

E-NEWS – November, 2015

A Note From Father Donald Staib

To Members of Saint Mary Magdalene - Until Christmas I will send this weekly news, adapted from my Sunday sermon, [remember it is a spoken sermon, not a literary composition]. It is my part to promote our need for additional funds to complete our church construction endeavors. Thank you for whatever you can do to help us.

Church as an Octagon

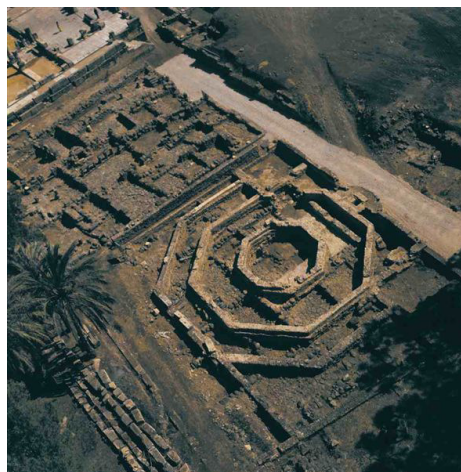
I have a syllabus [never before for me] of sermons for 9 weeks. The 9 week schedule is posted in the bulletin. Today is our church and the octagon. Brief history: our parish patron is St. Mary Magdalene, the first to witness Jesus' Resurrection, called the apostle to the apostles: she brought that news to the 11 Apostles huddled in the upper room. Jesus' Resurrection happened on the 1st day of the week, on the 8th day. The 8th day is also the 1st day of the week. 8 = octagon.

The early church had scrolls, not written books, few could read anyway. They used pictures and shapes and forms and numbers to communicate the themes of religion. The cross, a fish, bread and wine. We know the significance of Bible numbers 12 and 40.

Regarding shapes of their early churches. Google church and octagon: you will find examples - one possibly St Peter's house at Capernaum.

To build an octagon church now is difficult and expensive, and it presents difficulties in worship and placement of pews and other worship elements, and there are sound system issues. Our use of the octagon is that we will have an 8 sided dome. If we took the dome off, we would save expenses, but we would also have a not very distinctive looking building.

Aerial Photo of the excavations at Capernaum. The three concentric octagons forming the walls of the octagonal church of the late fifth century



Our Church Dome

Our dome is not over the altar, nor over the baptism font which is in the middle of the pews. It is over the entire worship space, a square, and it draws us all together: sanctuary and congregation, the people of God.

We have a square here already in the gym if we just move up the grass hill a little. Placement of the church pews is very much like our gym arrangement. Front floor is flat, slope on back ½ of pews.

Interlude to sermon:

These 9 weeks of sermons on various aspects of our church are to call attention to our need for additional financial help in our construction project. A mailing went this past week to all the parish: for new pledges/gifts.

We ask those who have not pledged or given, please do so now. And if you have already given - if you can do more, please do. This interlude each week is to ask - and to note: *we are all together under the dome.*

Interior of modern Catholic Church in Capernaum; located inside the ruins of the original are enclosed in glass in the center.



All Saint's Day

November 1 - We are gathered here as all the Saints. Gospel: Jesus went 'up the mountain.' Reminds us that Moses also 'went up the mountain.' Moses brought back the 10 commandments: 'thou shalt not.' Jesus from the mountain spoke the Beatitudes. 'Blessed are 'the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, blessed are the merciful.'

Some who commented on the recent Synod in Rome noted a shift of priorities in our church from commandments to mercy, from Canon Law to the Gospel. As the church Synod were representatives of every nation and region of the earth.

Reading from Revelation today spoke of a 'vision of a great multitude which no one could count - from every nation, race, people, and tongue.' The writer had no idea how vast was the world, how diverse were the people of the earth, how dissimilar were the ways in which people believed and worshipped.

When All Saints falls on a weekday I usually give a brief homily on just 3 Saints, calling attention to how diverse the 3 are in their fidelity to the Gospel. Diversity is not a characteristic of St. Mary Magdalene parish, but we know how diverse is our country and our world.

Bishops in Synod voted on a 97 paragraph document. They did not all agree. It took a 2/3 vote to pass; one paragraph passed by only one vote.

You have heard me and other pastors comment on how 20% of parish give 80% of funds. We keep trying to move people to consider how we are all together under the dome.

A Final Word

Now: I need to make one comment about last weekend's collection. I hope all under our roof put in something generous. But someone put into the collection a counterfeit \$10 bill. It was so authentic that our counters did not notice it. Only the bank teller was able to identify it. It sure looked real to me.

The thought did occur to me: who in the parish has that printing press? We could use it!

We are all diverse, just like our Saints are diverse. The Beatitudes of Jesus present unexpected reversals.

One of the excavated sites of the octagonal church in Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee is thought to be the house of St Peter's family. St Peter was a man transformed from everyday fisherman to the leader of Jesus' Disciples and the Church.

On December 6, I will say more about St Peter. For today he is one of our Saints, one known for his weaknesses, sins, and failures, but he went on to preach the Beatitudes Jesus taught him when they all 'went up the mountain.'

Father Donald Staib
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Bottom Lines

The Parish Council has asked me to make a concise list of our present situation:

- 1. There is a shortfall of \$1.5 million between our approved budget and the projected costs of construction. Reasons were given in my recent letter to the parish.*
- 2. we are now working on: reducing the construction costs by deferring some items and by seeking additional funds.*
- 3. We ask those who have never given/pledged to make a gift/pledge of \$5,000.*
- 4. We ask those who have already given/pledged to add a pledge/gift of \$2,000.*
- 5. Receiving cash will help us more in getting final approval.*