



ST BERNARD  
OF CLAIRVAUX  
PARISH

"What we love we shall grow to resemble."  
~ BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

June 2018

Dear Parishioners:

As you might imagine, as a pastor, there are many day-to-day activities involved in the administration of a parish. The most important of which is the care of the sacramental life of our parish and I take that responsibility seriously. Also important, is the care of the facility.

Since my arrival last July, I have completed a few projects that were being considered at the time, namely, sealing/stripping of the parking lots, demolition of the small vacant house, and upgrading the church sound system. Another item I have not yet addressed is the exterior painting of the church which will be addressed this summer. The funding for these items were taken from the Parish Upkeep Reserve Account and were approved by the Finance Council and, where necessary, the Diocese of Metuchen.

This summer, as we celebrate 30 years since the dedication of our church, I would like to address some improvements for the church sanctuary. I believe this will provide a renewed spirit of sacredness in our church and I'm excited to share them with you. Included with this letter is a detailed explanation of the proposed changes and the reasons why these changes are being proposed.

In brief, the renovations would include replacing the current image of the resurrected Christ behind the altar with a similar size crucifix. Secondly, the tabernacle would be moved from its current location to where the presider's chair is located (under the new crucifix). The platform would be extended and the chairs would be moved to the right and the sanctuary carpeting would be replaced. Thirdly, the current statue of Mary would be moved to the place vacated by the tabernacle on a similar pedestal. Lastly, we would acquire a new statue of Joseph to be placed where the statue of Mary is currently. I realize this might be a bit confusing, so please take the time to look at the artist's rendering that is enclosed with this letter. Please note it is not to scale and is intended only to display a mockup of the proposed changes. Even though not depicted on the drawing, no changes to the choir space or railings will be made.

To accomplish these improvements to our church, I need your help. I would like to raise approximately \$35,000 for this renovation. Costs will be kept down by doing the labor ourselves. Donations can be memorialized in memory of a deceased loved one or in thanksgiving for graces received. Donations of \$500 or more would be recognized on a plaque in the narthex. If you are interested in memorializing either the new statue of Joseph or the new Crucifix, please contact me directly for information. Enclosed is a contribution form and envelope for your consideration. Contributions can also be put in any parish collection.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to enhance our worship space. I would welcome any opportunity to speak to you if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. Randall J. Vashon  
Pastor

Enclosures

Below is a more detailed summary of the improvements and an explanation of why I would like to accomplish these changes. I will place in the narthex an artist's mockup of what is being proposed so you may visualize these changes.

1. Replace the existing resurrected Jesus/cross with a similar size crucifix. The General Instructions for the Mass (GIRM) places an emphasis on the display of a cross with the figure of Christ crucified visible to everyone. (This is why a small cross was placed on the altar so the priest can keep this in his view also!). While it is by no means "wrong" to have the image of Christ resurrected, it is not preferred since the cross with a figure of Christ crucified is what the Church believes actually occurs during the Mass. The focus should be on the sacrifice He accomplished.
2. The Resurrected Jesus statue will be relocated to a wall in the mausoleum where it is most fitting and appropriate.
3. Next, move the tabernacle where Christ is reserved to a more central location making obvious its importance. The current location tends to be a thoroughfare when the main church is in use while the faithful are there to pray. Altar servers, sacristans, clergy, and others must continuously move around and through that area to prepare for or clean up from the Liturgy and can be disruptive for the individual at prayer. This proposal therefore relocates the tabernacle from its current location to where the current presider's chair is located;
4. To accommodate these two changes, we would extend the raised sanctuary platform in order to move the current presider's chair to the right of the current location (the left of the tabernacle platform would also be extended for uniformity);
5. Move the existing statue of Mary from its current location to the area where the tabernacle now resides and place it on a similar stand (built in-house) thereby giving prominence to Mary;
6. Replace the sanctuary and old tabernacle area with updated carpet (same style and colors);
7. Keeping a long church tradition of having both a statue of Mary and of Joseph, we would purchase a statue of St. Joseph from the company that manufactured the current statue of Mary and place him where the statue of Mary previously was located.
8. Finally, we would complete some general paint and clean-up in the areas affected.

NOTE: Because these renovations affect the worship space of the church, I have sought the input and permission of the Worship Office of our diocese and our Bishop before bringing them to you and both have agreed with this proposal.