

Columbarium Update Nov 17/18, 2018

Dear Parishioners,

I would like to give you an update on the status of our Columbarium project.

Over the past years many of St. Patrick's parishioners have expressed a strong desire for a columbarium facility on our parish property. Various teams over the years have tried to respond to the desire to provide parishioners with the option to choose a resting place on the grounds of our church which is;

- in a Catholic environment
- on Holy ground
- accessible to all
- easily visited
- no more costly than other similar alternatives.

In the past year, our Columbarium Committee has developed a plan which meshes well with other parish needs and which was presented to the well attended Parish Annual General Meeting in June where it was approved by a large majority.

Since that time the Columbarium Committee has continued to work to fill in the details and, with the permission of our Diocese, has been able offer our parishioners the possibility of purchasing the rights to a columbarium niche right here at St. Patrick's.

The Columbarium Project has been joined to the Church Improvement Project in order to keep the total costs of both projects as low as possible and to have one construction project rather than two. This means that, as designed, the Columbarium Project will be able to proceed only if there are enough niches pre-sold to pay for the initial stages of the project and if sufficient funds are raised to allow the Church Improvement Project to proceed as well.

In order to be financially viable, the Columbarium Project must pre-sell at least 75 niches, a break-even point covering the cost of the Columbarium Project.

To date, 35 niches have been pre-sold, so we are a little less than halfway to the "break-even point". This is a lower level of commitment than our Columbarium Committee had expected based on previous indications of interest.

Now, we have to consider... If we truly want this project, we now have the opportunity to act.

The Columbarium Committee would like to understand the reasons and concerns which may be preventing some parishioners from proceeding with commitments to purchase niches. In order to understand these reasons and concerns Committee members are offering a series of meetings of small groups (4-8 persons) and one-on-ones. The first of these meetings was held Tuesday, November 13th and did identify a number of steps the Columbarium Committee can consider in order to help the project go ahead.

These meetings are not just for those who have already expressed support. The parish would also like to hear concerns from those parishioners who do not support the project for various reasons of principle, project layout, project design, affordability, etc. Only by hearing and discussing these concerns can we develop the best possible solutions.

Future meetings will be held in the coming month. If you wish to be part of one of these meetings or if you would prefer a private discussion with a Columbarium team member, please approach Fr. Jan, Rick Graebner, Marcel Van Zeeland, Tony Doknjas or Tony Coley.

In the coming weeks, arrangements will be made after Sunday Masses to have a knowledgeable person available in the parish library to answer any questions parishioners may have on this topic. I encourage you to participate in these encounters. People are available to discuss your concerns.

I see this project as a wonderful opportunity for our Parish and our parishioners to satisfy the desire for the remains of their loved ones to be placed in the arms of our mother Church. This will also help improve the future financial security of our parish by offering the possibility for future parishioners and generations to have their ashes interred right here at St. Patrick's.

Having said this in support of the project I would, however, encourage everyone to pray with this intention: Lord, may Your will be done; help us to discern Your will for us. In this parish community may we always say to the Lord: not my will, but Thy will be done.

With blessings,

Fr. Jan SDS

In collaboration with the Members of the St. Patrick's Columbarium Committee