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Welcome *home.*

November 24, 2021 | Weekly Newsletter

Dear Christ the Redeemer Parishioners,

I wish that this return to our weekly communication were just a little less somber, but with this letter, I want to update you on our recovery from Hurricane Ida. So, let's jump in. To sum up what has happened until this point, at the end of August, the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux was struck by what will probably be the most destructive hurricane in recorded human history. In the week following the storm, I returned to our parish to assess the damage. It was clear at that time that our seven buildings were intact but several of the roofs were damaged, several trees were damaged, and there was wind-driven water in the church building. In the following weeks, we were able to have our buildings tarped to prevent further damage. Then, dehumidifiers were placed to mitigate the residual moisture. Finally, the downed and damaged trees were removed.

Our insurance company and adjusters reviewed our campus. There is a process in place at the diocese to evaluate all of the damage at all of our parishes and schools to help the whole diocese recover as quickly as possible. Teams from the diocese are assisting each parish on how to go forward with their recovery. The Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux is in this with Christ the Redeemer. Of course, Hurricane Ida was a massive event and the resulting chaos is leaving a number of unknowns. Much of this is your own experience with your house just expanded for a larger number of buildings over a big area. This is an oversimplification, but it sets the context for what comes next.

As part of our recovery process at Christ the Redeemer, I sought further clarification from the team that is working for us on whether we could start using our Family Life Center before restoration starts. This triggered a new review of our whole campus that gave me a lot of helpful but bad news. The interior damages to both Christ the Redeemer Church and our Family Life Center are greater than I was first informed. The team from the diocese is formulating a plan for Christ the Redeemer to address the damages which includes further remediation, some demolition, and finally full restoration. Probably the most striking is the updated timetable on demolition. Contrary to what I was first told, we will need to move forward on removing the carpet from our church building which will be messy and complicated. I am going to insist that our worship space remain usable during the removal of the carpet. This won't be easy, but we will have church no matter what it takes. The Family Life Center has developed a smell that concerns me. The reviewing team confirmed that it is most likely mold. Now this is nothing special to Christ the Redeemer, but it is nonetheless alarming and serious because we use our Family Life Center as a major meeting place not only for our youth but also older adults both of which are susceptible to the effects of the mold.

So now for repairs: Repairs will include the replacement of roofs on the FLC, Adoration Chapel, St. Jude Grotto, and both sheds. We will remove the carpet in the church, office, cry room, and meeting rooms. We will remove drywall in the church and FLC. We will remove the floor and ceiling tiles in the FLC. Finally, there is some external demolition which includes the removal of the remainder of the

gutters and kitchen canopy on the FLC and the rectory shutters. All of which will be replaced as part of the repair. I have not gotten a time table for any of these projects, but I will let you know each week in this newsletter what has developed in the world of our restoration.

These demolitions and restorations are going to create extra upheaval in our lives together at the church. Our reception offices have been moved into the church lobby during business hours. We are still open Monday-Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM, and we will remain open and available throughout the whole restoration process. However, we are closing to celebrate Thanksgiving this week on Thursday and Friday. We will still have daily mass all week. We have Mercy Night tonight and Thanksgiving Day Mass on Thursday at 7:30 AM and 6 PM.

We are going to make the best use of our meeting space as long as we can for Youth Formation for the time being. There may come a day when we will not be able to use the church for gatherings outside of Mass. That being the case, my staff and I are working on a contingency plan if it becomes clear that we need one. I hope to be able to advertise any changes with plenty of time before they take effect.

I know that this is a lot of information. I will keep you updated through these newsletters as the weeks go by. We will get through this. Also, I know that it feels like we are moving incredibly slowly in our recovery. The Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux is with us in our recovery. They are managing our insurance claim, but more importantly they are managing our FEMA claim. There are almost 400 buildings owned by churches and schools in our diocese. The majority of them are damaged. CTR could go faster, but that would mean that we would not be as well funded in our repairs. Going slow means that we will have better, longer lasting repairs at less cost to us. It is frustrating; I am frustrated, but our patients will pay off. This is a lot, but I would ask you to pray about and for these things.

Thank you,  
Fr. Alex Gaudet