

Build or Not Update Fellowship Hall

Several weeks ago, the Build or Not Committee provided a bit of information on the limitations of St Joseph's hall. We'd like to expand on that topic.

When this church was built in 1987, "flexibility" was the theme for St Joseph's hall. As you know, a "moveable" wall system was put in place to allow for the creation of temporary spaces within the larger, wide open St Joseph's hall. This concept has been useful in allowing for the creation of temporary classrooms and smaller meeting rooms within St Joseph's hall. As discussed previously, during the PSR year, walls need to be moved into "classroom position" before Wednesday evenings. Before Sunday the walls need to be moved to accommodate coffee and donuts (after the 8:30 mass). Our part-time maintenance man, Gary, spends 4 hours moving walls into "classroom position", and another 4 hours moving these walls into "coffee and donuts position". Yet, over time, many parishioners have come to believe that this "flexibility" actually limits the ways in which St Joseph's hall can be used.

Some credence can be given this theory by the mere fact that construction has taken place within St Joseph's hall. A permanent meeting room and a permanent Daily Chapel have been created on the east edge of St Joseph's hall. While the factors behind the construction of these two rooms were different, the creation of the permanent meeting room certainly suggests that a stable meeting place is preferable to a temporary space.

This construction has also limited the seating capacity of St Joseph's hall. We are not sure what the capacity was before this construction, but Peter Maller, reports that St Joseph's hall could seat 210 guests for the Chicken Dinner. That may seem like a lot, but the seating capacity of the Christian Life Center at the Troy United Methodist Church is nearly 300 – at round tables. No doubt the seating capacity would be greater if rectangular tables were used (like we do at St Jerome's). But most important, the Build or Not Committee takes notice that large Parish events – like the Knight's annual Trivia Contest, the Youth's Luke 18 gathering and the upcoming Chili Cook-Off – must be held elsewhere. St Joseph's hall cannot accommodate these **Parish** events.

Furthermore, the time and process necessary to move walls out of "classroom position", limits the ability to use St Joseph's hall for other functions. As an example, in several instances, "funeral lunches" – a way of providing service and comfort to grieving families – have been moved "off-site", because there was not enough time to move the walls to create a large social space for the funeral lunches, and then move them back for classrooms.

<To be continued next week>

St Jerome Build or Not Committee