



St. Francis Xavier

CATHOLIC CHURCH

◆ Seeking Christ Together ◆

June 21, 2024

Dear Parishioners,

I want to share with you an update on our parish's Five-Year Strategic Ministry Plan. As you know, the Pastoral Council has focused its initial implementation of this plan in the areas of Stewardship and Welcoming of new members. There have been several bulletin and email updates outlining opportunities for you to join in the birth of these new ministries.

In addition, our St. Francis Xavier Catholic School will begin their own strategic plan in the Fall of this coming 2024 school year. This endeavor, encouraged by the Diocesan Education Office, is quite timely as enrollment in our school has stabilized with the 3K, 4K, and 5K classes nearly full for the Fall semester of 2024. In addition, the Alabama Legislature has recently created new opportunities for funding of our school. Because Saint Francis Xavier parish is the primary stakeholder of this important ministry, in addition to parents of the children enrolled in our school, in the next 2-3 months we will be seeking volunteers of all ages to serve on committees to assist in this project. Please consider volunteering to assist with our school's strategic plan.

The Pastoral Council has begun addressing a third goal of the Five-Year Strategic Plan as we assess the facilities of our parish and how they impact the ministries we value and hope to grow. The parish's Property Management Committee (PMC) has made great progress updating our campus including the new Hayden Parish Office Building, the Youth Area, the meeting rooms beneath the gymnasium, the parking lot, and the road behind the school playground. This summer, we will begin remodeling the gymnasium.

Recognizing that there are other facility needs that are financially broader than the annual budget and savings of the parish, the PMC has unanimously recommended that the parish engage in a facilities assessment. This will involve meeting with and interviewing leaders of the various ministries and programs at St. Francis Xavier. Our parishioner Bob Sellers, who recently retired as the CFO of the Diocese after serving in this role for over 24 years, has volunteered to head up this effort. The Pastoral Council has approved this study and work has begun to meet with and interview volunteers and staff members. We anticipate that a written report will be presented to the Pastoral Council in August of 2024.

Bishop Raica, along with the Diocesan Consultors, has granted a per-year of our parish's monthly Building Fund envelope. This is important because donations to the Building Fund are exempt from the Diocesan tax obligation of 13.5% that applies to regular offertory contributions. Bishop Raica's letter can be found on our parish's website. Because the August report on the Facilities Assessment might recommend exploration into updating or expanding the buildings on our campus, the Building Fund would be used to continue future improvements to the campus.

We welcome several new members of our staff, including Jay Tumminello, Director of Liturgy and musical accompanist for Mass, Elijah Newcomb, Director of Youth Ministry, and Vanessa Florentino, receptionist. We are grateful for the many ways that we can collaborate or parish ministries and parish life.

We are very grateful for all those in our parish who are involved in leadership roles and those who volunteer their time, talents, and treasure to support the ministries and programs that we value. There is always a place at the table for you! We are very grateful for all the many parishioners who have responded to the Finance Council's request to increase their offertory contributions to offset inflation. St. Francis Xavier is a parish with great potential and we move with confidence into the next chapter in our 75-year history of living the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our community.

Let us pray in discernment concerning how we can best be the community of faith that Jesus Christ is calling us to be in Birmingham, Alabama.

Happy summer season to you.

Hope and Joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Culotta". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Father Joe Culotta