



SAINT JOHN FISHER

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Project Benchmarks

One of St. John Fisher's busiest times has come and gone. You were patient with our parking situation at Christmas and for that we thank you. We are systematically working our way across the parking lot until we get to the existing church and rectory. As Christmas turns into 2011, we want to inform you about changes coming before Easter.



- † The current portion of our parking lot construction is slated for completion at the end of this January.
- † The priest's rectory is scheduled for completion by mid-February.
- † The next portion of our parking lot construction is slated for a February start date.



A Parishioner Perspective

By Dennis Branconier:

I admit that initially I was neutral toward the building project. Even though I was a co-facilitator of the original town hall sessions and heard first hand all the various "wish list" ideas offered by parishioners, part of me was excited for all the facility improvements that are clearly overdue, while the other part was convinced we don't "need" a new church or parish activity center.

What pulled me off the fence? It was the misunderstanding on the part of a handful of resistant neighbors about who we are, and realizing that our current physical plant actually reinforces the misunderstanding. Every time I drive up Crenshaw and see the unappealing wire mesh fence holding "ST. JOHN FISHER PARISH" in big block letters at

the base of a 15-foot tree-barrier berm, the last thing I think of is "warm and welcoming community," which ironically is the first pillar of the parish mission statement.

Jesus says that a "city on a hill cannot be hidden." So then why are we hiding behind the impression of a closed compound? What exactly are those Catholics doing back there? Would anyone guess that we are among the most generous parishes in the archdiocese or that we have over 70 active ministries, many of which are devoted to the poor and struggling in the surrounding neighborhoods? Every community benefits from the presence of a strong, vibrant, caring church as a neighbor. *Continued on the other side...*

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We must be visible. Jesus spoke the language of the people he encountered, whether shepherds, farmers, learned scholars or authority figures. The language of Palos Verdes is *high quality*. We live in one of the most beautiful, desirable, affluent areas in the entire world. In one way it's nice that we still get by with a church that has ineffective acoustics, little space for liturgy preparation, unwelcoming gathering points for weddings and funerals and a non-private chapel for the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament. And I am amazed at what our ministry leaders are able to accomplish with no campus facilities dedicated specifically to their needs. But this is false virtue. There is so much more *not* being done to serve others because space and resources aren't available.

This Christmas awakened me further in two ways. First, I always enjoy seeing mass attendance swell. Imagine the church full more often because those who need a little extra encouragement feel connected to and invited by the presence of their church on the visibly open corner of one of the highest

points on the peninsula. Second, and more importantly, as each new year is added to my own history, I am so grateful to all Christians who have cared enough about me to pass along our precious faith for the last 2000 years. Having grown up in a family that helped found two new parishes in the 60's, I finally "get it" that we need to do the same for the next generations. The founding families of St. John Fisher Parish sacrificed to give us the first 50 years. I feel responsible for doing my share to make sure that at least the next two generations will know that I cared about their home for Catholic community, worship, word, and service.



Dennis and his wife, Kathleen, were married in SJF's original church in 1982. Their three daughters graduated from SJF Parish School. The family remains active in teaching, pastoral, and liturgical ministries. Dennis and Kathy are officers for a comprehensive financial services firm in Torrance.

Everyone Benefits



This project is sometimes seen as a "New Church." Yet we have a population here at St. John Fisher that comes for "The School." We all can envision how our many ministries and groups will be touched by the campus wide transformation and new church; however, we want to take a moment to highlight changes taking place for St. John Fisher Catholic School.

Our Parish School is a National Blue Ribbon school with excellent teachers and staff. We think our school campus should be as great as our people, so we have been working on the following upgrades.

- † Basketball and foursquare courts (complete).
- † A children's playground (complete).
- † Grass field (in-progress).
- † New parking configuration for easier and more organized pick-up and drop-off of children (in-progress).

This project is not only a new church and parish activity center; it is a campus-wide project for everyone's use.