

# *Saint Pius X Roman Catholic Church*

220 LAWRENCE ROAD BROOMALL, PA 19008

August 19, 2024

Dear Saint Pius X School Families and Parishioners,

As the summer months pass and we get ready for September, I take this opportunity to update you on the status of our school building's condition and the work that has been taking place to address needed maintenance to the structure.

As you know, we closed out the prior school year on May 31st so that necessary corrections to the original construction defects in the brick façade could begin. Work commenced on Monday, June 3, and continued on schedule through June and July.

While the work progressed and the defective brick walls were being taken down, other necessary repairs were discovered behind the façade on the three walls of Phase I. These previously unknown issues would ultimately cause an adjustment to the work schedule and the total cost of the project.

Once discovered, these areas for repair were reviewed by the structural engineering firm of O'Donnell and Naccarato, who is overseeing this project for us. It was their recommendation that another structural engineering firm be contracted to produce plans to properly and permanently address these repair needs. Those plans were produced in mid-July, and the work to execute these permanent repairs is being completed now by Palmer Masonry Restorations, the same company completing the brick removal and reinstallation.

Again, these repairs were not part of the initial plans for Phase I. As such, they will add time and additional costs to this phase of the project. I wish to address those two areas with you: time and costs.

First, the issue of time. We are committed to opening our school year on time, beginning on Wednesday, September 4.

In light of the finding of the additional repairs and associated costs, I was called to a meeting at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center on July 25. I was accompanied at this meeting by our school principal, Sr. Kathleen Touey, IHM, members of my pastoral staff, and representatives from the Parish Finance Council. The meeting was led by Fr. Philip Bochanski, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Also present from the Archdiocesan staff were representatives of the Finance Office, Properties Office, Parish Services Office, and Office for Catholic Education. The purpose of that meeting was to allow everyone to gain an understanding of the issues facing our school community and to develop plans to support our families with a focus on safety. I am grateful to all who were there for their willingness to be of assistance and support.

A key area of concern for all of us at that meeting was our ability to safely open the school year on time in September. It was recommended that there be additional evaluation of the front and side of the building, those walls not being addressed in Phase I, to assess if there were any areas for concern that would prevent us from using our school building. Additionally, it was suggested that we visit two alternate sites, should our school building not be able to open in

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September. We did visit both Cardinal O'Hara High School and the former Saint Kevin Parish School. We are grateful to the staff at Cardinal O'Hara High School, especially Mr. Michael Connor, President, and Ms. Eileen Murphy, Principal, and to Fr. John Maloney, the pastor of Saint Kevin, for their graciousness in opening their doors to us.

O'Donnell and Naccarato, working with Palmer Masonry Restoration, conducted additional probing on the front and side walls of our school building on August 1 and 2. The results of those studies indicated the presence of additional deficiencies that will need to be addressed and planned for as part of a future repair program, or what we have called Phase II. However, in a signed letter from Matthew Mower, the structural engineer with O'Donnell & Naccarato, we were informed that, "these deficiencies do not impact the ability to occupy the building."

After reviewing all of the options and information presented to us, I am happy to report our school year will begin in our school building on Wednesday, September 4.

As previously stated, the additional repairs to the three walls of Phase I have added additional work time to the project. While we had planned to have all work completed by September 4, it seems that some work will need to continue on the exterior of the building into October. This work will not impact the students' learning or ability of our school to function properly and safely. Allow me to make a few points on this:

- We have been informed by both Palmer Masonry and O'Donnell and Naccarato that the wall of the cafeteria adjacent to the classrooms of our school building will be completed before the opening of school on September 4. This will also include new doors at the entrances marked 3 and 4.
- Work will continue on the wall nearest the convent into October, as well as the wall nearest the church.
- All work on these walls will be exterior, will not involve disruptive noise, and will not impact the students' learning day. This work will focus primarily on the relaying of bricks, and other finishing touches.
- The footprint of the construction area and the space used for the storage of materials and supplies presently in our school yard will be reduced from the current size (the whole parking lot) so that students and staff will be able to enter and exit the building safely and easily.
- Additional information regarding drop-off and pick-up procedures will be sent to all families closer to the start of the school year.

Allow me, now, to address the cost of this portion of the project. The initial cost of Phase I was \$1.1 million. Through monies in parish savings, the School Endowment Fund, and the Paul T. Worthington Fund, we were able to begin the work of Phase I, and would be able to pay the total cost.

When the additional repairs were discovered, and the plan to address them was produced, an approximate \$300,000 in costs were going to be added to Phase I. This is money the parish does not currently have. We are working towards securing a line of credit from a commercial bank to pay this cost.

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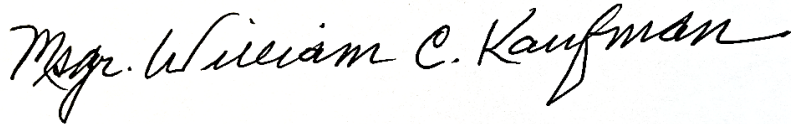
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In the coming weeks, I will be asking the people of St. Pius X Parish – all of us – for your generous support in assisting with these costs. This is money needed to complete the repairs for Phase I of this project. I also want to be clear that the necessary future repair program of Phase II to address the remaining walls of the school building, and additional deficiencies found in those walls, will present very significant costs and will require highly robust fundraising efforts.

For now, I am happy to say that our school will open on Wednesday, September 4. We will continue to rely on the professional opinions and expertise of those who are working on this project with us, with a primary concern for the safety of all our students, staff and parish and school community members. We will also continue to work as a parish and school community to plan for the future, with clarity and honesty.

May God bless you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Msgr. William C. Kaufman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Msgr. William C. Kaufman  
Pastor

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