



the *Celebration*

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH
900 DARLINGTON AVE, MAHWAH, NJ

**THE CONSECRATION OF THE NEW ALTAR
AND THE REDEDICATION OF THE NEWLY RENOVATED
CHURCH**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020 AT 12:00 PM
HIS EMINENCE, JOSEPH WILLIAM CARDINAL TOBIN, D.D, CSsR

MASS OF THANKSGIVING
DECEMBER 13, 2020 AT 5:00 PM
MOST REV. MICHAEL SAPORITO, D.D.





My dear parishioners and friends of ICC,

Peace and every blessing be upon you!

During this season of Advent, we have been journeying together the penitential waiting to celebrate the Incarnation. Two weeks of Advent have passed and the two purple candles have been lit. Today, we light the Rose Candle. It means that we are halfway through the waiting. It can be said that we have gone through a similar waiting, years of waiting, in regard to the renovation of our church. Two purple candles are close to burning out and a rose candle is being lit. The wait is almost over.

I can only thank you for all that you do for our church. Your passion for the renovation project is laudable. I thank God for people like you who are generous stewards of the gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure that God has entrusted to us.

The first priority of every good shepherd is the pastoral care and the spiritual welfare of the people. It is not about fundraising, parking lot repairs, paying bills, assessments and etc. The first priority is always the hearts and souls of our sisters and brothers.

But we still need a physical and a structural place – the church – where we meet and celebrate God's love and mercy flowing freely through the sacramental life of the Church. We also have to physically maintain, beautify and upgrade the church since it is God's house and our spiritual home.

Since my arrival here I tried my best to instill in you a very simple concept: this church does not belong to me but it belongs to you, all of us form this family of faith. The purpose of the ministries of our church is to develop our mission as Catholic Christians, build up our parish and local community. In other words, I want you to believe and say in your heart, "Yes, this is my church, this is my parish!"

I have always wanted us all to be happy working on the renovation of our church, a unique task that God has given to us. Just as we have always prayed to ask God to guide us and direct us in this effort, so have we also prayed to do it for the honor and glory of God alone. We were and still are in this together and each one of us is an important piece in the puzzle.

Every work that we do for God should be done in love. Let us be reminded of St. Paul's exhortation to the people of Corinth: "If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing." As I reflect on this passage, I am so convinced that even if we build a very beautiful monument to God, but in the process, we fail to love, our monument may just be a clanging cymbal.

Let us continue to make our church a monument to our unity, love and peace. Let it be a reminder of the gifts that we have received from God and use it for his kingdom. We pray that it will be a church befitting of the sacred mysteries that shall be renewed daily upon the altar, where souls will come to behold, worship and adore the Lamb of God. We pray that God will be pleased to dwell in this house of prayer and to fill it with the majesty of His Presence. May countless souls find a haven from the tumult of the world. May hungry souls come to be fed the Bread of Life. May weary and burdened souls come to find rest. May contrite and penitent souls come to receive His great mercy. This is our prayer. Then this is what we shall accomplish as we worship in this beautiful church.

As I call to mind the many individuals who have participated in this project, I am indeed humbled. First I must mention the parish members who have sacrificed in providing the necessary finances, giving innumerable hours of personal time, sharing abilities and expertise, and the prayer that this project would reflect the will and wisdom of God. In addition, we have been blessed with the support of many outside the parish, former members and friends who have recognized our need. We are grateful for their generous gifts and prayerful support. The work of the people in this renovation project bring honor and glory to God.

The beautiful church is our gift not so much to ourselves but to those who founded the parish and built the church, those who have worshipped here over

decades, and all those in will continue to celebrate God's goodness in it. As we prepare for our church's 100th Foundation Anniversary in 2028, we give thanks for past, present and future. For all these years, the people of Immaculate Conception Church have been singing the mercy of God. For all these years, the name of our God has been glorified in you, parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church, by your prayers, by your love, by your daily testimony. For all these years, Jesus has come to stay with you, to reveal his Father, to bring his good news, to manifest his eternal love. For all these years, Jesus has wanted to be one with you, to send his Holy Spirit, to pray with you. This is what we celebrate today, the great festival of grace.

The desire of our fathers and mothers was to give the Christian people a sign of the Emmanuel, of God-with-us, of God-among us. I pay tribute to all those who worked at creating this parish. So much care was given to build and maintain them, very often at the cost of countless sacrifices. Each church is a promised land, a place of celebration, a house of prayer. It is a temple open to every man, woman and child who worship, who are witnesses of God. Let us continue to be proud of this precious heritage.

However beautiful this church is, it is never as beautiful as its Christian community, it is never as important as each member of the community. Every baptized person is a living stone in the structure of this church.

I am confident that there is a great future for the life of the Church here in Immaculate Conception Parish in the years to come because I know that you will continue to witness to this truth. Your witness will not be achieved without sacrifice, without suffering, and without keeping in touch with the wellspring of truth revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

As we dedicate this newly renovated church building and consecrate the new altar, my prayer is that the faithful of Immaculate Conception Church and the greater community will come often, pray with us, and feel at home.

May God who has begun the work in us, bring it to fulfillment. May the graces and blessings flow in abundance to all who come to pray and worship here, both at present and for generations to come.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. JM Manolo A. Punzalan, STL, MA

OUR STORYHIS GLORY

"We have to do something about the carpet in the church." Variations of that utterance were expressed with increasing exasperation at almost every Buildings & Grounds and Finance Council meeting for roughly a score of years from the early 1990s until 2015. Inevitably what followed was the acknowledgement that we could not do only the carpet since there was so much else that needed to be done inside the church that should be done first to avoid ruining the new carpets as we did other projects. The collective psyche of the Parish congregation was also haunted by memory of financial distress in the not-too-distant past. Of course, there was also that old boiler that we all knew could go at any minute. And we had lost our school tenant without having a new one on the horizon.

By the dawn of the new millennium, we had a growing cash surplus, but we also had 9/11. The surplus kept growing nonetheless, and capital projects such as the roof replacement and the repaving of the parking lot were getting done on an annual basis out of cash flow. The boiler finally met its inevitable demise and was replaced. In late 2007, we found ourselves in the midst of a national financial meltdown, which made it difficult to think about asking parishioners for money. The Archdiocese was making it known that capital projects would not be approved unless they were fully funded in cash before any construction could start. We continued grumbling about the carpet, and the surplus continued to grow. The bright side of the financial crisis was the acquisition of Sage as a tenant in 2008. The surplus grew even more. At the end of our 2008 fiscal year, we had \$286,000 in our surplus account and had signed Sage up to a long-term lease.

Despite parish frugality, the kick-off of a renovation capital campaign remained on the "to do later" list, although the itch to do it was growing in intensity. Recovery from the financial crisis was less than ebullient, and Fr. Sheridan was charged by Archbishop Meyers not only with running our parish, but also with being the Chaplain and Newman Center advisor for Catholic students at

Ramapo College. In addition, rotation was on the horizon for Fr. Sheridan, and it was obvious that if a pastor was going to take on a renovation, it had to start early in his tenure.

In 2015, Fr. Gugliotta was assigned as our new pastor, coincidentally with the commencement of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark's ("RCAN") diocesan capital campaign --- "We Are Living Stones" --- for which Immaculate Conception was expected to raise several hundred thousand dollars. We had the option to run our own campaign simultaneously, and we seized the opportunity. A Capital Campaign Committee (the "Committee") was formed with Robert and Teresa Herpst as co-chairs, and Ruotolo Associates was retained to do a feasibility study. Before Ruotolo had even started their work, we had secured several large pledge commitments totaling \$530,000, which more than met our We Are Living Stones obligation to RCAN. Ruotolo did 16 personal interviews with 25 people (10 of them couples), held three focus groups with 35 parish families, interviewed members of the Committee and did a survey which garnered 108 responses. Ruotolo's research indicated enough support for the renovation to get started. Ruotolo concluded that we could expect to raise approximately \$1,850,000 to \$2,500,000 during a capital campaign.

The Committee held a more sanguine view: that we might get in the range of \$1.2 to \$1.4 million, inclusive of our RCAN obligation. Both projections made some kind of a project seem feasible. Additional discussions with parishioners indicated that priorities included an elevator, keeping the interior space consistent with the exterior and preserving the stained-glass windows. The concept of what was "consistent with the exterior" seemed to mean somewhat varied things to



anyone who expressed detailed views and would prove a challenge throughout the project.

We initially retained McCrery Architects, LCC to design the church interior. After submitting a conceptual design, James McCrery resigned from the assignment, stating that the firm disagreed with moving the tabernacle to the side of the sanctuary. The Committee was also getting adverse feedback from parishioners who were troubled by Fr. Kevin's poker-tournament participation which was portrayed in numerous internet photographs. The Committee addressed that issue constructively with Fr. Kevin by adopting expenditure approval and sign off procedures for the project similar to those followed by most businesses. Then Fr. Kevin abruptly resigned. We were back to square one with no Pastor and no architect. But, by then we had a fair amount of money collected which was safely on deposit at RCAN earning interest.

Fr. Manolo immediately took on the challenge of getting the renovation back on track, and the Committee began to interview architects. After interviewing several architects, the Committee unanimously selected Greg Blasi (Vincentesen-Blasi Architecture) and Troy Joseph Simmons (McPherson, Simmons Brothers & Sons LLC), whose firms have





formed a joint venture to design church projects. The project evolved as a collaborative effort with Greg and Troy, incorporating the input of many parishioners who expressed (quite passionately at times) very strong opinions about matters ranging from the ceiling of the sanctuary, to the backdrop for the stations of the cross, to the cushions (or lack thereof) on the pews.

Perhaps the most consequential design decision we made early on and stuck with was to remove the drop ceiling, expose the trusses and raise the ceiling all the way to the roof. The church was not designed to have a cathedral ceiling, and the original McCrery design made only minor modifications to the low-drop ceiling with which we are all familiar. The "attic" above the drop ceiling concealed 3 large trusses, but the space was a rabbit warren of hundreds of 2 x 4's that hung from the roof to support the original dropped plaster ceiling and the secondary layer of tiles underneath the plaster from an earlier renovation. There was a lot of other "stuff" up there, too. It was hard to imagine how this would look if we ripped it all out, but we did. Fr. Manolo was absolutely adamant that we were destined to have the trusses exposed, and as it turned out this is likely the most dramatic change in the appearance of the church.

Anthony Wright, a principal of Malanga Construction Co., our general contractor, recently commented that "this is the most dramatic transformation I have ever seen in all of the interior restorations we have done over the years." He added that "exposing the trusses added so much volume to the space that it accounts for a lot of that perception."

We put the project out for bid in the Fall of 2019 based on the design our architects had developed, and we got bids back that exceeded our means. The Committee worked with the prospective contractors and with Greg and Troy to identify

constituent parts of the project that we could add in at the end if we could get the money to pay for them. This exercise let us pare down the project and rebid it. Our bare-bones renovation came in at a cost of \$1,494,000 from Malanga Construction Co., a firm with extensive experience working on projects within RCAN that was highly recommended by RCAN Property Management and our architects. We were still short unless we parted with that reserve fund that the parish had been nurturing for 2 decades.

The final money question we had to address before going forward was whether or not to apply our reserve account to the project. We had about \$750,000 in reserves (up from \$286,000 in 2008) and no debt. We had also pared staff down to virtually a few part-time people and our Pastor. We were still running a surplus, we had met out RCAN "We Are Living Stones" commitment, and we had collected an additional \$800,000 for our own renovation. The Finance Council approved using all but \$50,000 of the reserve fund for the project, and with that, we had enough money to get started. That decision was not taken lightly, but we were then in "fish-or-cut-bait" status: we had to either go forward or refund the donations. With enough cash to fund all of the \$1,494,000 cost of the project, we applied to the Archdiocese College of Consultors to go forward.



In January 2020, they approved the project with leeway for a 10% overrun. We immediately began to negotiate an agreement with Malanga that would allow us to get started. There was an all-day meeting at the Archdiocese to get the parameters of the renovation clearly defined and to craft a very detailed letter of intent, which was signed the same day by Malanga and Fr. Manolo. The letter of intent was sufficient to allow us to start immediately while awaiting formal approval of all of the contract terms by the

Archdiocese lawyers.

Our project had a wish list of extras that we had pared down and taken out of the bid process. It also incorporated several design elements that were outside the scope of the contract, such as the sound system, the Carillon bells, the pews, the statues, and the Divine Mercy painting. The excluded contract extras included much of what we needed to really make the church special, such as the wainscoting, the Ave Maria decorative railings, the Ambry for Chrism and Holy Oils, and marble for the stations of the Cross, Altar of Sacrifice and Baptismal Font. Fr. Manolo then began the task of asking parishioners to help us to fund these change orders. We have since raised over \$300,000 in additional contributions to cover these beautiful additions to our worship space.

Malanga started work immediately after the letter of intent was signed. Despite COVID and 197 executive orders by Governor Murphy, work on our project continued uninterrupted after commencement in early January. Anthony Wright, who is the Malanga principal who supervises our job, has been onsite daily since the work commenced, and not a single day went by where some progress was not made to advance the job towards completion. Meanwhile, the Parish separately contracted with Sauder to supply the pews, Monte Bros. to supply the sound system, and Rambusch to supply the

Immaculate Conception statue, and Neill Carillon Service for the installation of the Carillon bells system.

The basic structural changes to the church interior include: the addition of an elevator; raising the ceiling to roof height; raising the height of the sanctuary ceiling; expanding the size of the sacristy; adding a reconciliation room; reorienting the entrance to the church and access stairs to the choir loft; adding a direct-access staircase to Marian Hall from the entry foyer; exposing

the storage area under the foyer and staircase; making space for a baptismal font at the rear of the church; installation of a new high-efficiency HVAC system; and moving the rear wall of the church forward to allow for code compliant staircase width which required re-supporting of the choir loft with steel.

Exterior-design elements of the renovation become evident as you approach the church from the parking lot. The area surrounding the HVAC equipment has been bounded by

large field stones and shrubbery. There will be a life-size, bronze statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the end of the sidewalk adjacent to the church in the rear. On the façade will be Moravian tile backdrops for marble statues of Mary and St. Joseph that were acquired as patrimony from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. These three statues are onsite, but masonry work will not be done until the spring.

The front doors to the church are the original doors which were restored by Alpine Cabinets in the pre-construction phase at a savings of about \$50,000 over replacement cost. Around the corner from the front door are handicapped-accessible, double-plate glass doors leading to the elevator, that are touch-pad activated and configured to enable access for coffins via the elevator to the nave during funerals.

As you enter the church, you follow the decorative railings up the staircase to the right to a landing. To the left of the entry foyer is a staircase leading down to Marian Hall, and above that staircase will be the donor and memorial gift list. On the landing there is a marble Immaculate Conception statue, provided by Rambusch of Jersey City, a 122-year-old firm founded by a Danish immigrant in 1898. Rambusch provides art objects and lighting fixtures for churches and cathedrals and has undertaken such projects as the mosaic Trinity dome of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Our Immaculate Conception statue was carved by a Rambusch affiliated artist in Italy. The statue is in the Art Nouveau / Arts & Crafts style prevalent around the turn of the 20th century and is modeled after a circa 1913 statue in Troy's personal collection which was originally created by the German Benedictine Abbey art workshop of Maria Laach that is a product of the Beuron School of ecclesiastical art. This same statue was the inspiration for Paul Landowski (who carved the Cristo Rey on Corcovado in Rio) for the circa-1930, larger-than-life, Immaculate Conception statue he carved for the Immaculate Conception Church in Detroit's Polish section. This church was demolished to make way for a GM plant, and in 1981 the statue was moved to St. Hyacinthe RCC, which is also in Detroit's Polish section. Our Immaculate Conception statue and the Immaculate Conception statue at St. Hyacinthe's look like twins.

The rear of the niche in which the Immaculate Conception statue is displayed comprises a blue field filled with gilded (gold leaf) stars flanked by lilies in Art Nouveau / Arts & Crafts style. See Fig. 3.

The backdrop design is by Troy and was executed by Richard Royce (Royce Sign Studio, Saddle Brook, NJ) who also restored our Stations of the Cross.



At the top of the staircase is a landing is bounded by Ave Maria decorative railings. The overlapping letters A and M form the central design composition which fills the space between the bronze handrail and the frame. The railings have beveled-glass inserts to comply with building-code gap limitations. At the right as one faces the altar looking towards the front of the church is the Ambry & Chrismal where holy oils and chrism are stored and displayed behind glass doors. In the center of the space is our baptismal font, designed by Troy and constructed by Alpine Cabinets (Lodi, NJ). The baptismal font features inlays of Sahara Noir marble, which visually tie it to the marble in the sanctuary and behind stations of the cross. The glass bowl of the font was provided in duplicate by Rambusch who had them hand made by Flickinger

Glassworks (Brooklyn, NY). Rambusch then hand etched the bottom of one with a stylized Chi Rho and another with 3 intertwined fish symbolizing the Trinity both designed by Troy.

The octagonally-shaped baptismal font is surrounded by an octagon comprising 5 alternating walnut and red oak inlays. Opposite the Ambry and Chrismal is a niche containing 18th-century, polychromed, linden-wood statues of Christ baptized by St. John the Baptist with partially gilded garments. These statues were carved in southern Germany circa 1750. We acquired them at auction from Hargesheimer in Dusseldorf, Germany. Far above the baptismal font is a marble statue of a dove representing the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10) mounted in a niche near the ceiling at the edge of the choir loft which the artist modeled after the backdrop of the Bernini throne at the Vatican.

Upon entering the church, the additional spatial volume added by removal of the drop ceiling becomes apparent, and your attention is drawn to the massive trusses which support the roof. Removal of the drop ceiling exposed purlins, which are large beams that run horizontally along the length of the nave. The purlins are supported by the three trusses and run perpendicular to the roof rafters which hang from the purlins. We insulated the roof and then covered the rafters with pine bead board, which is stained Ipswich pine, thereby covering the purlins. The purlins were reproduced and added on top of the beadboard ceiling surface and stained to match the trusses to replicate their original color *in situ*.

Also immediately apparent is the raised elevation of the elliptical ceiling in the sanctuary. The ceiling and the arch which segregates it from the nave required installation of an elliptical custom-made steel "I" beam to support the



ceiling. The sanctuary ceiling is, like the nave ceiling, covered in pine bead board, but it is finished with a blue wash. The



sanctuary ceiling is coffered in 21 square sections and painted to replicate the color of the trusses and purlins, with additional bands of gold and Renaissance red that coat the moldings at the interface with the blue ceiling. The blue ceiling and the coffers separate the sanctuary from the nave and designate it as a special place. The color blue symbolizes the sky or heaven, where heralds proclaimed Jesus' birth, from whence God proclaimed his pleasure with his Son at his baptism and during the Transfiguration and to whence Jesus ascended after his resurrection. In Roman Catholic tradition, it also symbolizes Mary, who is known as "the Queen of Heaven" and the waters of Genesis 1, the beginning of a new creation.



The Altar of the Tabernacle has a reredos (backdrop) of Sahara Noir marble. The top

of the Altar of Sacrifice is Sahara Noir marble and the panels on the exterior of the altar include a central panel engraved with a Alpha and Omega symbol (Christ is the beginning and the end). The Sahara Noir marble visually harmonizes the sanctuary with the stations of the cross and baptismal font.

Inside the altar of sacrifice are letters to God written by parishioners and 7 first class relics of St. Pius X, St. Francis Caracciolo, St. Gabriel Possenti, St. Justin Martyr, St. James, the Apostle, St. Beatrice, Bl. Miriam Teresa Demjanovich and one of the 800 martyrs of Otranto. These relics were donated by Fr. Manolo Punzalan and Fr. Ryan dela Pena.

Flanking the sanctuary are altars of Mary and St. Joseph. Our Madonna & Child statue is a product of late 15th-century (circa 1470-1490) German artisans. Statues of polychromed linden wood were developed to perfection by German artists of this period who were transitioning from late Gothic to early Renaissance. These artisans ran guild-ruled shops that decorated churches and cathedrals throughout central and eastern Europe. Viet Stoss (Altarpiece of the Dormition of Mary, Krakow, Poland) and Tilman Riemenschneider were among the most well-known. Since guilds limited the number of craftsmen who could work in a master's shop, many skilled artisans who were trained under these and other masters set up their own shops to provide art to decorate the numerous churches and cathedrals that were being built during this period. Our Madonna holds a scepter in her right hand in what is known as the Queen of Heaven pose, and she exhibits stylistic traits typical of the late Gothic

period, particularly the "Olivia de Havilland-Melanie" facial features which are characteristic of late Gothic depictions of Mary.

Our statue of St. Joseph and the Christ Child comes from pre-revolutionary, 18th-century France, a period during which the Catholic Church reigned supreme. Virtually everyone in 18th Century France was Catholic, and the Church had a huge income stream at the

end of the 18th century estimated at 150 million Livres. A Livre was the value of a pound of silver which in November 2020

was \$394, so in 2020 dollars the Church's revenue in late pre-revolutionary, 18th-Century France was the equivalent of \$59 billion. Although the Church was under secular attack during the Age of Enlightenment and the Baroque dominated secular art of the period, the output of religious art of the period was nonetheless prodigious and ecclesiastical art tended towards the neo-classical. Jacques-Louis David's Christ on the Cross is a famous example of this contra-Baroque style. France was undergoing a period of counter-Reformation during the pre-revolutionary 18th century, which included the construction of numerous churches and cathedrals. When Louis XIV died in 1715, many significant, crown-sponsored, church construction projects remained incomplete. The lesser and petit nobles, who were emulating the Sun King's church-building proclivities, were likewise engaged in their own ecclesiastic building projects. These projects created abundant work for artists. The recent secular trend in European culture has created an abundant supply of beautiful works of art which have been made available at auction and through antique dealers. Our statues were restored



by Walter Nowatka (Gate House, Pompton Plains, Wyckoff and Parsippany).

The Stations of the Cross, which are from a prior restoration, were restored during the renovation. The edges of the stations and the halos of Jesus, Mary, Mary Magdalene and St. John were gilded during the restoration process. The restoration and gilding were done by Richard Royce (Royce Sign Studio, Saddle Brook, NJ). The Stations of the Cross are mounted on seven Sahara Noir marble panels set into the wainscoting. The 8th marble panel serves as the backdrop for the Divine Mercy painting, which was made possible by the Wall of Mercy Donors and the gracious gift of the artist Janusz Golebiowski, who created a faithful copy for us of the image painted by Eugene Kazimierowski under the direction of St. Faustina.

Our Oasis of Mercy Room (reconciliation room) is located towards the front of the church. To conserve space, we built it over the existing staircase that leads down to Marian Hall and the Parish offices. This room is handicapped accessible.

In the rear of the church is the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe with the small replica of the Tilma of St. Jun Diego brought by Fr. Manolo from the shrine in Mexico City. In the shrine are four other statues of saint; St. John Paul II, St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Padre Pio and St. Jude Thaddeus. A electronic votive candles are available for people to light.

The floors of the sanctuary, the nave, the sacristy and the choir are red oak. In the sanctuary, nave, and vestibule, the floors have walnut accents along the perimeter. The walls of the sanctuary and the nave are all wainscoted (Alpine Cabinets, Lodi, NJ). The walls of the choir and the reconciliation room are wainscoted with the same bead board that was used on the ceiling, which is pine with an Ipswich pine stain.

The space is illuminated by lifetime LED recessed lights in the ceiling, spot lights mounted in trusses and perimeter lights along the top of the walls which wash the ceiling. The sound system was installed by Monte Bros. who supplied the sound system at RCAN's Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart which is renown for its amazing acoustics. Headsets are available to enhance the worship experience for the hearing impaired. Controls for lighting and the sound system are located in the sanctuary and the capability exists for an almost infinite variety of adjustments. We now have a handicapped-accessible lavatory at the nave level, which does not require access to the sacristy. The lavatory can be accessed from the side doors to the nave at the top of the landing of the original staircase to Marian Hall and the Parish office level.

Security cameras and internet access plugs are also new addition to the church

There are a few details of the project



which remain unfinished or have been deferred until spring due to the onset of colder weather, and we have unsubscribed memorial gifts seeking donors to close a budget deficit. We are still seeking donors for the wainscoting, the exterior shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the Wall of Mercy among other memorialization opportunities and we will delay the completion of our donor and memorial gift plaques until after Christmas to allow additional time for people to make memorial gifts.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR OUR CHURCH RENOVATION

O Lord, we thank you for blessing our church renovation project solely for the honor and glory that we give to You.

Thank you for guiding us and directing us always in this effort that for us to be perfect instruments of Your will.

Thank you for stirring up the faith in our congregation to walk by faith and not by sight. Thank you for inspiring them to support this vision through their generous giving, service and prayers.

Thank you for filling every participant, our renovation committee including the building contractors, permitting officials, architects, and engineers with Your spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

We continue to pray that it will be a church befitting of the sacred mysteries that shall be renewed daily upon the altar, where souls will come to behold, worship and adore the Lamb of God

We pray that You will be pleased to dwell in this house of prayer and to fill it with the majesty of Your Presence.

May countless souls find a haven from the tumult of the world.

May hungry souls come to be fed the Bread of Life.

May weary and burdened souls come to find rest.

May contrite and penitent souls come to receive Your great mercy.

We have relied solely on Your loving Providence. You poured the grace from heaven through the continual assistance and generosity of our parishioners and friends. Now, with utmost gratitude in our hearts, we have accomplished this vision beautifully, gloriously and cheerfully.

We thank St. Joseph, the great builder and great provider who helped us in this humble endeavor for Your greater glory.

We thank our patroness, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, who interceded for us, strengthened us and protected us in this effort.

Amen.