

WELCOME TO ST. DOMINIC PARISH, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN



Last weekend at all the Masses I asked you to read through the special insert in the Parish bulletin concerning the letter addressing the Reconfiguration of Our Catholic Schools. This would involve St. Dominic and Holy Family Grade Schools. I also mentioned that the date of implementation would be moved from the fall of 2011 to the fall of 2012. This was done in the

light of the many concerns expressed primarily by the St. Dominic School Parents and Parishioners. The implementation process would be handled by Carol Ward of the Archdiocesan Office for Schools.

Here is a summary of the reasons for my decision to move in this direction.

First, I heartily affirm the importance of Catholic Education Ministry with its many benefits to our parish, the larger Church community and the greater Sheboygan community. As a community of faith our spiritual life and growth is of utmost importance.

Second, meeting the financial obligations associated with this ministry as well as all the other ministries of a Catholic Parish is the responsibility of the Pastor, aided by the Trustees, Parish Council and the Finance Committee. This responsibility encompasses all the ministries and dimensions of parish life as well as the greater Catholic Church of which we are a part.

Third, the economy is still struggling to improve. This is particularly true here in Sheboygan County. Many of the area Churches have noticed contributions being less than anticipated.

Fourth, our parish financial situation concerns me greatly. Since I came in June 2006, 3 of the 4 years so far have been in the "red". (-30K in 2007, -70K in 2008, -40K in 2009, +5K in 2010) and this year we might be in the red by as much as 68K. In planning this coming fiscal year's budget there was talk of a deficit budget, which would have to be approved by the Archdiocese. What helped us deal with this deficit spending is bequests. 2 large bequests in particular: the one from the Margaret T. French Estate (278K) and another from the Kathy Schieble Estate (60K).

Fifth, the very tight finances have had these ramifications – 2 years of salary freezes for all staff. Last year in reducing the parish subsidy for the school by 35K resulted in reduction in staff & our Principal, Peggy Henseler, now has to go into the classroom and teach. Also, there are times when the purchase of needed textbooks is delayed because the budget is that limited.

Currently, there is an effort to raise money for the School. This is good. But this effort at good stewardship cannot be on an emergency basis. We need a sustained sense of Stewardship throughout the year, and year after year for the good of the entire parish.

Sixth, there are a number of big maintenance projects that have been deferred for many years that are starting to come due. The replacement of the Church furnace & Air conditioning is just the beginning. Please speak with the Building & Grounds Committee members. They have a 10 year chart with the many projects waiting to be scheduled and accomplished.

Seventh, demographics are working against us as well. Sheboygan Public School District is expecting fewer students. There has been a decline in the Catholic School population over the last 10 years. These are the percentages of decline: St. Dominic 30%, Holy Family 6%, Sheboygan County Catholic Schools 25% and Archdiocesan Catholic Schools 19%.

Eighth, discussion at the joint School Committee's meeting speculated that if the implementation would be in 2012 then 2011 would be a dead year with a great deal of worrying and anxiety associated with the future. That is why I thought 2011 would be better.

Ninth, after discussing the situation at St. Dominic Parish with other priests moving to new assignments this June, the general consensus was that with 4 ½ years of experience at St. Dominic that I would be more able than a new pastor to make this decision.

Tenth, I consulted with the Archdiocese about this decision and the word came down that "this is the decision made by the Pastor of the parish, you are the Pastor, do your job".

—Rev. John J. Radetski

From The Principal's Desk...

As all of you know, each week I use this space in the bulletin to update you on school happenings. Periodically I like to have you hear from some of the parents in our school family. Enjoy!

Written by Becky Thompson, mother of Cora (grade 6), and Owen (grade 3):

As I look around my daughter's bedroom, I see her "Stephi" pillow, a craft project she made while with Stephi, and Stephi's senior pictures on her mirror. My son's room is similar, only with remembrances of Trey. Stephi and Trey were my daughter's and son's 7th and 8th grade buddies.

Each Kindergarten student at St. Dominic School is paired with a buddy in 7th grade. I credit St. Dominic School with providing the unique and impacting relationships and experiences that my children have shared with their buddies over the years.

My daughter, Cora, is now in sixth grade and Stephi is in college. They continue to keep in touch and see each other in the summers. This past summer, Cora had the opportunity to accompany Stephi while she went to her college to purchase her textbooks. My son, Owen, is now in third grade. He lights up every time he sees Trey. From going to the pumpkin farm, to participating in weekly Masses together; the experiences that my children have shared with their buddies have had a lasting, positive impact on them.

It warmed my heart this Halloween as the kids and I shopped for costumes. Cora saw a large crayon costume and the same costume in a smaller size. She commented on how this would be a perfect costume for her and her future Kindergarten buddy to wear for next year's Halloween parade. Just as Stephi is a wonderful role model for Cora, Cora now looks forward to being the big buddy.

