



From the Pastor's Desk...

Dear Parishioners:

In the 94 year history of Our Lady Star of the Sea, today is one of our greatest days. When Father James Malloy opened our original church on Huguenot Avenue in July 1917 during the First World War, nobody could have predicted that there would be an expansion of parish property in the 1960's by Monsignor James O'Mara that would enable Monsignor Frank Genslinger to build a replacement church in May of 1982. It would have been hard to imagine when Cardinal Cooke dedicated it that our brand new 500 seat church would be too small for its inhabitants within ten years of its construction because of the exponential growth on the South Shore of Staten Island.

In 1993 we had a three part plan for the expansion of the parish facilities:

1. Construct a pre-kindergarten building which would be a feeder for the school and produce income for the next phases of the project – The Father Owen Gartland Pre-K building dedicated by Bishop Henry Mansell in January 1995.
2. Build an athletic complex, soccer field and parking as an addition to the school building. This was dedicated in November 2002 by Cardinal Edward Egan.
3. Build a 1000 seat church that would be able to accommodate our people and make room for newcomers.

In 1998, 2003, and 2007 we raised funds for the new church (most of the 1998 fund was pledged to the \$4.5 million athletic center). We moved into the O'Mara Hall for the celebration of Sunday Eucharist in February 2008 as construction started. We used Sts. Joachim and Ann Church at Mount Loretto for First Communions, Funerals and Weddings. We had Confirmation at St. Patrick's Cathedral in 2008 and 2009.

Neighboring parishes helped us by allowing us to hold most of our weddings in their churches. Thanks to St. Thomas and St. Joseph, Holy Child and St. Clare for their help in our time of need. We are especially thankful to Steven Rynn and Bill D'Ambrosio of Mount Loretto for their help in taking care of the sacramental needs of our parishioners during these two years.

The 2010 church, dedicated today, is a blend of the new and the old. All of the stained glass windows from our 1982 church were stored and installed in our new church. The statues, the cross, and the baptismal font were also in the 1982 church. However, new statues and stained glass windows were purchased from the companies that provided them 28-eight years ago. Rohlf's Studios in Mount Vernon created new large Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost windows, along with smaller windows of Sts. John Bosco and Dominick Savio, St. Lucy, St. Cecilia, St. Peregrine, St. Isaac Jogues, St. Frances Cabrini, St. Florian, Dorothy Day (who attended mass in the original church), Fr. John Drumgoole, and St. Michael the Archangel. Warner Studios added new statues of Mother Teresa, St. Therese of Lisieux, Padre Pio, St. Jude and Maximilian Kolbe, and one of Pope John Paul II is on order for use when he is beatified.

The church floor is white porcelain tile with marble inlays and the altar area is marble. The ceilings are light oak and the pews are beach wood, with beach wood molding throughout the church. Stars (for Star of the Sea) are evident throughout: carved into the pews, in the inlaid doors, in the marble, and on the hanging lamps. Our Lady Star of the Sea is depicted in a Bas-Relief outside, on a large stained glass window inside, and on an icon in the baptismal area.

There are icons throughout the church created through the artistry of Father John Walsted, Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal on the North Shore. The eight foot St. Matthew's Cross, painted on both sides, is encased in glass in the lobby and the Daily Mass Chapel. There is an icon of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Blessed John XXIII, All Saints, the 14 Stations of the Cross, and (coming soon) The Divine Mercy.

There is a Gold Cross atop the front of the church and a light red brick exterior and interior. The roof is metal with a rubber sarnafil covering. Although the church looks huge from the outside it has a warm, home-like feel on the inside. There are 1,000 seats in the main section and 110 in the cry room – but everyone seems close and enjoys an unobstructed view.

The church's architect, Drazen Cackovic of DCAK Architecture, did a wonderful job, along with his assistant, Werner Savaria. Caldwell and Walsh Company served as Construction Managers. The Archdiocesan Building Commission staff, especially George Grenier, kept a watchful eye on the project. Our parish's volunteer architect, Al Saulo, gave invaluable help and advice through many hours of meetings. Marie Cancelleri, our chief fundraiser since 1980, helped raise funds for the church and arranged the "Tree of Life" and pavers to recognize donors. John Manetta, our sacristan, managed the transfer of liturgical materials to three different sites and back again and was involved in many of the liturgical purchases and decorations. Karl Emigholz, our Director of Plant Services, used his construction expertise to supervise the construction company and the sub-contractors saving us much money in the process. His wife, Debbie Emigholz, our Parish Manager, did more work than anyone, attending meetings, making phone calls, sending e-mails, working with the architects, construction managers, the Archdiocese, city agencies and staying on top of the project from beginning to end.

We are grateful to Sovereign Bank for their loan, and the Archdiocese for their deferred loan. But, most of all, we are grateful to God who has worked all things together for good in bringing about this beautiful church for his people.

The movie *Field of Dreams* made popular the expression "if you build it they will come." Now we have room for all the people that God may choose to send to Our Lady Star of the Sea.

Thanks to all our loyal parishioners who kept believing that this day would come!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey P. Conway". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rev. Msgr. Jeffrey P. Conway
Pastor