

Q&A on St. Teresa of Avila Land Sale

Two weeks ago we announced the exciting news that the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council had approved the sale of the convent and old school property to a residential developer for \$3 million. The sale contract is currently under review by the developer's lawyer, and the Archdiocese believes that a mid-June closing date is still expected.

As we await the finalization of the process with the help of both the Real Estate and Legal Departments of the Archdiocese, a number of questions have come up about the sale that we would like to address.

Q: Why are we selling the land now? Why not wait?

A: There are two main reasons why we are selling the convent and school land: We need space for our ministries and staff and we need the money to build new space.

When we decommissioned the deteriorating convent and school buildings, we lost both office space and ministry space; ministries that had used St. Teresa for their meetings for decades had to find new meeting space elsewhere. Staff offices moved into the parish center, occupying space previously used for sacramental preparation, SPRED, and smaller meetings to name a few.

As our ministries continue to grow (see the St. Teresa Ministry Teams Chart on the cover of this week's bulletin), so does our need for additional space. If we did nothing about our space needs, our ability to feed the poor, educate children and adults in the faith, house our growing youth ministries, store groceries for our food pantry, and host meetings for community groups would continue to diminish, hindering our ability to reach out to our parishioners and our neighborhood.

The idea of selling the land occupied by the school and convent has been discussed for many years, going back to previous pastors. Because of the condition of the real estate market at that time, it was advised not to sell any land.

The Master Plan for buildings and facilities developed in late 2010 called for the construction of a ministry center that could provide more space for meetings, ministries and staff. The sale of the convent and school land will fast-forward the fundraising for development of the new ministry center.

Our decision to move forward with the sale was based on these reasons:

- There is a much-improved real estate market now;
- There were several serious inquiries from developers interested in the

land;

- The offer from one developer was above the appraised value of the land according to an independent appraisal review;
- We also sought the opinions of others involved in real estate who reiterated that the offer we received was indeed above market value.

If the parish were to hold on to the land as a fall-back for the future, there is no guarantee we would be able to sell it in a timely way or at the same or better price to meet our future economic needs.

In the end the Finance Council and Parish Council thought it was better to make a planned decision than to be forced into a less favorable decision at a later date.

Q: Why not build a school instead of a ministry center?

A: With Catholic schools being closed throughout the Archdiocese, the idea of building a new school on the current property with a likely cost upwards of \$5-6 million does not seem feasible. More importantly, we do not have the financial operating capacity to run a school. Finally, there are several Catholic schools in the neighborhood who are not filled to capacity. Opening a new school would only draw students away from them.

The mission of St. Teresa of Avila is a parish "called to be witnesses of Christ's love, for the salvation of all people." Our mission has been manifest in our outreach to the poor and homeless and faith formation.

Although there have been no decisions about the ministry center, there will be space for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, SPRED, adult formation, offices and community outreach. This additional space will assure the vitality and expansion of these ministries and others.

Increasing the available space through construction of a ministry center would allow us to expand storage for our Food Pantry and Loaves & Fishes ministries.

Q: What are we going to do with the money from the sale? How does this affect the current capital campaign for church renovation?

A: The question about the uses of money is difficult to answer specifically with amounts or percentages at this time. When more details become available, we will communicate these to the parish.

In general, however, there are several primary uses of the money from the sale of the land:

- The vast majority will be used for fast-forwarding the fundraising campaign for the ministry center.
- An endowment will be created for sustainability of the parish, providing an income stream to supplement support to its operations and programs.
- Some of the money from the sale will be used to complete the renovation of the rectory that was started in 2012 with the "Preserving Our Heritage Campaign," including a new roof and the installation of central air conditioning.
- Finally, we will donate to the Archdiocese's "To Teach Who Christ is—A Campaign for Catholic Education and Faith Formation."

Money from the land sale will not be used to fund the Building Faith Together Campaign for renovating the church unless we have not paid back the loan at the end of the three-year period.

So, please, continue to honor the pledges you made.

Thank you for your generosity.

As soon as we learn something new about the land sale or the church renovation, we will pass it on to you quickly. If you have any questions about the land sale, contact either Fr. Frank, parish staff, or chairs of the Finance Council or the Parish Council.