



Reflections of the pastor after one year 2.18.16

Today marks the day of my first birthday as Pastor of St. Ignatius Parish. I am grateful for your continued support and for your enthusiasm. My heart is constantly lifted by your attention to prayer on Sundays and all week (did you know we have 50 - 100 at our daily Mass during the week?). I offer constant thanks to God for all those many parishioners who give of their time, energy, and prayers, making our parish not only a worshipping community serving one another, but also a parish attentive to the needs of our brothers and sister beyond our community, especially the poor.

Some amazing things happening.

Refugee Committee and Project:

Thanks for such generosity to all those who donated and are assisting in our Refugee project. It is wonderful to be in collaboration with Holy Rosary, St. Paul's College, and St. Paul's High School, and most recently, St. Gianna Parish. The St. Ignatius Refugee Committee had \$7,000 already in its fund from previous years. Our parish alone raised an additional \$18,000! Thank you to the committee members, especially Saratha Joseph and her team members (particularly Mary Shariff & Nerina Robson), who are guiding our efforts to welcome two refugee families to Winnipeg.

Knights of Columbus:

Following their Herculean efforts in the Fall in refurbishing our pews and bringing LED lighting to the church and school, and their wonderful fundraising celebration for the church and El Sitio on the occasion of their 50th Year of Council 5808, our Knights have taken on three more projects this winter, the beginning of the Sobey Card fundraising effort, the demolition phase of the refurbishing of the washrooms of the Church, and the repair of some windows in the Church. Thank you Knights!

Unsolicited Gifts:

– A Gift to the School: In the late spring of 2015, a person approached the principal of St. Ignatius School offering to assist in building the school's programs. He was particularly interested in bringing the technology up to date and helping to develop a music program. The principal was asked to draw up specific proposals for each of those areas. The principal sent off the proposal on December 16, 2015. Part of the proposal is to provide renovation of the two rooms above the gym and the installation of a fire escape so that the space can be used as the music centre. The total gift to the school for these two projects is \$115,000.00. The benefactor has approved the proposal and wishes to proceed with it. It has also received the approval of our Parish Trustees and our Archbishop.

– A Gift to the Parish: Some may say that our distinctive Church building on the corner of Corydon and Stafford should be enough to herald the presence of St. Ignatius Parish in our community. The now aging 100th anniversary sign seemed to one generous donor an inadequate signal of the Parish's presence. Before Christmas Chris Janes contacted a company who is well known in the city for their digital signage and obtained a proposal from them. The dignified design met the approval of the donor, the trustees, and our Archbishop.

A second screen in the Church:

To enable everyone to see better the words to the hymns and other words to assist our worship, the Knights have purchased a second screen and projector for the Corydon side of the Church. Some concern has been expressed that the screen may distract from the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. Given the amount of regular traffic on that side of the church because the access to the hall is there, perhaps there should be a rethinking of the location of our tabernacle (restoring it to the original location in the nave??).

Washrooms at the reception area:

At Christmas the stench from the men's washroom was terrible. Our Knights of Columbus demolished the interior and even the sub floor! A plumber was the main cost of the project as Chris Janes, Connor, and the Knights are completing the project: dry walling, taping, painting, doors, baby change table. The final result: some improvements in the women's washroom and the men's washroom being turned into a Family washroom. The men's washroom will be in the Education Centre (which will be refitted properly sometime in future.)

Elevator:

At the November AGM (Annual General Meeting of the Parish) some encouraged the parish to make quick progress on plans and action to make our Hall accessible to all people, not just those who can walk well. A conceptual design plan for a real elevator is in the works with a budget estimate expected soon. An elevator is a central piece in redesigning the future functioning of our entire plant. We have so much wasted space that is costly to maintain. A real elevator is a long-term goal. I am keen on and advocating for replacing the existing 'lift' as a short-term goal to answer our immediate needs. But I am schooling my self to patience. (FYI The cost of the lift would be \$46,000 plus tax and the cost of materials – dry wall, paint, etc– for in-house cosmetic finishing by Chris and Connor.)

Other follow up items after the AGM:

– At the AGM the Parish Pastoral Council reported about the upcoming Year of Mercy as promulgated by Pope Francis and plans being contemplated to help our parish focus on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. A pamphlet, "Eight Ways to Live a Merciful Life", is being distributed with parish tax receipts later in February and will be made available to parishioners in church.

– Some voiced the need to make plans quickly to make better use of our facilities, e.g., the rectory. Although there have been a couple of brainstorming sessions and a government-connected visitor coming to assess and give advice about its possible use, we are still evaluating options to best use the space. Currently the upstairs rectory is providing storage for items donated to the refugees.

There are many exciting and challenging things happening in our parish and school. I trust that we will meet all of them with prayer and good will and hope. May God continually bless all of you.

Peace and prayers,



R. Frank Albright O.F.M.