

# *FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*

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## *1. Why are we having this renovation and rejuvenation project?*

In the late 1970s Hillsborough Township was experiencing tremendous growth. The Hillsborough Catholic community was served by parishes in Raritan, Somerville, Millstone, Princeton, Flemington and Flagtown. In Flagtown the Mary, Mother of God Community was a very small parish that could not handle the unprecedented growth in the township. Due to the need for a larger church to handle the township's needs, a capital campaign was started to build a church on the Triangle Road property owned by the parish. The new church was dedicated in 1982. But the growth continued and soon expansion was called for again. In 1988 an addition increased capacity to 750. In addition parishes were established in Skillman and Three Bridges which included areas previously in the MMOG boundaries. And growth continued. In 2005 we added classrooms for the largest CCD program in the diocese and a gym used for CYO basketball and other parish activities. Last year we added a youth center for our teens.

The most important goal of this project is to enliven our church's commitment to Worship, Gather, and Grow. We will give greater life to gather to celebrate God's love, to grow in the knowledge and love of God, and to serve others as Christ did. The parish is growing and the ministries to serve our community are growing as well. For many years now, our present facilities have been holding us back from performing the fullness of service God calls us to do. These new facilities will enable us to provide the resources and support we need for our community to flourish, now and far into the future.

As part of this commitment we need to replace many of our infrastructure systems, including electrical, heating, air conditioning and lighting. We will expand the church seating and gathering space. We will build a new day chapel and have additional rooms for the choirs. After over 25 years of use and five years of prayerful investigation, it is time to expand and rejuvenate our church.

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## **2. *What are the main components of this project?***

The main components are:

- *expanding the church*
- *adding a bell tower*
- *adding a new day chapel*
- *refurbishing the pews and adding kneelers*
- *all new flooring*
- *sprinkler system*
- *projection system*

Other improvements include: a new improved sound system with devices for the hearing impaired and new lighting. The area behind the altar will be redone and feature a large crucifix.

Because we must disassemble much of the building to do this necessary update work, the church will receive cosmetic updates at the same time. We will create a gathering area at the entrance of the church, which will double as a “cry room” for our youngest parishioners. When completed, we will have an unmistakably Catholic Church exterior with a bell tower and cross, and a prominent main entrance.

Expansion of the parking lot is not part of our current plans. We continue to have a mutual agreement with the Hillsborough Board of Education whereby we can use the parking lot at Triangle Road School and visitors to the school can use the church lot.

The goal is to make God’s home here in Hillsborough a fitting tribute to our Lord.

## **3. *Is the church being enlarged?***

Yes. Additional space is being added and seating is being increased by over 100.

## **4. *Will the repaving of the parking lot be part of the renovation and rejuvenation project?***

The repaving of the parking lot is not part of this specific project. Parking lot repair will be part of our ongoing maintenance.

## **5. *The architect drawing does not show the Msgr. Liam memorial garden that was planned for space between the church and gym. Is the garden part of the plan?***

We still plan to have the memorial garden. It will be done following completion of the current renovation.

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## ***6. What is the estimated cost of these renovations?***

The estimated cost of the proposed renovations is \$4.5 million. This number is based on probable maximum project estimates.

## ***7. Don't we already have over \$1.5 million in the church account?***

Yes. This account is being used to reduce our financing debt. We hope to replenish some of these funds to be held in a maintenance reserve account.

## ***8. Where are we in the process?***

The floor plan has been available for viewing at the back of the church in recent months. We have Diocese approval. As with any major construction project, we expect that certain adjustments will be required as we move forward. We will continually update parishioners' on the progress of construction on our web site and through announcements at masses.

## ***9. What are we doing to control construction costs?***

Our building committee has been working on the expansion since the first phase 5 years ago. Throughout the process they have been very diligent to protect the parishioners' monies.

## ***10. When will construction begin?***

Construction is expected to start right after Easter, and we hopeful that we will be in the expanded/refurbished church by Christmas 2010. During construction we will not have access to the Church and we will conduct Mass, as well as other services, in the gym.

## ***11. Does the Diocese of Metuchen support our renovation and rejuvenation project?***

Yes. The Diocese has been a great help in getting our project moving. The Diocese reviewed our construction and financing plans before we began our fundraising efforts.

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***12. In the past year we have been supporting families in need and others who need assistance during these poor economic times. Shouldn't we be doing more for these people and not spend money on our facilities?***

First, we do not want anyone to stop giving to the people in need so they can support this renovation project. This effort must be above and beyond what people are already doing on Sunday and for other ministries. Second, it is our responsibility to take care of the facilities entrusted to us by those who founded this parish. These renovations are necessary. Finally, it is our belief that this project will help us build a stronger Catholic community that will, in the long run, help us build more outreach programs to the poor and needy of the wider community.

***13. Doesn't the church have adequate funds and lines of credit to do the project without asking me for more money?***

With our continued parishioner support our faith commitment has funds to sustain its current operations. The renovation and rejuvenation project requires an outlay of money that the church doesn't have. For this reason the Parish is seeking pledges for this project. The money required for the project will come from a line of credit which the church will pay back as pledges are collected.

***14. How much is each family being asked to give?***

Everyone is being asked to help. We all recognize that not every household has the same financial resources. "Equal Sacrifice, not Equal Gifts" is the guideline. Each household is asked to be as generous as possible according to individual means and circumstances, over and above the regular Offertory donation.

***15. How should this pledge affect my regular Sunday giving?***

It should not affect your weekly offering. The weekly offertory collection is used for the church operating expenses. For the renovation and rejuvenation, we are asking all parishioners to give above and beyond their regular offertory. For those who cannot pledge the minimum \$1000, please continue to use the Building Fund envelopes. All contribution levels are important to the success of the renovation/rejuvenation project.

***16. Will we be asked to contribute to the Bishop's Appeal during this time?***

Our renovation and rejuvenation project is independent of the Bishop's yearly appeal. There will be a yearly Bishop Appeals during our project.

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## ***17. How about giving stocks, bonds or other securities?***

Pledges can be made in the form of, property, securities and real estate. Donating appreciated assets may help you avoid paying capital gains and get a tax deduction. Please confer with your financial advisor before donating assets.

## ***18. Is my pledge legally binding?***

A pledge is not a legal document. A pledge is an act of faith; a spiritual commitment. By fulfilling your pledge, you are ensuring our Catholic legacy as the Church of Mary, Mother of God for generations to come.

## ***19. Why do we need to fill out a pledge card and sign it?***

When you fill out the pledge card and document your intentions, you will help Mary, Mother of God plan its future cash flow against debt service and construction costs. . Your pledge added to those of your fellow parishioners will make it possible for our parish to achieve its goals.

## ***20. Is my gift expected in full when I sign the pledge card?***

No. All donors are expected to fulfill their pledge over a three year period. This gives the church the ability to financially plan and allows for a larger gift by spreading the payments over time. If you require a longer period, we can work with you to accommodate your needs. You can determine how to fulfill your pledge by choosing a monthly, quarterly or yearly payment plan.

## ***21. Will there be memorial gifts.***

Yes, a number of items associated with the church renovation and rejuvenation have been identified for memorialization. For each of these items, a memorial value has been established. Families, individuals or organizations can pledge the memorial value of these items and can designate their intention, such as, in memory, in thanksgiving, in honor, etc... For Memorial gifts 10% of the total is required at time of pledge.

## ***22. How will my gift be recognized?***

There will be a wall of recognition in our new gathering space which will have plaques listing all the contributions to the renovation and rejuvenation project.

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## ***23. Suppose I can't complete my pledge to the Project?***

Pledges are not legally binding, they are not a contract but help the church plan financially. If you should have difficulties fulfilling your commitment, pledge payments can be deferred until your situation improves. Please contact the Parish Office should your payment plan need to be adjusted.

## ***24. I cannot afford a memorial giving level shown, will you accept a lower donation?***

In addition to memorial gift giving we also have general gift giving with minimum pledges of \$1000.

## ***25. How will my pledge be paid?***

Some people like to pay a lump sum amount which saves the church interest on the loans. Payments can be made by cash, check, credit card or electronic fund transfer.

## ***26. I pay my bills through internet on-line banking offered by my bank Can I make my pledge payments through on-line bill pay?***

Yes, you can use on-line bill pay for your periodic payments available from your bank or credit union just like you pay your bills. You will need to set up a new bill in your account. Information required varies by institution but normally includes the following:

- Bill - show -- MMOG - Continuing the Vision
- address --157 South Triangle Road
- city/state/zip--- Hillsborough, NJ 08844-4800
- phone number --- 908-874-8220
- account number --- use your envelope number

## ***27. When do I need to start payments on my pledge?***

Initial payments are scheduled to begin May 1, 2010. For memorial gifts an initial payment of 10% is required with your pledge.

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***28. Given that pledges will be collected over three years how will the church pay for renovations initiated and completed within the three year period?***

The church has secured a line of credit which will be paid off as pledges are collected.

***29. Can I make a Matching Gift through my company?***

Many corporations endeavor to match the charitable contributions of employees. Please contact your company's Human Resources professional to determine if your company participates in a Matching Gift Program. If you have questions, please call the parish office at 874-8220.

***30. Why do we need a fund raising effort? Why can't we simply use the weekly Building Fund collection?***

The Diocese gave our Parish permission to initiate the building fund to help pay for the additions and renovations we have planned and already made. The scope of our renovation and rejuvenation project requires giving that cannot be achieved through weekly collections. This is our opportunity to make a lasting gift not only for ourselves, but for future generations.

***31. In addition to my financial gift, how can I help?***

Volunteer to work on the renovation and rejuvenation project. The more volunteers we have the less work and more fun it will be for all involved. The project plan has specific jobs with start and end dates. Volunteers can sign up for a portion or for the entire project. We can't be successful without your help.

***32. Does the entire community need to be involved for us to be successful?***

The Church of Mary, Mother of God needs the commitment of the entire community. Building our new church is a sign of our stewardship. We are giving back to God in gratitude for His many blessings to us. As Catholics, we know that stewardship is a way of life and the responsibility of each of us. Yes, every household needs to be involved.