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June 3, 2019

Dear Parishioners,

I hope this letter finds you well. Since it has been over two months since we finished our Pizza Hut Building Project Feasibility Study, I wanted to be sure to bring you all up to speed before the summer begins in earnest.

As you know, the purpose of the Feasibility Study was to determine whether or not you the parishioners of St. Mary's would be willing to support our proposed plan of renovating the Pizza Hut Building into a new location for our Parish Offices, as well as a location for a downtown Eucharistic Adoration Chapel. Our initial estimates are that this capital campaign would be in the amount of \$635,000.

I am happy to report to all of you that the Feasibility Study survey results came back very favorable toward us going forward with the project. Allow me to share a few highlights:

- ❖ 53.5% of survey participants have been parishioners for 16 years or more.
- ❖ Based on survey responses and personal interviews, the study estimates that we would be able to raise between \$457,000 and \$884,500 for this project.
- ❖ Over 92% view this project as **important, very important** or **extremely important** (selected a 3, 4, or 5).
- ❖ An overwhelming majority of survey participants indicated they would be willing to contribute to the project (93.6%).

Additionally, based on the helpful comments from the Feasibility Study, I also wanted to briefly address a few commonly asked questions or concerns:

***What about our parish debt?***

We will begin paying off our \$715,000 parish debt on July 1, 2020 through our general operating expenses. It will take up to 15 years to pay back our loans from the diocese, however our annual budget will have to absorb our monthly payments. It is entirely possible that we may be able to pay back our debt even sooner than 15 years, which would be great. Mitigating our parish debt is a most important priority to me. Given that we will have this additional monthly loan payment, I humbly ask you to be as generous as you can in your regular parish contributions.

***Is it safe to have an adoration chapel in downtown Bismarck?***

Adoration **will not** take place 24/7, but rather adoration will only take place when the parish offices are open (Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm), ensuring that our staff will be available if any concerns arise. We will also have surveillance cameras at the entrance to the chapel and in the chapel itself. Additionally, at all times the entrance to the chapel will be secure and accessible via security code or electronic key fob. Parishioners who regularly come to adoration would have access to the code or be given a key fob. Other visitors would be directed to come to the receptionist desk in the parish offices to gain access to the chapel.

***Would this capital campaign include the amount needed to restore the original Rectory to a priest's residence?***

No, the scope of this capital campaign would be to renovate the Pizza Hut Building for an updated Parish Office Building and downtown Eucharistic Adoration Chapel.

***How will we pay for renovating the original Rectory as a priest's residence?***

Because the scope of this campaign would only be for the Pizza Hut Building, there have been some questions as to how we would pay for the renovation of the Rectory as a priest's residence. One possibility in the future is that we are currently looking at potential parish revenue from the proceeds of selling property the parish owns in east Bismarck. The parish owns a small land tract adjacent to St. Mary's Cemetery, which is not usable for cemetery purposes. These additional funds could assist with ongoing debt mitigation or also with the Rectory renovation costs. The estimated cost of the Rectory restoration is being worked on at this time. If any funds were raised during the capital campaign above and beyond the total amount needed for the Parish Offices/Adoration Chapel, those funds would be used for the restoration of the Rectory.

***What are our next steps?***

We are currently in the process of developing a timeline for a potential capital campaign. This process is being done in consultation with the parish staff, the parish finance council, the parish pastoral council, and the Diocesan Building Commission. Once the exact details of a capital campaign would be finalized, we will update all of you. It is my hope that I will be able to provide more detailed information on this capital campaign in the Fall of 2019.

It was very encouraging to hear that so many of you are in support of this project. I am most grateful for your feedback. I will continue to keep you updated as we move forward. Thank you for your continued support of this wonderful parish.

God bless.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Father Jared Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Father Jared Johnson  
Pastor