

As I reflect on our current spiritual home, I know that our lives have been inspired and encouraged here in this Holy Place.

Our grandparents and great-grandparents helped to construct and build it.
How eternally grateful we are to them.

This has been a place of heart-felt prayer and meditation, deep union and connection with our Lord and God.

Our children have been baptized here,
Weddings and First Communions have been celebrated.
We have buried our loved ones here.

At this altar Christ has been made present and has been a source of great strength and comfort for us.

This beautiful crucifix captures the height and depth of God's tremendous love for us. Through the cross has come the resurrection and the promise and the hope of eternity to come for all the faithful.

The stained glass windows are beautiful reflections of persons or events representing our life as a people of God.

This is such a holy and sacred space and we have all witnessed and experienced God's extraordinary love here.

While wonderful things have, and continue to occur here, the fact remains that we have reached a time in our history, and especially for those who come after us, when enlarging the heart of our parish life has become a necessity.

We need to build for the future, not just for today, and while our church is very intimate and inviting, it is too small to meet our present and future needs.

Our parish membership has grown, while the number of ordained priests to serve the church has not.

Statistics show that in the next 10-15 years we may have only one priest per parish.

Presently, we have seven scheduled masses every weekend, not counting weddings and funerals.

With weddings and funerals added to the weekend, we average about nine masses, which would be an overwhelming challenge for a one-priest parish.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I believe the time is right to move forward with phase II now,

for three main reasons:

- 1) We have successfully completed, and for all intents and purposes, paid for Phase I as we have pledge payments yet to receive.
- 2) We would NOT be able to begin for at least five years if we did NOT join in a combined campaign right now. And I would be very reticent to ask for a third consecutive campaign which would span over thirteen consecutive years.
- 3) We are one of three parishes granted permission to combine a parish campaign with the diocesan effort which included a financial incentive we couldn't pass up.

After much prayer and consultation, I believe the Holy Spirit is moving us in this direction, and that we are ready to begin together a new chapter in the life of our parish with a renewed commitment of being good stewards of all that has been entrusted to us.

Therefore, I am happy to announce that this weekend marks the start of ***Changing the face of Saint Raphael Parish From generation to Generation, Phase II,*** Through which we seek two important objectives:

- 1) Building a new Church, which would accommodate 1,100 parishioners because there would be fewer masses for fewer priests, a community room, Chapel, and additional parking, and
- 2) Meeting our parish commitment to the Diocesan Campaign ***Rooted in Faith, Forward in hope.***

Please know that we are making this decision with the utmost love, respect, and devotion to this time in our parishes history

And while I am aware that for some the desire to support our parish is greater than the desire to help with diocesan needs; please understand that the needs of the people in our diocese are very real, and the funds committed to ***Rooted in Faith*** will go toward charitable works, seminarian education, support for retired priests, and an endowment to make Catholic Education more affordable.

As we move forward in faith, I pray that each of us remains open to the many opportunities this campaign can provide for us:

- 1) Building up the Body of Christ locally, here at St. Raphael, and across our diocese

- 2) And, creating a legacy for the future.

I am very grateful to Maureen and Steve Smith for agreeing to become Campaign Chairs, and to all those who are serving on the committee in various capacities.

The committee has planned a series of receptions in November and December to provide more in-depth information about the project as I am limited in this time of the homily to get into great detail.

Every parishioner is invited to attend and I would ask for your participation in these receptions as they will be very informative and helpful in understanding our goals and objectives.

Please join me as we pray for these intentions:

For God's guidance in all that we do

For each of us to keep an open mind and heart
as we explore ways to embrace and live the Gospel message.

For all those who strive to make our parish
the best we can be

For the future success of our parish and this campaign.

At the beginning of my talk today,
I asked all of us to dream forward
into a future filled with promise.

Picture our new worship space
with our beautiful crucifix in the center of our sanctuary
and just beneath it our tabernacle
placed on an altar of repose
using our black marble present here in the church.

Our ambo will have a very similar look using the black marble as well.

This incredible altar will be right in the center of the sanctuary
where Christ will be made present.

Our stained glass windows will have a new place
in the new church very much present and visible there.

We will be joining this present church with our future church
inspiring generations yet to come.

The old will be experienced with the new and Christ
will be given great honor, glory, and praise,
forever and ever, AMEN!

Thank you, and God bless you!