

## **Build or Not Update** **Elevator**

Access to St. Joseph's Hall by means of an elevator (rather than using the handicapped entrance in the circle drive) was identified as a high priority by many of the parishioners who completed the recent survey sent out by the Build or Not Committee. Having handicapped access only by way of the entrance off of the circle drive is not ideal, since there is no way to access St. Joseph's Hall from inside the church, except by the use of the rather steep set of inside stairs. Anyone who has physical limitations finds it difficult, if not impossible, to use these stairs. With the main social space for the parish difficult to reach, it's unlikely that anyone with a limitation would participate in social activities immediately before or after mass. An elevator seems to be the obvious solution to this problem. Unfortunately, it is not that simple to implement it as a solution.

Several times within the last 10-15 years, the parish finance council and/or members of the parish staff have investigated whether installing an elevator was a feasible solution. In fact, possible installation of an elevator was discussed with several members of the diocesan staff during a review of our existing facilities with several members of the Build or Not Committee that was held on January 7, 2020.

Several locations for installing the elevator have been explored in the past. They include: (1) using the room next to the preparation room as an elevator shaft, (2) installing an outside elevator near the handicapped entrance to the church or (3) installing a small interior elevator by the existing stairs. But, each of these locations presents problems. Installation of an elevator next to the preparation room would require digging into the concrete floor on the lower level to complete the shaft. An external elevator would require parishioners to go outside to access it (which, of course, we are trying to avoid). An elevator near the existing stairs to St. Joseph's Hall would require some changes to those stairs. In addition, all of these options share two drawbacks – the elevator would be undersized and would be able to move only a few people at a time and a cost that would likely be \$150,000 or more. The parish does have a fund dedicated to the installation of an elevator, but that fund contained just over \$2,800 as of December 31, 2019.

The Build or Not Committee believes that it is vital to improve access to our primary social space, so that all parishioners can easily participate in the life of the parish community. So, we continue to prayerfully explore options to provide ways for everyone to be an integral part of the St. Jerome parish community and hope that you will join us in these prayers as we consider changes to the St. Jerome campus.

**St Jerome Build or Not Committee**