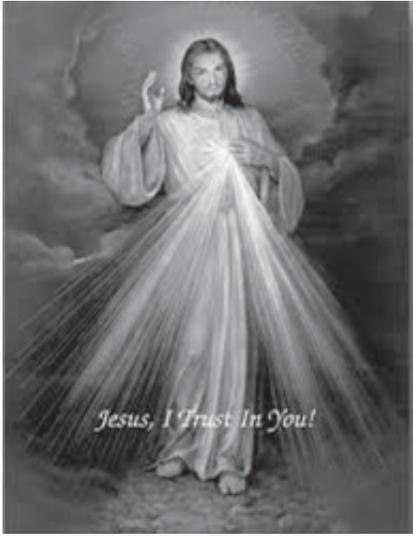


Pastoral Message



Happy First Sunday of Lent everyone – and Happy Saint Valentine’s Day!! Since I am committed to keeping clear communication about the discussion we are having about the future of our facility, I want to use this space to keep you informed. This past week the parish facility committee met with architect Steve Jamroz of Blue Design Group of Hortonville, who summarized the results of the parish survey and also his interviews with numerous people on our parish staff and other parish members. At this point Steve is trying to identify what problems/issues we have here and prioritize them with our help so that he can propose a solution that is as economical as possible. The surveys and feedback were generally very positive. The most frequent comment was that people wish we had some kind of a parish hall and/or multi-purpose space that could be used by both the church and school for social gatherings, education, presentations and other events. Second to this was the observation, no surprise to anybody, that “we need more seating for Mass.” Many people commented about how much they love the warm, intimate, and “cozy” feel of our church, and that they love how friendly and welcoming St. Mary’s is as a parish. Many also expressed concerns about the parking and traffic flow here after Sunday Masses and on Wednesday nights, with one person describing it as “organized chaos.” This is a serious safety issue that must be considered as we move forward. There were also a fair share of concerns expressed about the cost of any expansion and how important it is that the parish will maintain its debt-free status. I am so grateful for all of your responses and continue to have an open door to listen to your thoughts and concerns. All survey results and minutes of the meetings may be read on our parish website. Our next meeting is Tuesday, March 8, at 7pm, and all are welcome to attend.

During this season of Lent, let’s continue to pray that as we discuss the possibility of a parish expansion, we will approach this whole question with a deep sense of the **mission** that we have as baptized Christians to **proclaim Jesus Christ** to everyone in Greenville. The question of what priorities we have as a parish, buildings or otherwise, must always be in response to this question: How can we generously offer ourselves and our resources to the mission we have of proclaiming Jesus Christ to all people?

Thank you for your continued prayers for me. My main focus for the next six weeks is the joy of living this holy season of Lent and Easter together. It is my privilege and joy to serve you each day. Come, Holy Spirit!

Fr. Peter