Dear Parishioners,

The parish vitality analysis which many of you completed before Christmas indicated that there could be an improvement in communication and consultation at the parish level. This is not an isolated problem which St. Augustine's has. It is a difficulty identified in most parishes throughout the Archdiocese. This letter, addressed to all registered households, is intended to begin the process of providing more open communication in our parish.

Many of you are aware that our beautiful house of worship is over a hundred years old. In fact St. Augustine of Canterbury is one of the oldest church structures in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. I have visited most of the churches in the Archdiocese and can say that St. Augustine's is one of the most beautiful churches in our Archdiocese.

The task of maintaining the church's original beauty is a challenging one and is always ongoing. Last May the Parish Pastoral Council agreed that we should take concrete steps in restoring our church and hire an ecclesiastical consultant / designer who specializes in the restoration of historical churches.

In July 2007, Mr. Jozef Reibesteijn from Cornwall, ON was invited to visit St. Augustine's Church. Jozef has over forty years of experience in restoring churches. He did a preliminary analysis and consulted with various local trades people. Jozef has made several recommendations that will restore our church to her original beauty.

Most obvious is the need of immediate attention to the church roof. Many of the asphalt shingles have blown away and have therefore allowed water to damage the interior plaster on the vaulted ceilings. The shingles desperately need to be replaced. Last summer some larger pieces of the interior plaster fell in the pew area in front of the crying room. Over the years several cracks have appeared on both the walls and ceiling. A meeting of approximately thirty parishioners took place in June, 2007 to discuss the roof and some of the other church maintenance concerns. From this meeting, a small committee under the direction of Al Twerdochlib was established. Unfortunately the committee's work was delayed in progressing as they waited for two quotes necessary to complete insurance claims for the roof damage. Only recently on February 20, 2008, did we receive the insurance claim for $95,130.95.

I have been assured by our roofer Roger Boulet that work to replace the shingles and repair any roof damage will begin in May or June. We need to correlate the insulation of the attic with the roof job. We also need to utilize the crane which will be used for the steeple to assist with the windows on the north side of the church so that they can be repaired. Hopefully these tasks will be completed by the end of June.

This past January Mr. Reibesteijn once again came for a more extended visit of ten days. During that time he met with members of the Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Capital Campaign Steering Committee and some fifty parishioners who attended the open meeting held in the parish square on Sunday, January 27. Jozef made all efforts to answer any questions which parishioners had about the restoration plans. Personally, I was greatly encouraged by this meeting.

July and August are normally too hot to consider working on the vaulted ceiling. However, if we want to complete the restoration aspect of the church interior during this, our 125th Anniversary

year, then contracts with painters, plaster tradesmen, the scaffolding company, etc. need to be firmed up soon so that we may commence with the interior restoration in September.

Regarding the flooring, we are presently waiting for the engineer to complete an assessment of the church's structural character which will help us determine what type of flooring will work best. Until the assessment has been given we are unable to make any final decisions regarding tile or carpet flooring. A Restoration & Roofing Committee, headed by Ray Cancade, has been established to look at the plans put forth by Jozef and determine how to best proceed with the roofing and restoration of the parish. They will make recommendations to Parish Council and Finance Council and all the details will be communicated to parishioners.

This project will be a significant undertaking and initial estimates put the cost of the new roof, insulation of the attic, restoration of the interior of the church, including all labour costs, at anywhere from $600,000 to as much as $900,000. I must stress that this is only a preliminary estimate; there are many decisions to be made yet which will determine just how much the restoration will cost. Some good news is that we already have $300,000 in the bank. Approximately two-thirds of this amount came from the generosity of all parishioners as Sunday giving has increased dramatically, the balance came from a bequest and several major donations this past year. Stewardship is truly becoming a way of life here at St. Augustine's. Our parish staff and ministry lay leaders are also being good stewards and have been able to effectively steward their budgets to reduce expenditures wherever possible.

So, with the $95,000 insurance money and the $300,000 we have in the bank we may need to raise $200,000 to $500,000. A capital campaign will be required in order to raise the necessary funds. A Capital Campaign Committee co-chaired by Denis Badiou and Dan Potvin is being organized. The campaign to raise the needed funds will begin in the not too distant future. All the details of the restoration and roofing project will be presented by the Capital Campaign Committee. In the interim, in order to get started on the project, we could take out a loan from the Archdiocese which we will pay back at a favorable rate of interest over a reasonable length of time. The loan will be paid off from your gifts to the Capital Campaign.

Fortunately Archbishop Weisgerber will allow us to make use of St. Hedwig's during the restoration of our church. This is yet another reason to move with expediency in this matter.

With these lines I have attempted to be as thorough, as candid, as descriptive and as informative as I know how to be. You may, nonetheless have questions, concerns or constructive suggestions which I invite you to share with a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council or myself. Their photos and names are located in the pictorial billboard in the parish centre.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Capital Campaign Steering Committee and the Restoration and Roof Committee for all they are investing in terms of time and expertise for the glory of God and the assistance of their fellow parishioners. May God continue to bless you and me as we together work for the Kingdom. Let us invoke the intercession of St. Augustine of Canterbury and St. Zeno whose relics are enclosed in the high altar.

Sincerely in Christ,