

September 17, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On August 29, 2021, three weeks ago, we held a townhall meeting in which I was able to listen to your thoughts and feelings regarding the current state of our parish. I told you that I would relay that information to the bishop. On Tuesday, I presented to Bishop a seventeen-page report which contained your information as well as my own detailed assessment of Divine Mercy, Infant Jesus or Prague and Shaver Lake. By Wednesday, Bishop had read the report and we had a lengthy and productive meeting to discuss its contents as well as the future of our parish.

Brothers and sisters, Bishop is very supportive and understanding of our situation. I will not discuss everything that was said in our meeting, but Bishop is committed to having a large Catholic presence in East Clovis. He wants our parish to be healthy and vibrant and big enough to serve the needs of the people into the future. He knows that we need a building and that we need it sooner rather than later. He is going to try and help us forge a path forward. I do not know exactly what that path will be. Bishop will meet with the diocesan building and financial officers to forge a path forward. I trust him and I believe that some help will be forth coming.

On our part we must also be committed to having glorious future, and we must work harder than ever to bring it about. One day we will design and build a large Catholic Church but that cannot be our priority. Our priority will be to build a large multipurpose room and a rectory. These two buildings will meet our immediate needs. We will have worship space, office space, classroom space, access to a permanent home and opportunities to develop ministry.

The Building Committee should refine and finalize the design of the multipurpose room for function and price. It should also begin exploring design of the rectory.

The Capitol Campaign Committee should be retooling setting goals appropriate to these new priorities. They should also be working on making Divine Mercy parish visible to our growing area and target congregation. Promotional information will need to be updated and distributed. Fundraising should begin as well.

The Finance Council should continue to monitor and regulate the day-to-day financial operations of Divine Mercy to ensure that we are viable. It should also assist with Infant Jesus of Prague and Shaver Lake as needed.

The Parish Council should focus primarily on the improvement of the ministerial activity of Divine Mercy Parish, making Divine Mercy Parish a place that people would want to worship and belong. They should discover what we are doing well, what we are doing poorly, and what we are not doing at all. Then they should devise, recommend, and implement strategies to help us function better.

Incidentally, I gave Bishop a list of all the people that serve on these committees and councils. He was pleased to see such involvement. He intimated however that there would be a need for each of these people to solicit help from several more. He and I both know the extensive resources that are necessary to build a healthy parish. We don't just need money. We need time, dedication, energy and so much more.

I want to encourage you. The meeting with Bishop is certainly good news. Progress is being made. We are going to go forward.

Fr. Michael