

E-NEWS – November 15, 2015 – Baptismal Font

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.

Take a look at the end of my sermon where there is a glass design which attempts to portray simply our current challenge and efforts.

Baptism Font

Our new church sermon series continues today with topic of Baptismal Font. Church instruction notes: *The rites of baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation, require a prominent place for celebration.*

BAPTISM FONT

The rites of baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation, require a prominent place for celebration. Initiation into the Church is entrance into a Eucharistic community united in Jesus Christ. Because the rites of initiation of the Church begin with baptism and are completed by the reception of the Eucharist, the baptismal font and its location reflect the Christian's journey through the waters of baptism to the altar. The font is a symbol of both tomb and womb; its power is the power of the triumphant cross; and baptism sets the Christian on the path to the life that will never end, the "eighth day" of eternity where Christ's reign of peace and justice is celebrated. Through the waters of baptism the faithful enter the life of Christ. For this reason the font should be visible and accessible to all who enter the church building. . Baptism is a sacrament of the whole Church and, in particular, of the local parish community. Therefore the ability of the congregation to participate in baptisms is an important consideration. - U.S. Catholic Bishops - Committee on the Liturgy

You have seen baptism places in other church: sometimes it is in the altar area like St Andrew, sometimes at the church entrance like St Michael. Ours in middle of congregation; we did that so everyone has opportunity see baptisms during Mass. Here is a picture of what we are considering for our church. Ours may be smaller than this font:



Some fonts are large enough for immersion of adults as is St Michael. That is an option, but adults are baptized at Mass only at one Mass a year: Holy Saturday night. Some fonts are designed for adults to kneel in the water while the priest pours water over their head like at St Andrew. We will be able to that if desired.

For funerals the casket is placed near the baptism font, it is sprinkled with water to remind us of baptism, and the casket is covered with a white cloth just as we put a symbolic white garment on babies at baptism.

Also we have 12 rocks from the seacoast of Magdala, St Mary Magdalene's home town near the Sea of Galilee, to use in our baptism area.



THE CHALLENGES AND JOYS OF BAPTISM



Message to Future Brides

I want to give an assurance to future brides. When I noted the baptism font is in the middle I meant it is off to side of the middle; on other side is a table for the Holy Oils and for the gifts the children bring up at Offertory – so the aisle is free for wedding processions to go in and out.

Recently I had a wedding for members of our parish; they were not excited about the wedding in this gym worship space, so arrangements were made to use St. Francis on Leesville Road.

The Groom was handsome, the Bride was beautiful, the mothers cried – and I cried too. Because for me to get to St Francis for the rehearsal and the wedding I had to drive over 100 miles - and still keep myself radiant for the Saturday 5 pm Mass and the Sunday Masses. When we have our own church I will be able to be there for weddings in 5 minutes.

And I will be able to control the ceremony. Brides and brides' mothers are famous for wanting perfect details for weddings. I can tell you that we priests also are quite picky about procedures for weddings, myself included.

I cannot dictate in a borrowed church. It would be like you are invited to someone's house for dinner and when you get there you ask to re-arrange the furniture in their house. So: when you are a guest at another pastor's church, you keep his wedding procedures.

One story about a wedding at St Michael with the baptism font in the middle in the back. A photographer once wanted to get the perfect pictures of the groom and bride walking down the aisle after the wedding; he was walking backward and – yes he did – he fell right into the baptism pool!

Final Word

I have thought of doing something new, something creative, and something persuasive. I thought of a new committee to be formed to help me. It would be a select group; most of you would not have the qualifications.

This select group would be composed only of young ladies, girls, between the ages of 10-20, and someday want to be the bride who walks down our church aisle. Send me resumes to explain how at this time in your life you have figured out ways to ask for and ask for and ask for – and get what you ask for. You can begin to practice today on the way home in the car with your plans, with your hopes and dreams.

I have talked about the sacraments of baptism/marriage today and the ceremony of funerals. I also want to say something about the Scripture readings.

Just before and in Advent Scriptures get very serious. 'Daniel: *'at that time . . . it shall be a time unsurpassed in distress.'* Gospel: *'in those days after that tribulation . . . the powers in heaven will be shaken.'* Many of our SS readings use the words *'in those days . . . at that time.'*

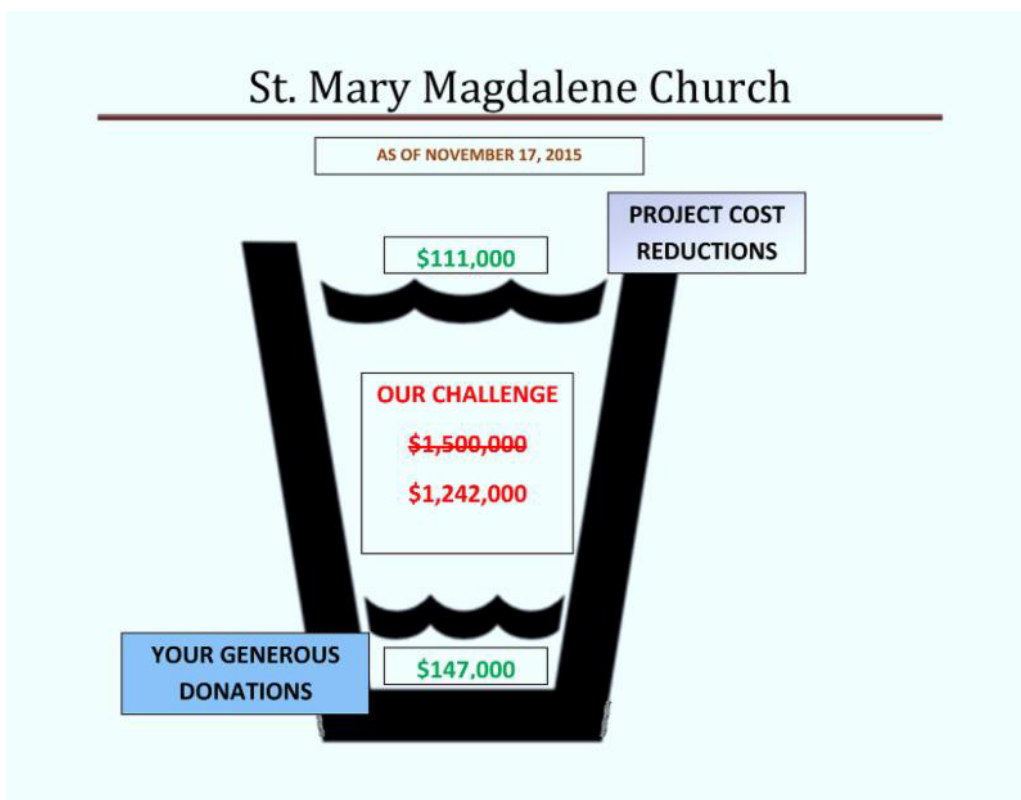
A story: Paul Salopek, an environmental biologist, is walking around the world in 7 years. It is called *'The out of Eden walk.'*

He is walking the presumed migration history of humans from Ethiopia thru Europe thru Asia, into North America down to Tierra del Fuego. He walks 6 months and works on research 6 months.

Recently he stopped in Dwanisi, in the country of Georgia to join excavations of some kind of human presence there 2 million years ago. Archaeologists there told him they were asking the question *'what were those people doing here?'*

Daniel and Mark's Gospel noted: *'in those days . . . at that time.'* For us, in our days, in our time, we can also ask the question of the Dwanisi archaeologists: *'in our days . . . what are we doing here? In my days . . . what am I doing here?'*

Fundraiser Glass



Bottom Line

We ask each family in our parish to pledge \$5,000 over 3-4 years. If we had a 100% response we would be underway quickly. For those who have already made a pledge/gift, please consider an additional \$2,000 pledge/gift, more if you can, to help us with these new costs. You are the ones who have brought us this far, and you are the ones who will bring us to the finish line. Many thanks.