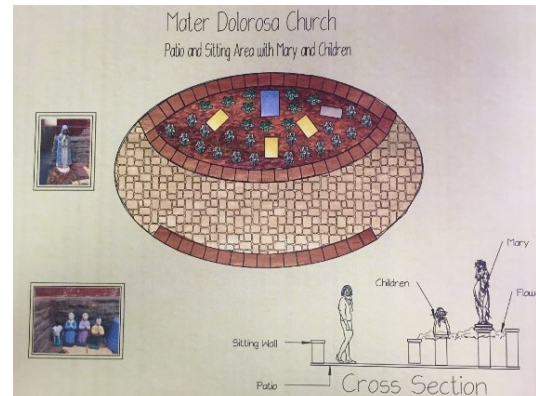


During the deconstruction, the team of engineers will mark the spot where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered and the Holy Eucharist was held in the tabernacle. At this very spot, a shrine will be constructed to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima. The statues which stood at the entrance of the old church will be enshrined with flowers and a meditation garden. We attached a simple design which may be expanded in the future. It is our goal to have the shrine built and dedicated prior to October 13, 2017 which is the conclusion of 100th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima.



The statue of Our Lady of Sorrows is already placed at the priest circle in Mount Carmel Cemetery. This will be added to this summer through a Corpus of Christ placed upon a wooden cross. It is our hope that the Crucifix will be placed before the Memorial Day Mass which is offered on the priest circle mound. Finally, the statues and other holy items are being used in various locations throughout our parish. It is our hope that our heritage from all four previous parishes will be maintained for future generations.

We are offering the pews for a donation of \$100.00. If you are interested in a pew, please contact the main office prior to the deconstruction. However, after the deconstruction, all items will be available through Steinbacher Enterprises. This would include any bricks from the structure. However, the bricks used in the construction of the building are hallow. Thus, the number of bricks may be limited. At this point we are unsure on the exact date but it will be made known to the parish via the bulletin as soon as it is scheduled. We will be meeting with City Council on May 25, 2017.

I thank you for all your prayers and support. These past five years have truly been a blessing in my life and priesthood. We are to never forget our heritage. Our parish has been built on the shoulders of those who have sacrificed and given all they had to build toward a future not their own. It is during these times that we are encouraged to share our past and look forward to the future. It is these times where we are called to follow our ancestors of faith and build toward that future as well; one where we are brought together through the sacrifice of the Cross. Please keep each other in your prayers and please be assured of my prayers for you and your family. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the main office. Our Blessed Mother, please pray for us and may we be under the protection of our dear Patron St. Joseph.

God's Peace,
Fr. Brian Van Fossen
Pastor



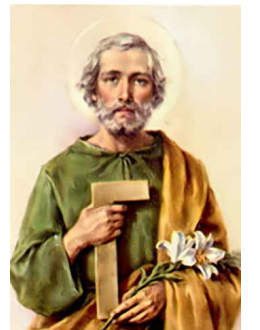
The Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Matthew 28: 18-20

May 5, 2017
Feast of St. Angelo

My Dear Friends,

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the unity of the Holy Spirit be with you and your family. Back on July 19, 2009, we began our journey as St. Joseph the Worker Parish. At the early onset of this journey, we needed to discern many issues which were presented to our parish. Prior to our birth as a parish, on June 27, 2009, Holy Rosary Parish offered the final sacrifice of the Holy Mass. On the weekend of July 7 and 8 of 2012, the parishes of Annunciation, Ascension and Mater Dolorosa all offered their final Holy Masses. After these liturgical events, we began to discern what we were to do with the properties of our heritage.



On October 11, 2011, the Holy Rosary Property was sold. On August 2, 2012, the Ascension Property was sold. On August 5, 2012, I entered into your journey as your pastor. At this time, we stopped with the sales of property and entered into discernment on possible use of the buildings. We formed an Exploratory Committee on February 25, 2013 to examine the remaining properties. Through a great deal of prayer and conversation, we began to look at the needs of the parish community, as well as the Williamsport community. It was then that we became aware of the many needs in the local area and our call by Christ to help alleviate the suffering of this fallen but redeemed world.



In 2013, we began to see the Castellano Center as a means of outreach to those who are in spiritual and corporal need. We collaborated with United Churches of Lycoming County and the Food Pantry and Shepherd of the Streets joined us in our mission. We next worked in partnership with Family Promise and they were able to expand their ministry in the old rectory. We then began our own ministry with the Children's Clothing Closet which continues to grow in aiding mothers through advice and comfort along with clothing. There is still one office open on the hallway for a future ministry working with children with special needs, at least for the summer of 2017.

We have also used the large hall and kitchen for a variety of events over these past years; however, more can be done with this space.



In 2013, we looked at the Fleming Center and Administration Building (Old St. Joseph School) and realized that they were both very underutilized. During Lent 2011, we opened the Holy Family Chapel in the Fleming Center. In 2012, we reignited our funeral ministry by serving funeral lunches for families who are grieving the loss of a loved one. We entered into collaboration with the YMCA for summer programs in 2014. The youth ministry program has been reevaluated and began to use some space in creating a welcoming atmosphere. We have plans in place to update the technology of the Fleming Center in order to make the large room and classrooms conducive for group

gatherings and small group breakout areas. We realize the limitations for those with accessibility issues within these two buildings and are looking toward plans to remedy these concerns.

All these initiatives would not have been possible without the grace of God and the insight and foresight of our Parish Council and Finance Council. Over these past years, they have worked and prayed diligently to see how to best use our resources and practice proper stewardship. They have outreached to members of the parish to discover new ministries and come to understand the needs of our community. In light of all this discernment, there is still one building which remains empty and now is presented with a new and old problem, the old Mater Dolorosa Church building.

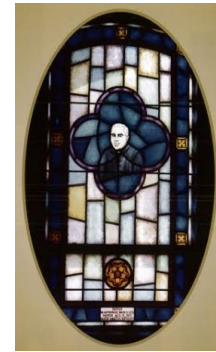
The original church building was built in 1908 in the downtown area of Williamsport. In 1930, the church was bought for the growth of the Williamsport Growers Market (The Italian Market). From February 1930 until July 1932, the people of Mater Dolorosa had no property to build a church. The property on the corner of Park Avenue and Hepburn Street was purchased from Mr. Phillips and the foundation and cornerstone of the church was placed on October 1932. The problem with the property purchased was the presence of Grafius Run.



Grafius Run has been in the newspaper quite a bit as of late. The run currently is an open water stream until it reaches the northern part of the city at Highland Terrace. After this point, the run heads underground and winds through the city. There is a notation of the run where it crossed Hepburn Street and bricks were made for buildings in the downtown area. From a journal entry dating in the year 1911 (Municipal Journal and Engineer – 239 West Thirty-Ninth Street, NY vol. XXX) there is conversation about the Grafius Run Sewer system and bids upon its construction. This cursory investigation points to the presence of Grafius Run under or near the current structure of the former Mater Dolorosa church building.

Since the building of the church, there have been several attempts to stabilize the foundation of the building. Most recently in 1991, the parish contacted Master Contractors Inc. in order to stabilize the

south-east corner. They placed powder grout and fill under the footer to prevent any further subsidence. The company outsourced to a specialized company to stabilize the footer which cost between \$20,000 to \$30,000. They also replaced and repaired some brick on the outside of the building. After the consolidation in 2012, there was evidence of a continued subsidence in the south-east corner of the building. The front façade has been pulling away from the main building and is continuing to lean toward the corner of Park Ave and Hepburn St.



Considering the south-eastern corner appearing to sink into the ground, we were proactive in salvaging some of the heritage from the building. In 2014, we contracted with Baut Studios to remove and retain the windows and wooden doors of the building. That same year, we worked with Peragallo to remove and crate the pipes from the pipe organ for possible use in the future. We removed all the religious artifacts and stored them in the Castellano Center or Heritage Room of the Administrative Building (Old St. Joseph School). Finally, we worked with Mertes Plumbing to disconnect and cap any water or gas lines which flowed into the building in case of a major breach. We retained the electrical and alarm systems to ensure the security of the property.

On October 10, 2016, we were contacted by the City of Williamsport Codes department in order to investigate the property. As you might have read in the Sun-Gazette, the City is looking to develop a plan of urban revival in the Park Area of Williamsport. This area ranges from Park Avenue to High Street and from Hepburn Street to Campbell Street. They knew of the concerns over Grafius Run and were wondering if they could see the crawlspace below the church. In this investigation, they discovered a sinkhole measuring approximately 5 feet in diameter and 4 feet in depth in close proximity to the south-eastern corner. They believe this to be caused by a breach in the sewer line of Grafius Run.

Based on all the above information, a cost analysis, and an exhaustive exploration of all the possibilities for the use of the building we are moving to deconstruct the building during the summer of 2017. The church is connected to the boiler room for the Castellano Center. This wall will be reinforced so the structural integrity of the Castellano Center will be maintained. The space which the church occupied will be brought to green space; however, it will not be left empty and the heritage of the Italian congregation who worshiped the Living God in that space will not be forgotten.



When I moved to Williamsport, I came from Nanticoke with an understanding of the importance of heritage. Anyone who has heard my homilies knows this fact. The words from my Uncle Len, “Never forget who you are and where you are from” continue to enter my prayer. When I arrived, I never knew that there was another location prior to the current location of the church. When I searched to find its exact location, there were so many stories but a lack of consistent precise information from that time. We knew approximates but the exact location is lost in history along with the pictures from Little Italy, which birthed that small community. However, this will not be so concerning this location.