

Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish Building and Renovation Update February 2020

Thank you! There are so many ways God has blessed us with our endeavours to update and modernize the rectory and parish offices. The most abundant blessings always manifest themselves through the help and generosity of ordinary people. Therefore, thank you to everyone who has provided any form of assistance to the renovation effort.

As you know, this was no small effort. When, in 2016, we began the process, we soon realized that the rectory had been largely left without regular updating and maintenance for many years. This meant that the renovation plans had to grow significantly, and the resulting costs did as well. However, because the rectory and parish offices are in the same building, we have managed to complete 90% of the work within a remarkably frugal budget. The final rectory renovations, which includes installation of the baseboards, window and door casings as well as completing the building entrances and my washroom, are currently underway.

The total process has resulted in two suites for priests, two guest rooms, and a large kitchen and dining rooms. As well, there are five offices for staff and two large meeting rooms for parish programs. Overall, the building has been reinsulated, the heating and ventilation system has been upgraded and the electrical and plumbing services have been brought up to current codes.

To date, the overall costs are roughly \$350,000.00. This works out to \$80/ft². The estimated cost of replacing the rectory with a building of the same size is \$1.25 million. I would like to especially thank the parishioners and the Diocese of Whitehorse for their generous financial contributions. In addition, the huge project savings would have been impossible without the help from my friends from Ontario and a number of seminarians, who spent countless hours working on this project.

Given the reality of how long the rectory had been undermaintained, we must face the same facts with the church itself. There have been no upgrades or maintenance for many years. Now we have to face the fact of needing to complete similar upgrades to extend the lifespan of the Cathedral. These upgrades vary from small to large issues. I am sure that everyone is tired of how the sound system keeps cutting in and out throughout Mass and how chilly it is in the building.

We are currently having an analysis of the structure being done by Northern Climate Engineering Ltd. to ascertain what the exact upgrades need to be. However, there are certain concerns that are already evident. Our furnace is old and on the verge of unrepairable breakdown, ten windows in the basement are only single pane, the windows in the church are not energy efficient, and the walls and roof are not insulated properly. For just the two-week period of January 6 – 20th, it cost \$3,298.32 for heating oil for the church. We cannot sustain that.

Obviously, the church building upgrades will come at a cost that is not easy to cover, but we feel that there is little choice. We expect that the final report from the ASHERE Level II Audits. This will help us in prioritizing the renovations and discerning what is financially feasible, after which a project proposal can be made to the Diocesan Finance Committee for final approval by Bishop Hector.

I was recently made aware of the “**Good Energy Program,**” which offers a **40% rebate** to non-profit or non-government organizations, that make energy efficient upgrades to their commercial and institutional buildings.

Our parish can benefit from this program until it expires in **March 2022**. The Community Development Fund may be another source of grants to help cover costs. However, as with any undertaking like this, the remaining costs need to be covered by parishioners of Sacred Heart Cathedral.

At this point, we have no quotes for the upgrades, and so no sense of the overall cost of the project. To move ahead with any or all these stages would be contingent on first obtaining the necessary funding and/or financing.

These are the stages of renovations that are currently envisioned:

Stage 1: ASHERE Level II Audits and Blueprint of Heating and Ventilation System (*already underway*) **

Stage 2: New PA system in Cathedral and CYO Hall (*already underway, spring 2020*)

Stage 3: Renovation of CYO Hall **

Stage 4: New Heating and Ventilation System **

Stage 5: Insulation of Cathedral (*outside*) **

Stage 6: New windows in Cathedral **

Stage 7: New roof (future) **

Stage 8: Solar photovoltaic (solar panels) system (future) **

*** These costs would be part of the Good Energy Program, 40% government rebates*

Therefore, I am directing my questions to you, the Parishioners, whether you wish to financially support this initiative. We will soon obtain some construction quotes, which will give us a better picture of the costs involved. Keep in mind that if work is done before March 2022, we will be saving 40% of the price.

This will be a topic of conversation at Sacred Heart Cathedral's annual AGM on March 4, 2020 at 7 pm

Fr. Sławomir Szważyk

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