What is Happening in Our Church?

A Letter from Monsignor Manuel Simas

This Monday we observe Labor Day, a national holiday set aside to honor all those whose efforts grow our food, cook our meals, wash our clothes, teach our children, care for our health, pay the bills, deliver our mail, maintain our roads, build our homes and make the many things we use every day. Last weekend, St. James reminded us that God is the source of all good, and that we are to respond by using God’s gifts for the benefit of others. This holiday weekend, let us take time to thank and pray for everyone who labors on our behalf - including mom and dad!

As you know, in the June TBC Times I announced my decision to delay the next phase of our capital campaign while we focus on the success of our parish stewardship effort. As you may have noticed from the Finance Committee’s weekly note in the parish bulletin, this summer our weekly plate collection has been below the average needed by our budget. I trust that as a parish family we will increase our weekly offering so that we can meet our current financial obligations. Remember, just “One Hour A Week” – donating one hour’s worth of your wages every week - will go a long way in keeping our parish and ministries thriving for years to come.

In the July TBC Times, I stressed that stewardship is not just about fundraising, nor is it something practiced in good economic times only. Stewardship is a way of life, of thanking God for His many gifts. As St. James said last weekend, we must be believers not just in words but in deeds. This is why good stewardship requires sharing our time and talent in addition to sharing our treasure.

In two weeks we will be holding our parish Ministries Fair on September 20 after the 9, 11 and 12:30 Masses. I encourage you to attend the Ministries Fair and learn more about how you can use your time and talent to build up God’s church. We will also be holding a parish picnic the same day from 12 to 3 pm to grow together in fellowship as a parish family. Tickets will be on sale after Mass next weekend. I hope to see you at the Ministries Fair and parish picnic in two weeks. Let’s build church together!

Last month the diocese approved our request to hire a consultant to help us subdivide surplus land at the parish cemetery on Mission Boulevard near Durham Road. Selling this surplus land is part of the financial plan for building our new church. Subdividing and selling this land is expected to take 18 to 24 months. While this occurs we hope for a return to better economic times, resulting in a more successful capital campaign and higher land sale proceeds as well.

So when might we expect construction to begin on our new church? The TBC Coordinating Committee has worked diligently over the past year to create a revised financial plan and project schedule. Please read the second page of this newsletter for the answer to this question, and visit the TBC booth at the Ministries Fair for more information. TBC members will be there to answer your questions.

For many, the Labor Day holiday marks the end of summer and the beginning of a new school and work year. Our thoughts turn from vacations and summer leisure activities to the busier days ahead. Daily school and work schedules require our attention, and our lives often grow crowded with activity. My prayer for you is that your schedules will include quiet times to reflect on God’s goodness and “together time” to grow closer together as His family.

Peace and love,

Father Manny

Monsignor Manuel Simas
When Will We Build The New Church?

If everything goes according to plan, construction will start in 2012. Here are the major milestones:

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<th>2009</th>
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<tr>
<td>Subdivide and sell surplus cemetery land</td>
<td>Prepare building permit application</td>
<td>Complete next phase capital campaign</td>
<td>Obtain building permit from city</td>
<td>Obtain loan from diocese</td>
<td>Church construction completed</td>
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<td>Hall renovation completed</td>
<td>Phase 3 (multi-purpose building) TBD</td>
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What Will It Cost?

Phase 1 of the parish master plan has been completed. Phase 1 included the purchase of land required for an expanded campus to include the future multi-purpose building and playing field; completion of church design; city planning, city council and historic district approvals for the new church design and location; archeological mitigation; and relocation of the rectory. The cost of Phase 1 was $6 million. There is no debt to be paid off for Phase 1.

Phase 2 is the completion of construction drawings and obtaining a city building permit; construction of the new church; landscaping; road work; and renovation of the existing temporary church and parish hall into a full-size basketball court and improved meeting facilities. The estimated cost of Phase 2 is $15-18 million, depending upon final programming and design and future construction cost inflation.

Where Will the Money Come From?

The planned sale of the surplus cemetery land, payment of existing capital campaign pledges and the funds remaining after Phase 1 was completed will provide $6.3 million. The remaining funds needed for Phase 2 must be raised from new capital campaign pledges and other sources.

The TBC Coordinating Committee has set $9.5 million as the target for new pledges. We will ask the diocese for a loan to allow us to begin construction before all of the pledges are paid, but we must have $9.5 million in pledges to request the loan.

So the answer is that most of the money will come from each of us. If we all support the project with a pledge to the best of our ability, we will be successful.

Why Is This Plan Better Than the Last Plan?

Plans and schedules reflect the best information available when they are made, but they are not guaranties. The previous plan envisioned starting construction of our new church in 2008. Several unforeseen events, including the current recession, occurred that made the plan unsuccessful.

The environmental studies required by the city were more complex, took longer and cost more than expected, delaying the project. The sale of the surplus cemetery land, which was under contract at the height of the real estate market, fell through, creating a large hole in the funding plan. Demand for steel, concrete and other materials in China and other countries nearly doubled construction costs, creating a budget problem. We are confident that these lessons learned have made our current plan more realistic and achievable.