



Reflections about our Parish:

Thank you to all who participated in the Census. Our office staff (Leslie and Jan) will do Part II of the census in correlating those who did not fill in the forms but who are clearly contributing members to our parish with the list of those who filled out the census form. The virtual doctor cured the hiccups of our parish electronic e-mail software and it is now poised finally to deliver attachments with e-mail messages.

Thanks to all those who generously stepped forward to make sure our summer liturgies were well celebrated: there were altar servers, lectors, communion ministers, ushers, greeters, and musicians, even during the heat! It was a pleasure to see your commitment and enthusiasm. We were blessed to have with us for the month of August, Fr. Peter Monty, S.J., I know he enjoyed becoming re acquainted with many friends in the parish!

Our maintenance staff Chris and Connor worked hard over the summer. The grass on the field was blessed with much rain and so looks lush. Despite the rain, the extra sump pumps which were installed in spring seem to be keeping the hall dry; major digging and placing of barriers and weeping tiles have stopped the water leakage into the grade three classroom on the west side of the school; attention to a drain pipe and land fill on the wall of the church on the Jessie Street side will forestall any water attacking us from the south. The old church doors at all the entrances have received some attention. The Jessie door is still out in repair waiting for hinges that are on back order.

One of my reflections published for our parish in April that we are not in good financial shape has been borne out during the summer. We still owe a considerable amount of last year's assessment to Sharing God's Gifts. We have not begun to address our obligations for this current year. Also as you notice in the reporting in the Church Sunday Bulletin, our weekly contributions are well below the need of \$20,400.00. We average about \$16,000.00 to date over this past year.

One very pressing need for our facility is access to our hall for the handicapped. It is unjust that all persons cannot access our hall. I was embarrassed a couple of times explaining to families that the hall is not accessible to people in wheelchairs for the receptions. Thank you to some thoughtful people who have specified the 'elevator' project for their donation. At the moment we are investigating the plausibility of restoring our 'lift'. A proper elevator would be our dream, but the restored lift would answer our immediate needs.

When I spoke with the Archbishop in late June to give a mini report concerning our parish, he asked me if we had any plans which would enable the parish to generate more revenue to support our parish ministries and obligations. I did not have an answer for him. His question is a good one. To give some thought about how to use our facilities more efficiently is important. Our congregation is very generous to the community at large with its myriad of ministries, but we don't seem to have 'generating revenue' in our minds, and in a sense that is good. The mind set is to minister, not make money. Nevertheless, in our school and the Education Centre, and in our facility in general, we have to begin thinking in terms of making our ministries sustainable as well as serving the needs of the community.

Reflections about our School:

Our parish's commitment to our school ministry has been at the heart of the parish for over a hundred years. The reality is that it is becoming more and more expensive despite the fact that our teachers' salaries are less than 84% of the scale in Winnipeg One School Division. (It is clear our teachers are making a large contribution to maintaining this ministry.) In my estimation the administration operates the school very frugally and husbands its resources very carefully. The expense seems to be a fact of life.

My conviction is that this ministry to our children must always remain central to our parish. The policy that every student in the parish is entitled to attend our school regardless of the resources of the student's family must also remain sacrosanct.

However, for this principle and policy to be maintained some change in strategy is necessary. It has been reported to me that some parishioners believe that if a family is registered in the parish, there is no cost to the family, that the parish simply underwrites the tuition for each child. Some others have told me that some families believe they can reimburse the parish later when their financial situation is better. The reality is that some children do attend our school whose families pay nothing in support of the church or the school (beyond the school incidental fees). Unfortunately our parish is not able to sustain financially a system of supporting this ministry based on these assumptions or practices. Families whose children attend the school must pay what they can.

(FYI: For the 2014/15 academic year, the Government of Manitoba has determined that the cost to educate a child in Manitoba is \$10,428.00 per year. St Ignatius School operated on: 1. Grants from the Government of Manitoba in the amount of \$5,214.00 for each full-time equivalent child enrolled; 2. Instructional Supplies and Facility Revitalization Fee of approximately \$475 per child; and 3. support from families and the Parish equivalent to \$1,700.00 per year per student (1,800.00 for Kindergarten). The cost of the school to the parish in year 2014/15 was \$416,711. This amount includes a \$132,000.00 space rental fee charged by the Parish.)

Strategic Proposal for implementation for the year 2016 - 2017:

I propose that all families be assessed a tuition by the school for every student attending St. Ignatius School. However, financial assistance will be available for all those students of our parish who need it. Families can apply to the pastor of the parish for that assistance. They can simply indicate the amount of assistance they need and provide documentation to illustrate their financial state (e.g., an income tax return from the previous year). That documentation will be rendered anonymous and vetted by an advisory committee appointed by the pastor. The pastor will meet with the families and make a final decision about the amount of the assistance the parish can provide. (In time, a Bursary fund can be established to provide ongoing assistance for families so that the revenue does not have to be coming from the Church operations.)

A structure of this sort will enable all students of our parish to attend St. Ignatius School; it will ensure privacy for the families, provide a clear rationale for decisions and maintain good stewardship of our parish resources; and it will enable our school to have a clearer financial basis on which to plan for the future.

Given our financial situation, it is important to act soon. The School Board, the Parish Council, and the Parish Finance Committee have already been consulted on this. I will be grateful for constructive criticism on this or any other aspect of the life of our parish community and mission at our annual Parish AGM (Annual General Meeting) at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 19.

I am continually grateful for the many parishioners who faithfully and enthusiastically keep ministering to this our family, the Body of Christ at St. Ignatius Parish, and to many other members of the Body of Christ in the broader community! You are an inspiration. May God continually bless all of you.



Peace and prayers,

R. Frank Albright