

## Third Sunday of Advent

The cathedral is hiring an architectural firm to redesign the east side of our campus. I have consulted with our pastoral council, finance council, stewardship council, staff and our bishop, and all have approved a broad plan that will address many of our physical needs. Our vision is to leave the cathedral alone, but to demolish the other buildings, creating a larger parking area and a more efficient building for Morning Glory Ministries, the offices, and a hall for parish, diocesan and wedding receptions. Our present buildings are outdated and repairing them would be costly. Our building committee wants to hear your views; we will host open meetings next month when you can help refine our plans.

Everything comes at a cost, of course. The period of construction will be inconvenient for all of us. And the financial support we need will require sacrifice. Because the results will benefit not only the cathedral parish but also our diocese, our generous members can expect supportive contributions from other donors outside the parish.

Our finances are not stable. We still owe some \$250,000 on the renovation of the cathedral and another \$150,000 in monthly payments that every parish owes the diocese. Recently we discontinued the weekly second collection. I felt that that collection was a little disingenuous because it basically served the same purpose as the first collection. I want our members to be intentional in supporting the parish with a pledge and regular contributions. Ending the second collection has improved the liturgy and goodwill, but it has hurt us financially. The good news is that our annual appeal to the parish this year has brought in the highest number of pledges I've seen here: over 60 of our households have pledged over \$220,000. Thank you all.

One benefit of our plan for the east campus is that a parking facility and an event space that others may use can provide additional sources of income to pay our bills. I rely mostly on the members of cathedral parish for our support, but I am immensely grateful to the many visitors who come here and help us by your contributions. The diocese does not pay for the cathedral; we do.

We have many unanswered questions, but I wanted you to know this much. I asked the diocesan construction manager when all the work could be finished. She asked, "How soon would you like it finished?" I said, "Tuesday."

But things take time. And that is the message of St. James in today's second reading. He addresses a community anticipating the imminent second coming of Christ, which James promises will be joyful rather than catastrophic. But, he says, we have to be patient, patient as a farmer who waits for seed to grow, patient as the prophets who suffered hardship keeping Israel's hopes alive.

We all suffer impatience with projects, people, government and Church. We think of waiting as something that interferes with life, but waiting defines a good part of life. Advent helps us act charitably and patiently while we wait. Like the prophets, we can expect hardship, but like farmers, we can expect growth. Whatever you are waiting for in your life may not come by Tuesday, and, who knows? Christ may come first. If he does, the joy we experience in his presence will exceed the joys we envision in our elaborate plans for the future.

Sunday, December 15, 2019