

St Ignatius Parish January 15, 2023

How wonderful to end the 2022 calendar year and begin our liturgical year with so many families, parishioners, and friends gathering in person for the Advent season and particularly for Christmas!

It's been three years since we've been able to do that. Thanks to so many for preparing us well for these celebrations and for those who worked hard to make them truly joyous: music ministers, lectors, communion ministers, ushers, organisers, decorating ministers, our Knights, counters, tech ministers, church administrators and staff, and everyone who came to worship! Not only did you parishioners come in solid numbers to our five Christmas Masses rejoicing in Jesus' birthday, but also to our Masses on the Feast of the Mother of God and on the Epiphany! What you may not know is that many people in our city, country, and around the world, some times in great numbers, also join us for worship. More than 1900 virtually attended our three Christmas streamed Masses. On January 1st alone, Feast of Mary, Mother of God, more than 1700 joined us virtually for the 11 am Mass! Our Church is truly Universal!



PARISH TRUSTEES AND FINANCE COUNCIL: Our Parish trustees, Steve Ward and Bill Burns, who are also our Financial Council members along with Steve Chipman, have worked very hard over the past years, and particularly in the past two years. They assisted in finding personnel in our transition from the “Jan Hasiuk and Chris Janes era” of our parish community. The contributions of Jan and Chris over the past decades cannot be counted. Replacement? Unthinkable! The challenge for the team was to imagine how to move forward. They rethought the parish administrative possibilities, drew up job descriptions accordingly, and were successful in finding a new team for the parish. Another position in the Education Centre needed to be filled after COVID and the retirement of another remarkable gift to our parish for many years, Valerie Forrest. Again ‘replacement’ was not possible. It was necessary to revisit a job description and then find the right person. The team did that. A fourth major achievement of this team of Steve, Bill, and Steve, was to draw up and negotiate an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) to guide the Parish and the School in their cooperation to assure that the Parish and its important School ministry could grow and work together harmoniously. That MOU will be signed this month! Congratulations. After this and much other hard work, another task for this illustrious trio will be to ensure a good succession for their current roles to serve our parish in the future. Their contributions and accomplishments have been stellar. A thank you is a small response from us for what they have done.

AGM: Thank you to those who prepared reports for our Annual General Meeting of our parish in late November. Thanks also for those who attended and for the Knights who provided a fine reception for us. The Reports are accessible on our parish web site (“22 Annual General Meeting” under the “Weekly Bulletins”). The reports reflect that our parish is vibrant and coming back to life after COVID. There is one dark spot though. At the AGM, I spoke about our financial status, noting that it is at least as bad as it was when I arrived as pastor in 2015. Steve Ward covered more details about our financial situation in his report.

OUR DEBT: One letter I received on December 9, 2022 from the Archbishop and another message I received from our parish Auditors caused me a few sleep-disturbed nights. I know. I know. “God will provide”. But Archbishop Richard’s letter pointed out specifically that we are in arrears for two years in our Archdiocese financial support, a total of \$153, 611.00. He also reported that the Archdiocese will be probably in a financial deficit status this year. And another blow was the Auditor asking me

whether St. Ignatius planned to continue in operation after having experienced a large debt for the second consecutive year. Archbishop Richard asked me to schedule a meeting with JR Alibin, his financial advisor, to discuss our ‘particular situation so as to come up with a workable solution.’”

We have been hit hard by COVID during these past two years, not only in regular weekly donations, but also in expenses. Having a plant which harkens back over a hundred years, means expensive surprises always occur. And regular care of our buildings is still essential. A few repairs and initiatives that have been achieved during the last months are as follows: the installation of hand rails for the steps at the Corydon Street entrance, the installation of the restored motor for our organ (in time for Christmas!), the completion of the floor and ceiling of the IT room supporting our whole complex in the Education Centre, demolishing the collapsed ceiling and installing a new one in the women’s hall bathroom, installation of bottom church window outside covers to conserve heat, beginning needed repairs to the thermostats and radiators in the church, and replacing the broken control panel in the hall lift. Our Operations Manager, Bob Pistawka, and his team handled what they could but much of the work required third party specially skilled workers.

We are in a particularly awkward situation. Despite some of the recent extraordinary expenses, for example, a collapsed sewer (\$40,000), a seized organ motor (\$6,000) and a collapsed hall woman's bathroom ceiling (\$5,000), the current fiscal year will bring extra costs related to our administrative transitions. I am looking for practical steps to help move our parish to financial stability. My dream of winning a lottery is a pipe dream. We have to do this as we’ve done before. One dollar at a time. Just eight years ago we initiated a second collection to catch up on our Sharing God’s Gifts shortfall. It was successful. In three years we did that. We can do that again. This month we will restore our second collection after communion every second Sunday. A number of parishioners have recommended establishing a “Fundraising Committee”. That is a good idea. Another idea? Everybody has to buy groceries. Co-op or Sobey gift cards available from our Knights’ Council contribute 6-8% of their cash value to our parish. But each of us may have to reflect individually on what is possible. There is no good time for soliciting funds, especially with today’s rising prices and inflation. But Fr. Con and I have been doing that. As you know, the Archdiocese sets the amount of support a parish provides each of its priests. The new amount just set for 2023 is \$45,759 *per annum*. My Jesuit Community has agreed to donate 10% of the support the parish provides Fr. Con and me to assist the parish in meeting the parish’s financial responsibilities in this current calendar year. One very generous staff member has also volunteered to forgo one salary pay cheque. With inflation and increased prices for everything, most of you are struggling to maintain yourselves and your families. Nevertheless every bit counts in terms of support for our parish. Please pray about what you can do.

As I suggested in October, this challenge is not a new one for us. We are blessed in having a faithful and solid community with an over hundred year tradition of enthusiasm and generosity. My faith is that God will continue to give us those gifts. My faith is definitely that “God will provide.”

Prayers for all!



R. Frank Alibin



St. Ignatius Parish

☺ have a dream!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJbhDMUojzE>