

Dear Friends,

The focus of this week's good news article is to advise of an important change that will affect all members of the parish. I write to announce the relocation of the parish office from the St. Vincent campus to All Saints Academy.

Over the summer and into the first few weeks of the school year, a 'soft move' of half of the staff was set in motion. This included members of the faith formation, music and communications staff – Mike Denz, Lorraine Smith, Michael Plagerman and Steve Putman. These were the most obvious to shift campuses because part of their job description is to assist with the ministry of teaching at ASA. They have been well-received by the students, faculty and parents and I know they have enjoyed a boost in this new role.

The operations staff has remained at St. Vincent. This involves the business manager, cemetery director/funeral coordinator and bookkeeper, Kathy Warner, Mary Kay Lisi and Severine Layouni. Together, they work hard to make sure the day-to-day operations flow smoothly. While date of moving this component of the parish office staff has been under discussion, the plan been expedited due to a burst pipe in the basement of the St. Vincent office. This occurred late last spring and the full repair has been put off because it supplies heat to the building, certainly not necessary for the past few months – but it now. The estimated cost for repair is between \$7,000-9,000. It can no longer be patched and has been a problem for years. Since the pipe is wrapped in asbestos, it needs to be removed properly. The slow leaking has caused considerable damage to the environment and has made that part of the building unsafe. Between the unhealthy environment and the high cost of repair, it has been determined that the office at St. Vincent will be discontinued.

**Therefore, the move of the parish office to All Saints Academy will occur on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>.** ASA will not be in session as it is a holiday observed by local schools. To give the operations staff time to focus on their move and become acquainted with their new surroundings, **the parish office will be closed the week of Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> (November 11-15).**

The parish office will open at its new location on Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup> with new hours of operation that are open to the public. **The new parish office hours will be 9:00am-2:00pm Monday through Thursday.** Please take note of these changes.

These hours may seem like a drastic change, but the statistics support the decision. A foot-traffic study was conducted from May through early October. This research told us that the office receives at most 5-6 visitors per day. The average number per day is 2-3. Often, there was only one and many occasions there were zero. It is clear that an 8 hour a day, five day a week model is no longer needed. Staff will continue to work the prescribed hours that reflect their status as either part of full time and they can still be accessible via appointment. While the address and location might change, **the phone number for the parish office will remain the same.**

For me, the most important part of the decision for new office hours and days of operations is the safety of the students at ASA. The new office hours allows drop off for students to be completed

before the parish office opens. By closing at 2:00pm, it gives almost a half an hour before ASA students are dismissed for the day. With this in mind, I am also conscious of the difficulties that may arise for some of our parishioners to access the ASA building. We are working on a plan that will help bring some of the services that the office provides to the Church side of the campus around the daily Mass and daytime prayer services. This is in the early stages, so please be patient and please let us know how we can better serve you and your needs.

Since Olga Biasi retired a few years ago, volunteers have helped staff the reception area and assist in completing various tasks to support the staff. These volunteers will continue their ministry after the move and will be very helpful to both the school and parish staff. I might add that the shared benefits and services will make operations more efficient in terms of productivity but also will be a huge cost-saving measure to both entities. This is a very important part of the decision as we must be extremely prudent with our resources. Any money that is designated and available for parish building improvements should be spent on the buildings we intend to use at the designated campus, not buildings that are no long a part of the one campus plan.

ASA is utilized most fully by the school during the weekday. Beyond that, it is an underused building. This will help accommodate evening meetings, weekend events such as the confirmation retreat, coffee hours between Sunday Masses and other social events that I hope and pray will boost the life of the parish. Yet, the most pressing need as we move forward is to examine current safety and security measures and to make sure they are up-to-date and address our particular needs. Currently, the priorities include a security door alarm at the main entrance, additional security cameras around the back entrances and the addition of a more extensive buzzer system that grants entry into the building. A check-point system will be initiated for visitors who come to the building for any purpose. They will be given passes to indicate they can be in the building. Parish and school staff will begin wearing tags to themselves as most offices have today. These improvements and visitor policies will be refined over time and further explained in future communications.

This particular piece of the solving the one-campus puzzle is an important one as we move forward. As happened with ceiling tile collapse at St. Vincent, this recent episode has caused a necessary move sooner than expected. Yet we are now at an advantage of seeing how we operate with one campus and what we need to do to make it grow and prosper in all aspects instead of just talking about it.

At a recent meeting, I made a connection between declining infrastructure and the decline of the faith. Things that are let go by the wayside – whether worship, facilities, programs, prayer - indicate a lack of faith, and it starts with the leadership. The need to improve and take care of our facilities resembles our need to take care of a restore the Catholic faith, both in our parish and throughout the greater community.

In your prayer this week, please pray for the staff that will have to make this difficult but welcome change. Please pray for other parishioners who might struggle with this change. And please, if you are struggling with it yourself, do not hesitate to offer it up in prayer to the Lord.

In Christ,

Fr. Jones