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JMJ

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Agnes,

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior.... The Almighty has done great things for me and Holy is His Name.” These words from Our Lady at the time of her Visitation to St. Elizabeth capture the same sentiments of my hearts as I write this letter to update you all on our parish projects and overall direction.

I want to begin by thanking all of you for the generous outpouring of prayers, kind words, gifts, sweets, and love on the occasion of my anniversary last weekend. I count myself tremendously blessed to serve such a beautiful community and I assure you of my love and prayers for each of you as well. To this I add my gratitude for your prayers for our families and facilities through the Rosary Series, which saw over 14,500 rosaries offered, and the Seven Sundays Devotions to St. Joseph. Many graces are flowing! Let me tell you about them.

Organ Restoration: After much work in preparation for this project, we have finally entered into contract with Casavant Freres for the much-needed restoration work on our organ. The final contract price is \$737,000 for the full restoration of the pipes, engine, console, and various pieces and parts. The organ will be disassembled in January 2024 and, God-willing, will be completed and ready for use by Christmas 2024. With the contract signing, we also were able to have Casavant fast-track a very small portion of the project that will help stabilize the air flow and allow Daniel, our head organist, to save lots of time and energy previously spent applying Gorilla Tape after each Mass to keep us going. Bishop Duca was concerned about the cost, since the cafeteria question is still unclear, but was convinced to allow us to proceed when another \$50,000 donation was made toward the Building Fund. God has been blessing us with some great benefactors inside and outside of the parish, and for them we cannot help but be grateful and humbled.

Cafeteria: Two weeks shy of the 1-year anniversary of the gas leak explosion, we finally received the report of the damage done to the cafeteria by the blast. The damages are extensive, but, again, the building is sound and our insurance company has assured us that we have no need to worry about not being covered for the repairs. Our present status is that we are trying to iron out details with our Builders’ Risk Insurance claim so we can get clarity on the financial situation moving forward. I mentioned in my previous update that there were questions about the viability of the cafeteria and whether to shift our focus to the gym. I do not expect to have the cafeteria demolished, but all options are still on the table at this point.

Master Planning: The Master Planning Committee had its first meeting on May 4 and had a fruitful discussion about the present status of the campus and projects, together with ideas on how to cast a vision for our future. It will be meeting this coming week with representatives from the various ministries, apostolates, and groups that call St. Agnes home to gather input on the ways in which our facilities are used and what needs each group has. After this initial phase, the committee will be seeking input from our parishioners and friends to help us discern where we are, where the Lord is calling us, and how best to follow Him. All of that will help us understand how our buildings are used presently and how we can best utilize them in the future. Once that is done, we will be able to bring these needs to an architect or engineering firm to have them draft the plans for the cafeteria — and perhaps other buildings — that will best serve us now and in the years to come. It is my

hope that each parishioner or family will take part in the input portion to help us move forward with clarity and confidence. More information will be forthcoming on that process.

Gym: While any gym renovation work seems still a ways off, it would be nice to have at least some indoor area to utilize for various events, even if it is not air-conditioned and has inadequate restroom facilities. With that in mind, we are going to work on cleaning up the gym on Saturday, June 10 from 9am-12pm during our Parish Work Day. All are welcome to join us!

In addition to these facilities projects, and in conjunction with the Master Planning currently underway, I would like to propose a spiritual project for our parish to consider. We all know that there is a shortage of vocations, and that will not be improving for a while. To this we can add the shrinking number of people in the pews, which also affects the collection and our ability to keep the facilities that we have in good shape. These and many other factors can cause discouragement about the future of the Church, but I have great hope, both locally and universally. That hope was increased by a little book I mentioned in a sermon a while back: *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission*. This short but insightful book will be available for every family to pick up a copy next weekend. Ideally, each of you would be able to read the book in its entirety by the end of July. That would help us ensure some great conversations for the next portion: small group discussions. I would love to have parishioners host a night where a group of fellow-parishioners could come together in an informal setting to discuss the book, the gifts we have as a parish, the challenges we face, and what the Lord might be calling us to do individually and corporately. If you are interested in hosting one of these discussions, please let me know.

As I began this letter with a word of praise for all the good the Lord has done for us here, so I want to end with the same. There is MUCH good happening in our parish that gives me confident hope in the Lord. *Deus providebit!* God will provide! Know of my daily prayers for each of you, and please pray for me and for our parish. God bless you all!

Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us! St. Joseph, pray for us! St. Agnes, pray for us!

in Corde Jesu, per Mariam,

Fr. Brent Maher

May 31, 2023

Feast of the Visitation