

12 June 2020

Dear Parishioners,

The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ recalls our intimate union with Jesus. Jesus consecrated unity with his flock through the simple forms of bread and wine. In the Eucharist we encounter God. Through the simplicity of food, we are nourished and strengthened for our faith journeys as disciples of the one we consume. The nourishment of the Eucharist helps us to believe and see the workings of God in our personal lives, in the life of the Church, and in our world. In these strange times we are challenged to turn inward and to protect ourselves. However, the Eucharist calls us to Love. This love is different from what we experienced before but is a call none-the-less. As we receive the most precious body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus, either physically or through spiritual communion, let us remember that we are disciples of him and are entrusted with spreading His love. With the Holy Spirit as our guide, we can rise to this challenge that Christians have responded to for centuries.

Over the past years I have mentioned the expense and responsibility of the school and rectory buildings. Although we have been graced to have tenants rent the school building, the financial strain on the parish is great. Over the years we have received a variety of proposals. After many conversations staff, committees, Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Council, and various offices of the Diocese, I have made the decision to sell both buildings and the property south to Detroit. This does not include the parking lots, there will be an easement for their use. Over the past few months, I have been in negotiations with two different entities that were interested in the buildings. Because of restrictions from Canon Law and Ohio State Tax Law for nonprofit organizations, one proposal, though preferred, was not a viable avenue for us to pursue. These laws require us to sell our property at “fair market value,” and we were unable to agree on “fair market value.”

We are currently in conversations with Oster Real Estate Holding Corporation, on behalf of Oster Services Commercial, LLC, a Lakewood, Ohio, development company specializing in renovating and rehabbing historic and religious buildings. The current intention is to restore the rectory building for use as their corporate office, and to renovate the school building for use as a daycare facility or high-end residential apartments. The Parish Finance Council had a very productive meeting this week as we discussed many details to such a transaction. If they pursue high-end residential apartments, then parking becomes a major concern. We agreed to have another meeting where they will present a proposal on the parking that will not limit our use and could enhance our use. On the Diocesan level, the Diocesan Finance Council and College of Consulters are supportive of this transaction. Fr. Donald Oleksiak, the Diocesan Administrator, believes that the transaction will be beneficial for the parish financially and would help support facility needs, repairs, and paying off past bills. Though I cannot yet share the financial gain to the parish, it will give us a great boost in repairing the roof and planning for interior restorations.

I am fully aware of the different opinions that parishioners and others may have on this issue. I was hoping to host a “town hall” regarding the potential sale of this property. Unfortunately, the pandemic and timeliness of this offer prevented me from doing so. The potential purchase of the

property by Oster Real Estate Holding Corporation is NOT finalized, and is dependent on city council redevelopment agreements, legal understandings, parking easements, ongoing parking maintenance, property security, and similar discussions. This is a one-time deal, and I ask you to pray with me to the Holy Spirit that we get this right for the growth of Saint James Parish.

As we continue to reopen and restart parish activities, please use your best judgment in coming to Mass and other activities around the parish and our community. Plans are being made to restart the Saint Clement Chapel, AA group meetings, Community Meals, Boy Scout meetings and other events. This weekend we will offer our last prerecord Mass. A special thank you to Bill Trentel for his hard work recording, editing, and posting Mass recordings. Going forward the Saturday Vigil Mass will be provided digitally via livestream and/or video recording.

We all need to personally take responsibility for our own actions and be witnesses to discipleship today. A lot is asked of us that we may not be comfortable with, including social distancing, facial coverings, or hand sanitizing. Please keep in my that we are called to love, and as we receive that gift of love spiritually or physically, Jesus is with us every step of the way!!!

Peace of Christ!!

Fr. Workman