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03 March 2024 + Third Sunday in Lent

I want to thank all of you who were present for our meeting on Thursday, February 22 when the scope of our two major parish projects were presented. I was edified by the questions and discussion, but most of all, by the positive nature of what was shared. I will need to meet with the Building Commission of the Diocese of La Crosse to present our plans and seek additional funding for the projects. I will let you know what comes from that meeting. There is no doubt that a substantial loan will be required beyond the funds we so generously pledged in our capital campaign.

As I have reflected on our projects, I looked at the wonderful history book that was compiled by Fr. Arthur Redmond and parishioners of Sacred Heart-St. Joseph parishes back in 1990. It was the occasion of the 120<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of these two parishes, respectively. In the book, it describes the background of building the current St. Joseph Church in Boyd. A cost analysis of the building project from the architect in Duluth, MN was \$65,057.33! One of the main supporters of the project was John W. Meyer, a parish trustee who worked for the Bank of Boyd for more than 65 years. To give you some perspective, it was reported in the history book that Mr. Meyer made \$25.00 per month for many years, until he got a \$5.00 per month raise. Checking further records, the current church was completed in 1928, with the actual consecration Mass taking place early in 1929. In August of 1929 the stock market crashed, which began the ten-year Great Depression. There is no record of how the new church was paid for during that time, but obviously it was. I did some checking with some church architects, and they estimate that a church like St. Joseph's built today would be in the neighborhood of 12-20 million dollars. In just four years, St. Joseph Church will be 100 years old. That is within one lifetime.

As I looked at the history of all of our churches in All Saints Parish, it occurred to me that many of the tradesmen and contractors were local parishioners. Though times have changed, perhaps that is one way we might complete our final two major projects. If there are local tradesmen and contractors who might want to enter into the bidding process, you can contact Austin Hoffman from Market & Johnson to get on the list. Perhaps there are people who were from our local area and have roots in our parish churches, but who no longer live here. They might be willing to help us if they know what we are doing. All I know is, the history of our churches is one of incredible sacrifice, a united effort on the part of everyone in the parish, and an unyielding trust in God's divine providence.

Blessings and best wishes,