

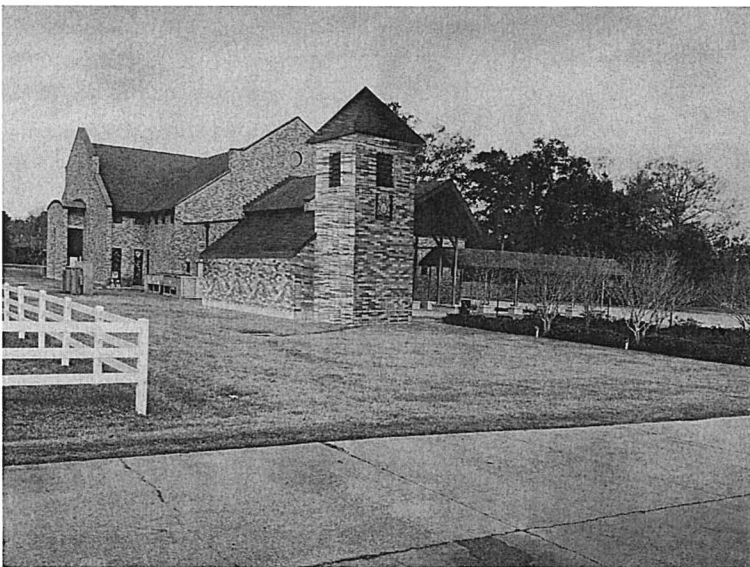
Fr. Jason's Wishful Thinking... Looking Ahead to 2019

Well, are y'all ready for some construction? I know that I am! In fact, I have been working on a few projects in Padre's Pyro Palace this week, and taking some measurements inside the new St. Joseph Church in preparation for some **seating changes** that will be made in the months to come as we order an additional pew and then reconfigure the existing pews to make better use of our floor plan. Eventually, we will also reconfigure the **sanctuary platform** to make it shorter and wider, and then resurface it with oak, instead of the pine that is showing its age and warping.

On Friday, we spent \$4,000 to replace **one whole quadrant of the roof on the new church**. Occasionally, we will have some bad weather with wind gusts and some of the shingles will blow off. We have made yearly patches, but I have chosen to replace a whole section of the roof this time to eliminate further problems on the back side of the church. In the future, we will slowly but surely replace other quadrants.

I want to thank everyone for a good start to our capital campaign. Just remember that we will have a second collection each weekend as we seek to raise \$300,000 at St. Joseph and \$60,000 at St. Stephen to fund the building projects that are needed. We have already worked on the bulletins for the next two weeks, but you will start to see capital campaign updates as time goes on.

Today, I wanted to update you on some progress. I will be meeting with Mr. Jay Labarre (an architect from Denham Springs) next week to work up plans for our new church annex and bell tower. Some of you wanted a drawing so you could see what the annex will look like, so Jason Cates went to his computer and sent me this illustration below. As you can see, he did an excellent job rendering the new structure. Bishop Duca will be visiting our cluster parishes on Sunday, February 3rd and he will be updated on this project, as well as the new St. Joseph rectory, before traveling to St. Stephen for Confirmation.



Deacon Jimmy will be doing a flood elevation on the site of the new rectory, and then we will work on the house pad and move in some clay. Our rectory contractor has the final plans and he is out and about researching the construction costs. I am also working with a few contractors to get bids on the new annex.

Moving on to another topic, all of the priests in our Diocese will be in Metairie next week for continuing education. This is a nice time for us to visit and catch-up with each other, as well as staying abreast of current issues affecting the Church. Our topic will be ministering to the elderly and the dying. If funerals arise, all priests will be unavailable on Tuesday and Wednesday. If

a funeral is needed on those days, then one of our deacons can do the burial and a memorial Mass can be offered at a different time. I will be here for the two weekends surrounding continuing education. On January 20-25, I will take five days of vacation and bring a group of 12 people to Las Vegas, which is now an annual trip.

It will be good to get away for a while and have a change of scenery. I look back over the last five weeks and see only one day where I had a few hours to get away and rest, which is not healthy. I have been busy over the holidays with funerals as well as the expectations of the fireworks sale and planning all of the liturgies that

come with the Christmas season. So my time next week and the week afterwards will be really good for my body and spirit! I want to close my article this week by mentioning two things:

(1) In April 2018, I started working on a book that tells the story of how I learned to play the game of craps. It is a very humorous read, and a good follow-up to the Stations of the Cross that I wrote for Lent 2018. After several months of writing, writing more, and doing some editing, I have given it to a professional editor to do some final edits. The book will be ready in the next few months and it will be published in an e-book format and I hope to be able to print some paperback copies. The book is dedicated to my father as well as Butch Little.

(2) We are beginning the year 2019 and while I hope to continue offering international trips in the future, I realize that the Eucharistic Miracles trip of Italy (scheduled for September/October 2019) will probably be the last European trip that I will make during my remaining time as your pastor. The exception may be a trip back to Poland to go shopping for liturgical goods. So I just wanted to make another push for the Italy trip and let you folks know that we will be traveling to some outstanding places this fall. The trip is quite reasonable (\$3,899) and you won't regret spending that money to go! And you will come back with a deep desire to learn more about the church's history. If you have any questions, call Magnificat Travel at (337) 291-1933 for more information.

Finally, I want to thank everyone for their generosity at Christmas. I used your monetary gifts to help purchase a new vehicle... a 2018 Toyota Sienna mini-van. Meanwhile, I sold the Silver Bullet #2 to our seminarian, Justin Cornett, at a good deal (on his end). He will now have cheaper gas bills since he won't be driving a large truck to school in Covington. So your Christmas gifts really helped me *and* him.

Wishing you a grace-filled week! Fr. Jason ☺