

ST MARY'S AND THE MISSIONS
RECTORY RENEWAL PROJECT NEWSLETTER
JULY 2022

It seems almost unbelievable now but it was May 2017 – 5 years ago when our Committee first gathered to consider a plan for dealing with the ageing (and decaying) St Mary's Rectory in Owen Sound. Our committee has met bi-weekly and sometimes weekly during all that time, virtually during Covid lockdowns to keep the process moving. The first major and longest debate was whether to renovate the old or demolish. The renovation of the old building without restoring it although sentimentally favourable was completely non justifiable from a financial perspective and looking back now it was absolutely the right decision to build new. The decision was made early on to separate the offices from the rectory building so the project was split into two phases. Phase One to expand the parish hall to add offices and improve the hall has been completed for some time and is fully paid. Phase Two for a separate (but connected) rectory residence for our Priests is now nearing completion.

We encountered many obstacles and hurdles throughout the journey in Phase Two, from obtaining heritage permits, design changes to accommodate heritage considerations and lastly but perhaps most important – the Covid pandemic. We experienced first hand the horror stories you have seen in the media, from labour unavailability, to extreme price pressure on materials and services. As an example, we had difficulty obtaining sub trade bidders for some of the construction and some major aspects only had a single bidder which left us no opportunity to seek better pricing. The costs to date far exceed initial projections but it is the times we live in currently.

The principles driving the Committee since inception have not changed – we want a building to be the home for our Priests serving Owen Sound and the Grey Bruce Catholic Community which is safe, comfortable, accessible, economical, yet durable to last 100 years, as well as providing operational efficiencies. All building materials selected have to meet these criteria, to be durable but not ostentatious. The design consists of three separate Priest's suites, two adjoining guest bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, reading room and a TV room. There is provision being made for future basement suites with lift accessibility, for the goal of attracting retired Priests to take up residence.

Despite the setbacks we are pleased to report with confidence that the finish line is now in sight, and we do not anticipate any more significant delays. We are looking forward to occupancy in September when our Priests can leave the rented house and finally reside on the Parish site. Plans are being formulated for open house tours and a social event to celebrate the opening but more on that later.

Which brings us to the aspect of paying for this new home. As stated earlier, Phase One is already paid for and through the generosity of Bishop Crosby, the Diocese has provided an interest free loan to fund construction but that must be repaid in course. Those that had been contributing to One Heart One Soul will have their payments end (if not already) as that program winds down. As a first step of a repayment plan we would respectfully request those that had been contributing regularly to One Heart One Soul to consider the continuation of your payments but directly to our Rectory Fund. Anyone wishing to make a one time or new ongoing commitment to the Rectory Fund would be greatly appreciated.

The details for these arrangements are:

Specifically, please clearly mark your donation with the word 'rectory', or 'building project'. Donations marked in this manner will be directed toward the Rectory Building Fund. Alternatively, you may wish to use our pre-authorized remittance (PAR) program to make automatic monthly contributions from your bank account. If you are new to PAR, or wish to make a change to your current PAR, you must fill out an authorization form. Forms can be picked up at the parish office, or downloaded from our website. Again, please indicate which portion of your monthly donation you would like to direct toward the new rectory. Only donations specifically marked for the new rectory will be directed toward the Rectory Building Fund; please make your intentions clear.

Please reach out to any of the undersigned Building Committee members with any of your questions.

Yours in Christ,

Neil Devlin (Owen Sound); Mike Donovan (Owen Sound); Joan Tod (Owen Sound); David Trudell (Chatsworth); Robert Foster (Meaford)

