



## DEBT RETIREMENT APPEAL

St. Mary's Visitation Parish

### A MESSAGE FROM FR. PETER

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. – Colossians 3:17

Shortly after I arrived at St. Mary's, a parishioner told me about coming to church on a summer's evening – as he walked into the Atrium he looked around – kids were playing on the soccer field, the trees and flowers were in full bloom, and the church bells were ringing. He told me that in that moment he recognized in a new way what a blessing it was to belong to this parish.

I suspect those sentiments are shared by each one of us. St. Mary's Visitation Parish has been built up over generations both spiritually and physically. We are blessed to be recipients of that spiritual tradition as well as being recipients of a beautiful parish campus. We see in the physical buildings of our parish a manifestation of the spiritual commitment and fruitfulness of those generations that have gone before us. From the old church across the street, the school building, the gym, the Senior Center, the landscaping and green space and, of course, our church. Just a few years ago the parish added to the beauty and facility of our campus by the additions of the Atrium and a new and grand entrance for our school. It doesn't take long to see the wisdom and the

foresight of these additions nor to recognize their importance in the life of St. Mary's Visitation Parish.

This year we are embarking on a Debt Reduction Appeal, to complete what was begun by this generation – to not only completely pay for these additions, but also to continue to protect and secure the well-being of the campus. I would ask you to take a few minutes to look through these materials and those which you will receive in the future and also to take a moment, in prayer, to consider if you can help complete these projects.

In 1963, our church building was completed and dedicated. Just as that generation has left the lasting gift of a beautiful space to worship God, I would invite you, on this 50th Anniversary of the dedication of our church to ponder the goodness and generosity of God and also to consider the generosity of members of St. Mary's for over 160 years. May we, the current generation of St. Mary's parishioners, walk in their footsteps.

Live Jesus!

*Fr. Peter*

## Our Mission

“United in faith, we live as a prayerful people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, called to share our gifts through Christian stewardship in our church and world communities.”



New School Addition



New Church Atrium

### WE ARE BLESSED

Our building program, completed in 2009, has been a tremendous blessing for our parish. The building program has provided space for us to gather as a community, improved safety, and continues to be a source of pride for St. Mary's.

Improvements to the school included a new, secure, main entrance which is more noticeable and welcoming, administrative offices, space for our very successful three-year-old kindergarten and after-school care programs, extra classroom space, elevator, and a new high efficiency boiler to reduce utility expenses.

To improve our church, we built a new atrium which features a kitchen, library, restrooms and gathering area. Prior to the atrium, we lacked an inviting space to stop and talk after Mass. Now, the atrium has provided a wonderful space to connect with one another, form and share our Catholic faith, and build relationships. The atrium provides space for adult ministry, large family gatherings, ministry fairs, Christian Women events, Life Teen meetings,

parent meetings, funeral visitations, quad parish functions, grief support meetings, graduation socials, parish picnic overflow, and many receptions. A covered canopy entrance north of the atrium provides a welcoming drop-off.

### PAYING DOWN OUR DEBT

The total cost of construction was \$5.5 million. The building program was funded through the sale of our triangle lot on Watertown Plank Road, parishioner contributions, and borrowed funds. Our two prior capital campaigns, which raised \$3.25 million, were successful in supporting the construction and our loan payments.

Here are some facts regarding our building program debt:

- Original loan amount was \$3,100,000.
- Current loan balance is \$2,263,760.
- Interest rates on various loan components vary from 3.25% to 4.91%.
- Required monthly payments are \$13,469 (\$6,190 principal, \$7,279 interest).

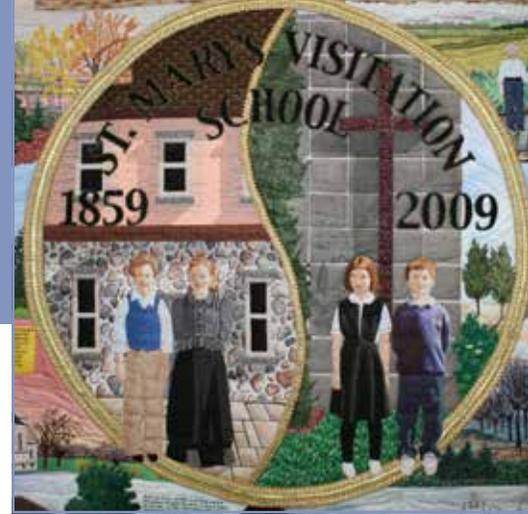
- Over half the debt is due to be restructured in September, 2013.

We are blessed with parish facilities that, for the most part, were provided through the sacrifices of those that came before us. We now seek to eliminate our debt so that those who come after us will be likewise blessed. Through this new three-year Appeal, we seek to raise \$2.5 million towards retiring our debt by June, 2016. Each \$1 million reduction in debt saves the parish \$40,000 to \$50,000 in interest cost annually.

### ADDITIONAL PARISH NEEDS

Going forward, the following areas of need have been identified. Addressing these needs will depend on the overall parishioner response to this Appeal.

- **Parking lot improvements** (estimated cost \$350,000 to \$380,000): Our church and school parking lot has been extended past its useful life with patches and repairs along the way. A complete replacement of the parking lot is being proposed, with newly installed drain tile to extend its life.



- **Organ maintenance** (estimated cost \$50,000 to \$100,000): For those who may not know, back in 1996 the \$500,000 cost to build our quality organ was funded entirely by a great-nephew of Franz Gruber, the composer of the Christmas carol "Silent Night." Now, we seek to protect this incredible gift by catching up on past due maintenance, and establishing a fund to keep our organ well-maintained into the future.
- **Church HVAC updating & maintenance** (estimated cost \$100,000 to \$130,000): The boilers were updated during the 2009 additions, but the remaining improvements to other components of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system were deferred. Improving them will allow for additional energy savings and improved air quality.
- **Church sound system improvements** (estimated cost \$50,000 to \$150,000 or more depending on the level of sophistication that we can afford): New sound technology is available that will make it easier to clearly hear what is being spoken or sung during Mass.
- **School Tuition Assistance Fund** (seed money up to \$50,000): Some prospective students seeking a Catholic education may find the cost of tuition to be a barrier. It is important that we provide an avenue for them to attend our school.

## SHARING TOGETHER

Our goal is to raise \$3 million or more through up-front gifts and three-year financial commitments. Raising this amount means we will need special gifts from all our parishioners, over and above our normal contributions to the parish. Please note that ALL funds received will stay at St. Mary's Visitation Parish to address our parish needs.

## THE INVITATION TO GIVE

In order to reach our Appeal goals, we are asking all of our parishioners to pray and consider the following invitation to give:

**Matching existing giving** - As a starting point, we ask you to pray and consider matching or doubling your current regular giving over the next three years. For example, if you are currently giving \$25 per week (\$1,300 a year) to the church's ministry, please pray and consider giving an additional \$25 per week to our Appeal over the next three years, for a total commitment of \$3,900.

**Leadership gift** - We ask those who are in a position to give more to pray and consider making a leadership gift of \$5,000 to \$25,000 over the next three years.

**Legacy gift** - We invite those who have been financially blessed to pray and consider making a legacy gift of \$25,000 to \$250,000 or more.





## PLEASE GIVE AS GOD LEADS YOU

We pray that all of our gift-giving decisions are motivated by the love God has shown for us in Jesus Christ. Our hope is that every person makes a prayerful, sacrificial gift. "Not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice" describes the biblical principle of proportionate giving. Through this Appeal, we encourage an equal sense of commitment and sacrifice throughout our parish, with each person prayerfully determining his/her own gift. We trust in God's spirit to guide each of us in our decision. In the end, we say "Thanks be to God" to each and every response to our Appeal.

## A PRAYER OF GENEROSITY

Gracious God, you have filled my life with treasures beyond count and measure. Yet I would ask for one thing more. Grant to me a grateful heart that I might share what I have received and know the joy of generosity, not for my recognition but for your glory and in accord with your will. -Amen



We are thankful for the dedicated members of our parish who are giving of their time and talent to make our Appeal a success.

### Appeal Steering Team

- Fr. Peter Berger
- Ignatius Smetek -Trustee
- Rick Wiederhold -Trustee
- Jim Olson -Parish Council Chair
- Molly Berens
- Lydia LoCoco
- Jim Parks
- Dave Spano
- Cheryl Peters -Dir Admin. Services
- Deacon Richard Piontek

Many other members of our parish are serving in a variety of Appeal roles. We thank them all for their service!

## COMMITMENT WEEKEND MAY 18 - 19

On Commitment Weekend, May 18 - 19, you are invited to bring your completed response form to Mass to be received in a special way. Prior to Commitment Weekend, through talks in Mass, mailings, church gatherings, and telephone calls, we hope to communicate how vital this appeal is to the future of our parish. If you cannot be with us on May 18 - 19, please return your response envelope the following weekend or mail it to the parish office. Your prompt response will avoid additional expense and volunteer time for a complete and successful Appeal. May your response be made with joy and thanksgiving for all God has given you.



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