



IT'S TIME FOR US TO MAKE IT RIGHT

Part 2

When I was twelve years old, my family visited a gold mine in Lead, South Dakota. Since my parents were generally unable to afford trinkets and souvenirs, one of my prized keepsakes from that experience was a free core sample – a piece of rock shaped like a cylinder, approximately one inch in diameter and three inches long. I kept that sample for years in the hopes that someday I might be able to extract the precious gold trapped within.

A couple of years ago, a similar object was placed in my hand. This, too, was a solid mineral cylinder about one inch in diameter and three inches long, but this had not come from a gold mine in South Dakota; this had come from our school building at Saint Thomas the Apostle. It was a cross-section of water pipe that had been cut out of our supply lines. The mineral deposits filling the inside of the pipe were so solid, I couldn't see light through the pipe. I have no idea how water had managed to flow through there.

That solid cylinder remains for me a symbol of why we need to replace the plumbing and fixtures in our school building. There are other symbols as well:

- If you look at the pipe chases behind the toilets in our restrooms, you'll see patches and rubber clamps holding together steel pipes so rusted and corroded that they could crumble at any time (and some of them have!).
- If you look at the toilets, urinals, and sinks in our restrooms, you'll see several that can no longer be used; we've had to take them out of service. If we could solve the problem simply by replacing those fixtures, we would do so. But the problems are deeper than that. The problems are in the supply and drainage lines buried in the walls and the floors.
- If you've tried to wash your hands in our lavatory sinks, you know what a challenge it is. Separate taps for hot and cold water – that will flow only as long as your hand continues to press on the valve – makes this a difficult task!
- If you've noticed an odor in those restrooms that never seems to go away, you're not alone. Contractors tell us that the marble walls of those stalls, with nearly a century of use, have absorbed the smells and locked them in forever.
- If you've been disappointed to find that our school restrooms are not all handicapped-accessible, you're not alone. The good news is that the rooms are big enough to accommodate the enlarged stalls that are needed.

Our anticipated capital campaign will seek to raise the funds needed to completely rebuild these 93-year-old restrooms. It's time for us to make them right!


Father Michael Reding