

The First Letter

Dear Parishioners;

It all started with the idea of cleaning the pews in Church. They are dirty, faded, scratched and badly in need of renewal. But once we touch the pews then everything has to be looked at and cleaned. The pews, the floor, the bathrooms, the lights and on and on it goes. But, as with your own home maintenance is very important so that things stay in good working order. After consulting with the Parish Council, the Finance Council and many parishioners, it is time to announce a period of RENEWAL for Maria Regina Church. We need to build on our great foundation.

Over the past five years we have celebrated many wonderful events, the 50th Anniversary of the parish, Father Acton's 50th Anniversary and finally the School's 50th Anniversary. Each one is a milestone in the life of the Parish. During this time we have worked to maintain the property of the church. Five years ago, the Finance Committee announced the formation of the 50th Anniversary Building Fund drive; that was very successful; we collected nearly 60 thousand dollars, which was used to make the Gathering Space outside of the Church, replacing the windows of the Rectory, painting the inside and outside of the Church.

All of this maintenance work has been accomplished because of your generous support of the parish. We are now faced with the reality of major maintenance and cleaning projects that must be accomplished in the few years. It all starts with the pew. We have to clean the pews and replace the floor under them. This is the foundation of the church; it is where we gather to celebrate the big events in the parish life and bigger events in each family life, Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, First Communions and Confirmations.

In the next few weeks you will see the work begin. Because of a few generous benefactors and members of the Parish Community we are able to start Phase One of the Project. After the 1st of March the Sanctuary will be closed off with plastic sheeting and work will begin. The floor will be replaced with tile and marble, the walls will be painted, the woodwork will be removed and some re-stained, new lights will be added. All of this work should be accomplished just before Easter. This phase will cost \$85,000 dollars which we have already collected.

Phase Two of the project is the floors and pews in the body of the Church, building a new restroom and repairing the parking lot. After much deliberation we have found a way that we can build on our foundation and build up the church community at the same time. We would like you to buy a brick. One Brick which will become part of the Foundation of the gathering area of our Church. The idea of this program is for each family in the parish to purchase a commemorative brick for \$500 over the next two years. That would be a pledge of 20 dollars a month. From this we would be able to build brick pillars in the Gathering Area. The proceeds of this drive will be used for the construction cost of Phase Two.

It is through the big and small sacrifices of the Families of Gardena that this parish was built in the beginning. Some of that generation are still part of our parish community, but most of us were not here when the big sacrifices were made to build this Church and School, so now is our turn to make a small sacrifice to build on that foundation. Please prayerfully consider making at least one \$500 dollar pledge and if possible I ask you to make a pledge of \$1,000 dollars to the Building On Our Foundation program.

Fr. Leo Alberg

Pastor