

SOMETHING NEW TIMES THREE

You may or may not have noticed three new additions to the environment of our parish facilities; one is in the school, the other two in church. So here's a description of all three:

VIGIL LIGHTS - These were supposed to arrive about a month from now, but—surprise!—*Shrine Design*, the company doing this work for us, called a little over a week ago to say that they would be arriving on November 8th. It had been my intention to tell you about this ahead of their arrival, but it's nice when anything promised at a certain date arrives earlier rather than later. People have frequently asked why we didn't have vigil lights, and so it was something I had been thinking about for more than a year now; the challenge was finding an appropriate and accessible place for them. When I received a brochure from the company I had worked with at St. John Fisher, I decided to ask them to design a vigil light stand for us to fit in the northwest corner of the church. The lovely wood carving of St. Joseph had been in an alcove on the stairs leading up to the second floor of the rectory, where hardly anyone ever saw it, and I realized it would work perfectly as a focal point for the vigil light stand.

Using them is simple: put an offering (any amount) in the slot in the center of the bottom row and press the red button in front of a candle for two seconds. The unique feature of these *Shrine Design* lights is that, even though the light is electric, the candle is real wax and the light flickers like a real—though much safer—flame. Another benefit with these lights is that their installation cost us nothing upfront; we simply send them whatever is donated each month until they are paid off. Once the lights are fully paid for, all the money you put in the donation slot will go to our St. Vincent de Paul Society to assist those in need in our community. So please light a candle and say a prayer whenever you have an intention on which you wish to shed a bit of heavenly light.

PAPAL FLAG - A less-noticeable addition in the church is a papal flag, with the coat of arms of the Holy Father, that is now located near the baptismal font and holy oils in the southeast corner of church. A generous parishioner offered to donate the cost of this flag which many parishes display along with the American flag, and I'm grateful for his suggestion and for his gift.

NEW MEETING ROOM - Less visible to most, but no less important, is the new and now nearly-completed handicapped-accessible meeting room in the school which we used for the first time this past week for our *Renew My Church* meet-and-greet with parishioners and staff from the parishes in our grouping. This space was funded by your donations to the *To Teach Who Christ Is* capital campaign. When the entire space is used, there is seating for 68, all at tables. But the large room can be divided into two separate meeting rooms by a soundproof folding wall, with the smaller room accommodating 24 at round tables and the larger room seating 44 at two rows of tables.

The ground-level entrance to this space is through the “milk doors” (we have to get a new name for them!) on the south side of the school, along the driveway between the school and rectory. The pavement in front of those doors was recently replaced to eliminate the holes and rain puddles, and an awning will be installed over the doors in the spring. There is a large coat-closet, countertops & storage cabinets, refrigerator and microwave in the room, with a sink available right across the hall in the former science lab. And the furnishings in this new meeting space were acquired for us by Deacon George Maddock from an assisted living facility where he ministers each week. They were remodeling and offered—for free!—all the tables and chairs we needed to complete this meeting space. Some of those upholstered arm chairs have replaced the uncomfortable chairs in the south meeting room of the Burke Center, and the remaining chairs will soon replace the wobbly chairs in the church cry room. Finally, both washrooms—along the school hallway leading to the gym—have been completely remodeled, with handicapped-accessible stalls, new fixtures and tile—again, thanks to your generosity to the *To Teach Who Christ Is* capital campaign.

This space is available to any parish group that has need of a larger meeting room or wishes to provide an accessible venue for their participants. Just call Agatha—as you would to schedule anything—to lock in a date and time. And if two groups have need of accessible space on the same day and time, that soundproof folding wall can be closed to create two meeting rooms—though only the larger (west) side has access to the coat closet, fridge and microwave. And before next summer, we should have new blinds or shades on the windows as well as window air conditioners to keep things cool.

So, lots of new and good things happening all around us for which we can and should be grateful. Thanks to all who make all this possible.

Fr. Bob