

August 29/30, 2009

Dear Members of St. Mary/St. Frances Cabrini Parish,

For almost fifteen months, as of May 30, 2008 on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we have been established as a new parish. Throughout this time, hopefully, we have become accustomed to the idea that we really are one parish, an idea that continues to take root.

Part of acclimating ourselves to the idea of being one parish is redefining who we are, asking ourselves how do we really see ourselves, and what does it mean for us to be one parish. It is more than simply having one check book, one savings account and one budget for the Parish of St. Mary/St. Frances Cabrini. Related to these questions is the question of what are we to do with all the parish facilities and can we afford them: two church buildings, a parish office building, a priest residence, a convent, a gym with classrooms and kitchen, a school building with a social hall and kitchen, and a bus/storage garage with four attached car garages. These eight buildings have all been constructed between 1887 and 1958, making them 122 to 50 years old. Besides the maintenance cost of these old buildings you will soon see in the yearly budget report that \$76,600 was spent for utilities.

As you and I look to the future together, I again ask, what do we want to look like as one parish in the next three to five years? One important question is: Do we want to and can we afford to maintain all eight buildings? A second question of equal importance is related to the Vision Statement given us by the Pastoral Planning Council in the fall of 2008. How do we see ourselves forming Catholic Christians into the Body of Christ through ministry and service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

These are not easy questions to ponder nor will they be answered quickly; however, I want us to address them with the time and freedom we now have. I want us to make the best possible choices for ourselves and not be forced to make decisions due to a lack of time and meager finances.

With all this in mind, I am seeking a facilitator to work with us on these issues. In collaboration with members from the PPC and the Finance Council I plan to interview possible facilitators and select one that we believe will be of most help to us.

Please keep all of these matters in your prayers as we move into the future discerning God's plan for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond J. Thomas".

Reverend Raymond J. Thomas, VF
Pastor