



IT'S TIME FOR US TO MAKE IT RIGHT

Part 1

December 27, 2017: I walked into our chapel to celebrate daily Mass and found that the holy water at the door had a skin of ice on top. I went into the sacristy to put on my vestments and discovered that I could see my breath form a fog in front of my face. The chapel was indeed cold! When it was time for Mass to begin, I stepped into the sanctuary and asked those who were assembled whether they'd like to celebrate Mass in the chapel as planned, or whether we should go over to the parish center living room where it was toasty warm. Those who had been there already for fifteen minutes praying the rosary through their chattering teeth didn't need even a second to think about it: let's move over to the parish center!

I later learned that the boiler serving our church and school had been out of operation for nearly two days. We were fortunate that none of our water pipes froze and flooded the building. The events that led to that worst-case scenario were a "perfect storm" of circumstances. Not only had the boiler shut down, but the preceding day had been a holiday, so none of our staff were onsite, and our alarm, which should notify us if the temperature drops below a certain point, had failed because of a temporary glitch in our internet service. This was indeed an unusual combination of conditions, but the fact of our boiler shutting down was not unusual.

Over the last several years, the boiler has failed on numerous occasions. There have been times when our maintenance personnel have slept onsite to ensure they can reset it if needed. In our fiscal year ending 2017, we spent more than \$30,000 on maintenance for our heating system – not to make needed improvements or even all the necessary repairs, but to do only those things needed to keep the system going for another couple of years.

Parishioners who have visited our boiler room have said that the equipment looks like something from the Titanic. They half-expect to see an army of coal-dust covered laborers feeding these giant furnaces.

When our buildings were constructed in 1925, this equipment was state-of-the-art, and the wise and generous stewards of this parish even installed a second boiler to act as a back-up in case the first one failed. But over the years, as our equipment has become obsolete and yet still needed to be kept operational, we have cannibalized parts from the second boiler in order to keep the first one running.

Throughout our buildings, control systems are failing. Not only are we too cold when we want to be warmer, we are sometimes too warm when we'd like to be cooler. Remember our liturgies around Easter-time when we were opening windows in the church because our radiators were spewing out heat and parishioners were fanning themselves with worship aids!

The replacement of our heating system for the church and school is a high priority for our anticipated capital campaign. It's time for us to make it right!

Father Michael Reding