

## FROM THE PASTOR'S PRINTER

### WE SHALL GO UP WITH JOY TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD! (I)

Today we celebrate the anniversary of the dedication of our present church; I think it's 95<sup>th</sup>! Most of us do not celebrate the day we move into our home; we might remember it, and that's is about it. We celebrate the dedication of our church, however, because our church is not simply a pragmatic building to shield us from the elements when we come to worship the Lord. Rather it is also a symbol of the Church – the People of God – who gather there, and it is the place where, in unique and privileged ways, we encounter our loving God who is always with us. The building is called a church because it is where the CHURCH gathers; it is called a Temple of the Lord, because when the Church is gathered, God's presence shines forth in our midst. The church is not a symbol in the sense that it simply points something out; it is a symbol in the sense that it draws us more fully into what it is pointing out. In other words, while it shows us what we are, it also makes us more and more into what we are meant to be. The nave where we gather helps us

be one body of worshippers, as it gathers us as the children of God. The font serves to bring us into the Body of Christ; as the ambo (aka lectern or pulpit) serves to draw us more deeply into God's word. The reconciliation room serves to bring renewal and healing, while the altar serves to bring all aspects of our life in the Lord together, as we obey Christ's call to remember the new and eternal Covenant sealed on the cross. It is there that we are nourished with his own Body and Blood. The Eucharist is reserved in the church so that it may be given as Viaticum (Food for the Journey) to the dying, and so that it can be received by the sick and those unable to attend Mass. Because it is reserved for these reasons, we come and adore Christ in private prayer.

To celebrate the dedication of a church, then, is to celebrate God in our midst, God working in our midst, and God constantly building us more and more into what we are, the CHURCH!

### WE SHALL GO UP WITH JOY TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD! (II)

If you ever used the front entrance of St. John's church, you know you had to keep one eye on the steps. Over the years, the weather had taken its toll on them, cracks and crumbles had grown in number and size. For years, parishioners would mortar and cement these steps as if they were Phyllis Diller's plastic surgeon. Finally, the stuff just wouldn't hold through the winter any longer. For that reason, the SJB Building and Grounds Committee recommended replacing the steps, and we have the newly designed and constructed entrance to our church. Thanks to the generosity of Denny and Lou Schultz, and from funds from the SJB Lottery and SCRIPs, we have the new steps.

While everyone appreciates the new look, some have asked if it was worth doing, given that in 15 months, we should be in the new church. This is a fair question to ask. In making the recommendation, we considered three things:

- ◆ the imminent danger of someone hurting themselves because of the damaged steps (which, if you do not have compassion for the wounded, you can consider a lawsuit);
- ◆ these steps will be used by the school children for weekly Mass for at least the next ten years, and may be used for funerals should a family request it be at the old church;
- ◆ even though we are moving to a new location, we have a serious responsibility to keep our property maintained and attractive for the sake of the neighborhood. (In the past three years there has been a great upturn in the care of the houses on Hill Street, and this has resulted in a safer neighborhood.)
- ◆ Now, we can go up with joy (Gemperline or in our hearts) to the house of the Lord!

Have a blessed week and life ahead! – Fr. Jeff