



# *The Church of the Most Blessed Sacrament*

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December 11, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

One year ago today, our parish community experienced an unthinkable tragedy when our church was destroyed by fire. The work of constructing a new church building began within a week, an effort that we have titled “**Building a Church, Continuing the Mission.**”

Today, the College of Consultors of the Archdiocese of Newark met to review our current rebuilding plans, and I am pleased to report that they have given us their support and permission to move on to our next phase of the project.

To recap the sequence of the parish’s work so far.....

We decided to work on dual paths which allowed us to design a new church building while, at the same time, to seek an equitable insurance recovery. Both paths began in early January with meetings with Archdiocesan personnel to understand the insurance and the rebuilding processes.

## **Rebuilding**

Given the “total loss” of our church building, and previous plans to expand that building, we decided to design a new church building that incorporated those proposed amenities. We were blessed to have our capital campaign contributors agree to allow those funds to be used toward the new building.

On February 6, 2020, MBS hosted an open meeting with all parishioners that included a presentation by the Reverend Thomas Dente from the Archdiocesan Office of Divine Worship about the liturgical considerations associated with the construction of a new church. At that meeting, parishioners were invited to offer their written input about the parish’s plans for rebuilding.

Later that month, after meeting with the architectural firms that responded to the parish’s “request for proposals”, the Rebuilding Committee selected the team of Foresight Architects (liturgical) and LAN Associates (structural) to design the new church building.

In early April, James Hundt from Foresight Architects conducted virtual parish-wide workshops to discuss what needed to be considered in building a church. The workshops also provided the parish with an opportunity to conduct an on-line survey that became the

basis of the *MBS Needs Assessment Report* for the church. This document was the foundation of the planning and design work of Foresight Architects and LAN Associates, and was completed on April 24, 2020. The document is on the parish website.

On April 28, 2020, the architects conducted a Zoom meeting with the Rebuilding Committee to review the various elements of the church construction project. That initial discussion focused on seating capacity, since the size of the new worship space would be the single most important factor in determining the total square footage (and cost) of a new building.

The Rebuilding Committee itself conducted a number of two-hour Zoom meetings with the architects throughout the summer months (specifically, on 6/10, 7/1, 7/14, 7/28, 8/11, 8/26, 9/2, 9/23, 9/30).

Among the many issues discussed during those meetings were:

- Church capacity and design
- Narthex design
- Daily chapel capacity and design
- Ambo location
- Baptismal font location, size, and design
- Community Center needs and design
- Storage and parish offices
- Plans for “overflow” seating at Christmas and other special Masses
- Basic exterior “looks” and approaches to essential materials and design
- Worship space acoustics and their impact on church design
- Roofing and the exterior building design including entrances, exits, and outdoor patio
- The overall MBS campus: moving the proposed building closer to the road; establishing a stronger connection between the new building and the Parish Center; parking and landscaping of the church grounds
- Budget and finances

As a result of these meetings, the architects created a detailed floorplan for the new building (church, chapel, community center, office and storage space) and three dimensional concept renderings of the planned building, including its new entrance and proposed landscaping. This schematic design is complete now and is the base on which we will move forward with more detailed plans used for bidding out the construction process.

### **Insurance Claim**

A separate sub-committee including Frank Bivona, Mary Anne Clark, Nick Gentile, and Brian McAuley was established regarding the parish’s insurance claim.

Our insurance policy is with the Archdiocese and covers the cost to rebuild the old church building using today’s rates and updated for current building codes. The Archdiocese is covered by insurance policies it has with secondary insurers, which are based in Lloyds of

London. In order to substantiate our claim, we had to submit original 1980 building plans and hire professionals to document costs. We also had to create detailed listings of church contents that were lost, business interruption expenses, and professional fees.

In early February, we held an onsite meeting with all insurance professionals to inspect the loss site and determined the path forward to filing our claim. In April, MBS hired Trophy Point Construction Services and Consulting, and LAN Associates to provide a Replacement Cost Estimate for a new church to support its insurance claim. On May 20, 2020, Trophy Point Construction submitted its summary report, and on June 2, 2020, we submitted our fully documented claim to the Archdiocese.

Since June, the insurance group has had many meetings with the Archdiocese Risk Management group to answer questions and fulfill information requests to perfect our insurance claim. This has been a lengthy and complex process. Recent meetings have included Larry Boland, the Chief Operating Officer of the Archdiocese of Newark, and Joseph Pescatore, its Chief Financial Officer. At this point, the claim submission is complete to the satisfaction of the Archdiocese. It has not been settled and may not be for some time, but the parish has some sense of what a final settlement might be, and how that settlement will impact fundraising and finances.

### **Funding**

We have about \$2.5 million in funds and pledges from our previous capital campaign. Additionally, over the past twelve months, MBS has received in excess of \$380,000 from more than 500 donors to the MBS Church Restoration Fund. This money has been used to pay for a number of immediate expenses, including the architectural services of Foresight Architects and LAN Associates, the consulting services of Trophy Point Construction and, of course, the demolition and clean-up services provided by Mike Jost Excavating, Inc. Some of these costs have already been reimbursed by insurance.

It is expected that our insurance proceeds, plus our funds on hand, will not be enough to cover the full cost of the rebuild; hence, we will need to begin an additional capital campaign to bridge the gap.

### **Approval**

On November 21, 2020, I wrote to his Eminence, Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, Archbishop of Newark, seeking permission to proceed with the design phase of the church, which includes the preparation of the specifications and the related documents necessary for competitive bidding. In that letter, I indicated that the parish and the architect had been in consultation with the Reverend Thomas Dente, the Archdiocesan Director of the Office of Divine Worship, and Mr. Steve Belloise, Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Property Management, with respect to the design elements for the proposed church building.

That letter has brought us to today's meeting of the College of Consultors, and I am pleased to report that having received word of their approval, we will be authorizing Foresight Architects and LAN Associates to move forward with its next steps.

And with that in mind, I invite you to join us on **Monday, December 21, 2020** when Foresight Architects and LAN Associates will be conducting a parish Zoom meeting to review, in detail, all of the schematic designs, including interior floor plans and three dimensional renderings of the exterior of the building. Please refer to the information below on how to participate in this virtual meeting. The link also will be emailed to parishioners during the week of December 14th. **Therefore, if we do not have your email address, please send it to us at [info@mbschurchnj.org](mailto:info@mbschurchnj.org).**

I am indebted to the members of the Core Committee, including its Chair, Frank Bivona, and parishioners Kevin Boswell, Mary Anne Clark, Antimo Del Vecchio, Esq., Nicholas Gentile, and Brian McAuley.

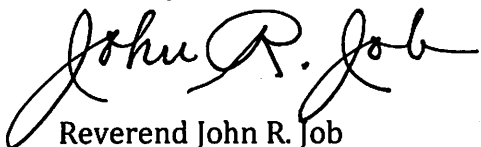
In addition, I am grateful to our general committee members: Doreen Allaghi, Ernest Behrens, Barry Donnelly, Steven Klenk, Peter McBride, Christopher Muro, and Paul Palmeri for their continuing efforts on behalf of our parish.

Likewise, my thanks to all of the professionals with whom we have consulted during these past twelve months for sharing their time and expertise to help us move this project forward.

I am especially grateful to our parishioners whose solidarity, encouragement, and prayers have enabled us to reach such a milestone in our parish's history.

I hope that you will be as inspired as I am by the "first glimpses" of the new church that we will share with you on December 21, 2020. May these Advent days help us to experience a joyous Christmas! Through the intercession of Saint Joseph, and Mary, our Good Mother, may God bless you.

Sincerely,



Reverend John R. Job  
Pastor

**Please register for "Parish Presentation of Proposed Design for New Church" to be held virtually on Monday, December 21, 2020 7:00 PM EST at:**

**<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8325275957656093712>**

**After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.**