

QUESTIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

AS HEARD AND ANSWERED BY MONSIGNOR BELFORD

Q. Why does the new church have to be so large?

A. We are planning on seating about a thousand people in our new church by order of Cardinal Egan, and because population growth in our area seems to warrant that. Also, it is less expensive to build a really large church than to open a second parish. And, we have a shortage of priests in the near term. And, people have favorite times to come to Mass, and we want to accommodate them when they come.

Q. Will we fill every pew when the new church opens in 2008?

A. Not at all. We are building ahead of growth, so we will have room to welcome new parishioners for years to come, for both worship and religious education.

Q. What happens to the existing church?

A. The four classrooms downstairs stay the same. But we add five classrooms and a religious education office upstairs where we are now worshipping. Our timing calls for constructing the new rooms during the summer of 2008, ready for September.

Q. Why does the new church look so wide?

A. We are using our advantage of lots of land and the disadvantage of a high water table to avoid a basement. The front of the building on the right side will have a chapel for daily Masses, with room for about 90 people. On the left side we will have a room for our Children's Liturgy of the Word, coffee hours, social activities, etc. That should accommodate about 150 people for talks or meals.

Q. Do these places have names?

A. Names of rooms and spaces are very important. I proposed to the Parish Council that we invite our religious education students, in a process directed by Mrs. Biasotti next year, to select the name of a saint for each of the classrooms we will have. And the Parish Council endorsed my suggestions for religiously significant new names (for the social room, the chapel, and the "old church" building) that I hope you will like as well: Holy Family Hall, Holy Eucharist Chapel, Holy Child Center.

Q. We own 81 acres. What else can we put on this land?

A. The water table issue precludes a cemetery. Olympic swimming pool, golf course, condominiums, retirement homes for priests and sisters – none of these are going to happen either. What we announced last November and show on submissions to the Town are the possibility of a gymnasium/classrooms on the north or Noxon Rd. side of the property, and some version of senior citizen housing on the south side.

Lots of people are enthusiastic about one or both. They each fit our mission of service to our community. But these projects, if they occur, are years in the future.

Q. Is it OK for me to stop coming to Mass for the summer?

A. A devout Catholic participates in Mass every Sunday. God knows the seasons of life because He made them, and He appreciates our need for rest. This is why He gave us the Sabbath, and you could even say by extension, gives us vacations. But the obligation of human being to Creator is to lovingly obey His Commandments, including this one: to keep holy the Lord's day. The Church listens to Jesus and makes it a precept: to make Eucharist in His memory on His day of resurrection.

Some people may have a work conflict every Sunday. Other people may just have a problem on certain days. Children, the sick, and older people who cannot drive, have less freedom. But for most of us, whether to come to Mass each Sunday, in July and August too, is a choice. Don't take unnecessary risks with your salvation, or deliberately miss out on nourishing experiences of prayer. Simply put: even in the summer, a devout Catholic makes Eucharist in the Lord's house on the Lord's day.

Q. What is the new Parish House going to be like?

R. Our Parish House will be to the right rear of the church, with administrative offices, counseling rooms, a large meeting room, a guest room, kitchen and dining room, and three apartments (living room, bedroom, bath) for priests to live in.

"Parish House" is more descriptive and accurate than the word "rectory" - which was used when the pastor was called a "Rector." By either name, this is our headquarters for parish business, and lots of people come to it. Personally, I like living where I work, being available to everyone and close to all the action of the parish. It beats commuting, and facilitates my job as chief protector of the property.

Q. Who lives at the present rectory, at 1810 Rt. 82, next to Pinecones?

A. Just me. From spring, 2003 until his death this January, Fr. Nimal Mendis, CHS, lived here too, while working as Chaplain for prisoners at correctional facilities. Perhaps we will receive another priest to be in residence, but there is no assurance. When we occupy our new facilities, I think we can expect to have another priest.

Q. What happens to the present rectory?

A. We sell it to some lucky family at a good profit for our parish.

Q. Why did we recently start receiving CATHOLIC NEW YORK newspaper in the mail?

A. CATHOLIC NEW YORK is a valued source of information and religious inspiration. We updated our subscription list and added hundreds of families in order to include everyone who contributes to our parish via church envelopes. Our parish will pay for you to get CNY. We hope you will like reading it. Anyone who wishes to receive CNY - or wants to be taken off the list - should call the rectory and we will do as you say.

Q. If I can't get a bulletin, how can I keep up with parish news?

A. We maintain an excellent website with an archive of Sunday bulletins, parish history, expansion plans, etc. Go to www.blessedkateriparish.com. We presently average 180 hits a week.

Q. Did someone really ask if they could skip Mass for the summer?

A. No, but just in case they were thinking of it...