



## *Most Pure Heart of Mary* Catholic Church

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We strive to imitate the heart of our patroness, the Blessed Virgin Mary, by:  
Loving God with all our hearts,  
Loving our neighbor as ourselves,  
Bringing Christ to others

Dear Parishioners,

I officially announce that our parish is going to build a new rectory. Now that I'm sure I have your attention...let me explain the details and why this is good news for all of us. To make sure we are on the same page, "rectory" is the Catholic term used for the house in which parish priests reside. The current rectory is at 3601 SW 17th St., which is right next to the church; it is the yellowish house immediately east of the church. Fr. Jonathan and I live there; and occasionally other priests or seminarians join us temporarily.

Why build a new one? The current structure has a lot of limitations that have been known by many for some time. In fact, in 2001 an estate was left to the parish as a trust "in honor of Gertrude S. and William B. McCabe and Mary and Frank Bothe" (may they rest in peace!). In the legal documents, the donor's express wish was "only the net income of the Trust be used..." "to aid in the construction of a new Rectory, or to assist in repayment of a Parish loan for that purpose."

So all this obviously happened before my time. Fr. Frank pursued fulfilling this project; but since he knew his retirement was drawing near, he decided to leave it to the next pastor. Fr. Brian also looked into this, but due to a number of valid reasons, he also passed on acting on it in his short tenure of six years here. I too, personally, believe it or not, would prefer to pass the buck, but I think the time has come to address this for the benefit of the whole parish for years to come.

In light of all this and more, our parish strategic planning made all of our parish facilities a top priority; and we looked at the current state of the rectory as part of it. I've had several groups of parishioners look over the current rectory (many with good technical expertise). They found the current rectory structure to have a number of challenges: very old stone, musty odor, a low-ceiling basement; dangerous stairs to the basement; laundry in the basement; many accessibility issues for those with difficulty using stairs; old plumbing and electrical needing replacing; water damage to ceilings and walls (may be mold in house); uneven floors; outdated styling throughout the house; and the rectory does not meet the current layout requirements of the Archdiocese for rectories. As such, the groups assessing the rectory were unanimous that it would be better to rebuild than renovate the structure, as a renovation would be costly and still have limitations.

But here is, in my opinion, the really good news. The estate trust mentioned above has grown over 15 years and accumulated enough income to where we believe it is entirely sufficient to build the rectory without costing the parish a dime. A new rectory will then be in good shape and efficient thus saving parish maintenance costs. But even better yet, the trust will still exist after the project, the principal will be left untouched, only its income over the years used. Then, since we will have fulfilled the donor's intent, we will thereafter be free to use income from the trust for other purposes for the parish. It will give our parish more income. Since this is extraordinary income, I would strongly propose we use it for extraordinary expenses in the future—especially taking care of our other parish buildings and making MPH M a beautiful and effective place to grow in faith. Another element of good news is that a good rectory provides long-term stability for the parish. We want here at MPH M the continued possibility that we will have more than one priest in residence here. A new structure will help accomplish that. But providing a healthier environment, having capacity for multiple priests, and being much more accessible with a new design, the new rectory will be attractive for priests, maybe even allowing the possibility of hosting a retired priest. I've seen this in other parishes—that a good rectory tends to keep multiple priests in residence at a parish, even when priest numbers decline and parishes merge.

So, there is a lot of good news here. Further, I intend us to keep working on beautifying and improving the rest of our buildings and facilities, so I think this project will get the ball rolling more in that direction. While there is no current need for you to give financially to this rectory project, I hope it inspires you to give to future upcoming projects to improve our grounds. The current mechanism is the Capital Improvement Fund of the parish, but also please consider leaving the parish a legacy gift in your will. We promise to be good stewards of such gifts.

Lastly, you might want to know the details of this rectory project. Well, so do I! It is a work in progress, and we are really still in early stages, so I don't have all the details yet. But I promise to let you know when I do. I promise you also that this project will do its best to line up with Gospel values. I desire us to have a highly-functional, durable, restful home for current and future priests that yet is simple and avoids luxury. May Jesus who worked many years as a carpenter be our true project manager! May God bless you and all our donors who make such things possible!

Sincerely,

*Fr. Greg J. Hammer*