

May 15, 2006/ NEWS ABOUT FUNDRAISING AND BUILDING

Dear Parishioners of Blessed Kateri,

May the divine assistance of our risen Lord Jesus Christ be with you today!

As always, I want to keep you informed about developments in our parish life and invite your participation and prayers. Therefore this letter will update you on our efforts to expand our facilities for worship and for religious education.

Also in this mailing you will find a handsome new brochure about our parish - our past, present, and future - that we created to give to new parishioners when they join our faith family. I thought you would like to see it as well. God has been doing great things, and as within your own family, we should notice and give thanks.

You will see a timely flyer reminding us who Jesus Christ really is, and giving some background about a new movie that misrepresents our Lord.

And I invite you to become a Captain in our Captains Club so you can sport a big smile if you win one of the ten prizes being given away on June 25.

BUILDING PLANS AND FUNDRAISING RESULTS

Our big focus at this time in our parish life is the building of our new church. There are three other major parts to the project: hundreds of new parking spaces and two new exit roads onto Rt. 82; a rectory, called a "Parish House"; renovation of the existing church into more classrooms for religious education students.

This large project has been moving steadily through a planning and approval process, locally and at the Archdiocese, on many levels. Everyone involved has been helpful to our parish, and if key elements can be done on time, we expect to break ground at the end of this summer. Construction should take about 20 months.

How are we, a less-than-four-year-old parish, able to be talking about such a huge step up in the size and beauty of our facilities? Only with the help of the Lord, and of our Archbishop, Edward Cardinal Egan.

You know that the initial estimate for this project was \$12,000,000. (We are affected as everyone is by surging prices for construction materials, so that number is likely to rise.) Cardinal Egan asked us to do our best with fundraising, but will also invest his trust and diocesan money with us, giving a gift to our parish of \$4,000,000, and extending short and long term loans totaling \$8,000,000.

My mailing to you in October included news about our fundraising campaign. I am delighted to report to you now in mid-May that you and other parishioners have responded very generously. Our campaign is open-ended and on-going. But the very ambitious goal of \$2,000,000 has been reached!

I want to thank all the families and individuals who have pledged their financial support to this endeavor, and explain why this is such a great response.

By fundraising standards, given our population and our Sunday collection, a safe goal would have been \$1,250,000. An ambitious goal would have been \$1,500,000. But based on our knowledge of your loyalty and the attractive reason for our solicitation, our Parish Council and I accepted a really challenging goal of \$2,000,000. Thank you for vindicating our judgment and trust!

This \$2,000,000 and more, as it comes in over the next three to five years, will help us repay part of the loan from the Archdiocese. I thank you in advance for your generosity and faithfulness to your pledges. People ask me, so I will tell you that about 95% of the pledges will be fulfilled. That is a wonderful record. (But if something happens in your life and you need to change what you thought you could do, don't fret about that. Just let us know. And if your circumstances improve in the future and you are able to give more, please make changes in that way too.)

Towards the end of the pledge period, we will contact donors who gave over the threshold of \$1500. We will prepare a handsome permanent memorial to be erected in the new building, listing the names contributors choose to display.

I know that not everyone is in a position to give money for this purpose. No one should give beyond their means. I know that we have important prayer support from many people whose gift includes or simply is prayer for the guidance and good result of our efforts. Again, I thank everyone for whatever they contribute.

Throughout this fundraising process, I had the wise advice and constant assistance of the Chairman of our Fundraising Campaign, Mr. William O'Hare. I thank and salute Bill for his work and prayers, and his wife Pat as well.

Other parishioners I want to thank for their help in this historic effort include the members of our Parish Council and of our Finance Council, committee people who arranged the kick-off events at The Links last fall, and the generous callers who last month reached out to hundreds of families we had not heard from as yet. These volunteers included Anne Anderson, Beverly Austin, Maura Brennan, Susan Condon, Judy and Martin Crawford, Joan Crowe, Norman Dauerer, RoseAlice D'Avanzo, John Lynch, Edmund McKenna, Robert Newhard, Mary Smith, Lorraine Travia and Gerald Weir.

You should know that we were favored by the Archdiocese with free advice from an expert! Deacon Richard Kovacs and his staff at the Office for Parish Fundraising gave us excellent guidance and encouragement as we went through the stages of this daunting process. Thanks in part to them, all the funds we raise will stay in our parish for our new building, even as we get credit for being part of the Archdiocese's Bicentennial fundraising for our 200th anniversary in 2008.

I have been in many parishes and know the value and importance of a Parish Secretary. Mrs. Elizabeth Rotunno is a wonderful representative for our church, and has handled the extra demands of this campaign with patience and skill. She epitomizes the wisdom of a question I have seen framed in some other offices:

"Do You Want To Talk To The Man In Charge -
Or To The Woman Who Knows What Is Going On?"

Faithfully yours in Christ,

