



St. Joseph Parish
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November 11, 2011

Dear Parishioners of St. Joseph,

In sharing my annual State of the Parish with you, I also want to share with you the challenges facing our St. Joseph Catholic Community.

OUR CATHOLIC CHALLENGE

This Advent our Catholic Church has asked us to embrace changes to our Mass prayers. These new words and the return to some old words are a challenge for all of us. We are challenged to relearn, memorize and re-own our prayers. It will take some practice for us and a return to reading what we pray. It is a good challenge for growth in all of us. It is a good opportunity to recommit ourselves to what we believe as Catholics. It is a good time to refocus our attention on what we pray at Mass. Together we will deepen our sense of the sacred, the holy and the gift of the Eucharist at Mass.

OUR CHALLENGE TO SERVE

This past spring a survey of our parishioners was conducted, covering every aspect of our parish community: worship and spiritual life, religious education and formation, sacramental preparation programs, parish life activities, parish operations and our future vision. The results gave the parish staff, pastoral council and parish commissions an opportunity to review our successes and focus on areas for growth. In each area of our parish, the call came for more volunteers: more volunteers to assist at Mass, more volunteers to assist with religious education, more volunteers to assist with parish activities, more volunteers to assist with cleaning our churches, more volunteers to assist with caring for our grounds and buildings. It is a call to give, to share, to sacrifice. The challenge before all of us is to ask ourselves, "Where can I serve my faith community at St. Joseph Parish?"

OUR COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

We have completed three years in our new church. We have adjusted and learned how to gather, how to worship, and how to care for our new campus. We enjoy the blessings of our new house of prayer.

Currently we are completing the second year of our third three-year campaign. Our *Step Up in Faith* campaign, our festivals and silent auctions have helped reduce our construction loan to \$2.94 million, and by December 2012 the balance on our loan should be approximately \$2.1 million. Thank you for your good and generous support and financial sacrifice that have enabled us to reach this point. In 2015 we will celebrate the 175th anniversary of St. Joseph Parish. Our goal and challenge with one more campaign is to finish our loan and begin our work on Phase II, which will be a unified campus. What a grand celebration 175 years of faith and a vision for one campus as we grow into the 21st century!

Our *Stairway to the Future* is a stairway of faith, service and sacrifice. We have climbed many steps, made many sacrifices and have served in the spirit of Jesus. Thank you to all who have so generously given in any way to St. Joseph Parish! Let us together walk, work and pray hand in hand as we continue on our *Stairway to the Future*.

Shalom,

Fr. Brendan J. Walsh
Pastor