



IT'S TIME FOR US TO MAKE IT RIGHT

Part 3

An exchange heard last winter in our parish center:

“Father, did you know that your office windows are open? And I think I saw some of the school windows open too, which is surprising because it’s February!”

“Yes. Unfortunately, it’s the only way we have of getting fresh air in these buildings and the only way we have of controlling the temperature in some rooms.”

Both our school and our parish center have no central system for circulating air. The school had a mechanism, but it was abandoned years ago and does not meet current codes, so that means that the only way we can get fresh air in the building – or even circulate air within the building – is to open the windows. This can lead to some rooms being too hot and others being too cold, and it certainly is not an efficient way to heat. In addition, our students are not getting the fresh air they need to be healthy and alert learners.

In our parish center, there was never a central air circulation system installed, and there’s not even one thermostat in the entire building. Instead, the central system in the parish center circulates hot water in the winter and cold water in the summer. The only means we have to control the temperature in a room is to turn on or off a fan mounted on each individual radiator. As a result, my office, which is right over the boiler, tends to be very hot in the winter, while other parts of the building are cold.

On the night of Saturday, April 14, when a blizzard struck the Twin Cities, I spent the night at the parish center to be certain that I’d be onsite for Masses the next morning, but I couldn’t sleep on the hide-a-bed in my office because the temperature was over 80 degrees. I dared not open the windows that night for fear that they would freeze in-place due to the wet snow. Meanwhile, our front office was 63 degrees.

During the summer, this problem is reversed. I get plenty of cool air in my office, while our staff upstairs are sweltering because the pressure in the water circulation system is too low to get them the cold water that’s needed.

And, of course, anyone who’s spent time in our parish center will tell you that the air quality is terrible: unless windows are opened, there is no air moving and certainly no fresh air being exchanged.

With monies raised from our anticipated capital campaign, in addition to rebuilding the heating system for our church and school, we also intend to install fresh-air handling equipment for the school and gymnasium as well as the parish center. And we will make upgrades to the heating and cooling system for the parish center that will allow us to actually control the temperature in that building. It’s time for us to make it right!



Father Michael Reding