



E-NEWS – November 22, 2015 – Tabernacle

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.

CHRIST THE KING – STMM – NOVEMBER 22, 2015 – TABERNACLE

Pontius Pilate was the prefect of the Roman province of Judea, where Jesus lived, from 26-36. The Sanhedrin [which could not condemn a person to death] brought Jesus before Pilate, who did have authority to execute people. In all four Gospels Pilate argues with the Sanhedrin; he said he *'found no guilt in this man.'*

Pilate agrees to the crucifixion only when the crowd shouts *'crucify him, crucify him.'* Pilate tried to avoid personal responsibility for the death of Jesus. History is not kind in its judgement of Pontius Pilate and his lack of courage at this crucial moment.

Pilate asks Jesus *'Are you the king of the Jews?'* This feast of Christ the King is a relatively recent addition to our church liturgical calendar, having been instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI. Pope Pius began this feast in response to the growing nationalism and secularism in many countries of the world.

Christ the King and Pontius Pilate have these elements in common:

- there is a clash of spiritual power and temporal power,
- there is contrast of the power of the ruler and the power of the crowd,
- there is the failure of Pontius Pilate to influence the crowd to release a good man. And the failure of Pope Pius XI to influence the world and nations toward harmony; World War II was soon to come.

Tabernacle

I shift now to a much less serious topic about authority. In the series of 9 sermons about features of our new church the topic today is the Tabernacle. What I present is just a very small, not world shaking, example of authority –the authority of a diocesan bishop.

Instruction of the church regarding placement of Tabernacle gives the authority to the bishop to decide where it is best to be placed.

There are a number of possible spaces suitable for Eucharistic reservation. The revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal states that it is more appropriate that the tabernacle in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved not be on the altar on which Mass is celebrated. The bishop is to determine where the tabernacle will be placed and to give further direction.

*The bishop may decide that the tabernacle be placed in the sanctuary apart from the altar of celebration or in a separate chapel suitable for adoration and for the private prayer of the faithful. In making his determination, the bishop will consider the importance of the assembly's ability to focus on the Eucharistic action, the piety of the people, and the custom of the area. **Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship**
Guidelines of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops*

Some history: in old large churches of Europe tabernacles are in a side chapel, not in the altar area. It is the same way in some of our large churches: eg: St Patrick's in New York and the National Shrine in Washington.

In most parish churches there is not a separate chapel nearby, so the tabernacle was on the main altar when the priest offered Mass facing away from the people and faced toward the tabernacle. That is what most people saw until the Vatican Council.

A significant change of Vatican II was for the priest to face the people at Mass. There was considerable discussion then about where to place the tabernacle, especially when new churches were built.

Some did provide a separate chapel. Some put the tabernacle in a sort of shrine area to the side. Some found a way to keep it in the center in the back of the altar area.

My judgment: people who come to Mass wanted the tabernacle somewhere in the church so they could see it.

As the Instruction of our Bishops notes: there is some leeway, but also, as the Instruction notes: it is up to the diocesan bishop to decide. He has the authority.

Our St. Mary Magdalene Church & Tabernacle

When we began to discuss the design of our church, I went to ask Bishop Burbidge what he desired. [I also asked about baptism font, last week's topic].

His answer about the tabernacle was: it needs to be visible for the congregation. That gave us some flexibility, but our decision was to place it behind the altar, though with the design to place it so it is somewhat distinct from altar area.

15 years ago when our parish was established we purchased an attractive tabernacle; the intent was it would go with us until the new church was constructed. It is in our chapel, it came from Spain. It will go with us to the church.



When you next go to our chapel, look at the cross on top of tabernacle - we want to use that design for the cross on top of the dome of the church. It is a sort of stylized Celtic Cross.



About Our Financial Needs

This appeal could be very short today if pastors had the authority - to tax people so that all would do their fair share. Pastors do not have that authority, so we have to ask. I ask: pay attention to mailings, website, E-News, weekly bulletin - and then be as generous as you are able. The authority to decide to give is with the members of the parish.

Other Authority Issues

I connected today: the authority of the local bishop in the placement of the tabernacle in churches - and the authority Pontius Pilate had in allowing the crucifixion of Jesus. That is quite a stretch, I know. I have other examples of authority:

Authority of parents: My example: As an oldest child I remember my young siblings were put in playpens to keep them from getting into things in the house. We would give them any toy they wanted to keep them happy there.

Today what toys do parents allow children to have? A friend of mine has an almost 2 year old who visits me; my residence is not baby proof at all. I have noticed he has his own device like an Ipad and to my astonishment can manipulate it, and he wants it with him almost as if it is a security blanket.

Sometimes when I see a child with a real security blanket, I ask if I can have it. The answer is always 'no.' Parents - you can enlighten me: is it wise to use your authority and allow small children to have their electronic devices whenever they want? I know we are not in the old playpen days.

Political & National Authority

Another example about authority: In an interview John Boehner, recently resigned as Speaker of the House of Representatives, said: "*It's weird; no job, no office, hardly any staff. I'm used to going all the time. Now I'm not going all the time. It's different.*" He once had great authority, now it is gone.

He also said some things about immigration and his old colleagues he could never have said while in office. And he described how he had to sneak into the White House so no one from his party or from the President's party would know. They would presume he or the President would be up to no good.

American Bishop's Authority

Our American Bishops met last week in Baltimore to set priorities for the next few years. They identified these priorities: *Family and marriage *Evangelization *Religious freedom *Human life and dignity *Vocations and ongoing formation

A person who has written several books about American Bishops and the history of bishops' authority in the church commented he would have had different priorities if he had authority: *A poor church for the poor *The church as a field hospital, a church of mercy and compassion *The practice of synodality [collegiality] at all levels of the church *The end of clericalism and the empowerment of the laity *The promotion of justice and peace and the protection of the environment.

A Story

I have never been a fan of the feast of Christ the King because I think kings and queens, princes and princesses, pomp and ceremony is something of another age, antiquated, out of date.

I will show you what I mean by telling this story about some trappings of authority, about how people can be pompous, about how people might think they are more worthwhile than they really are:

A Department of Water Resources representative stops at a Texas ranch and tells an old rancher "*I need to inspect your ranch for your water allocation.*"

The old rancher says, "*Okay, but don't go in that field over there.*"

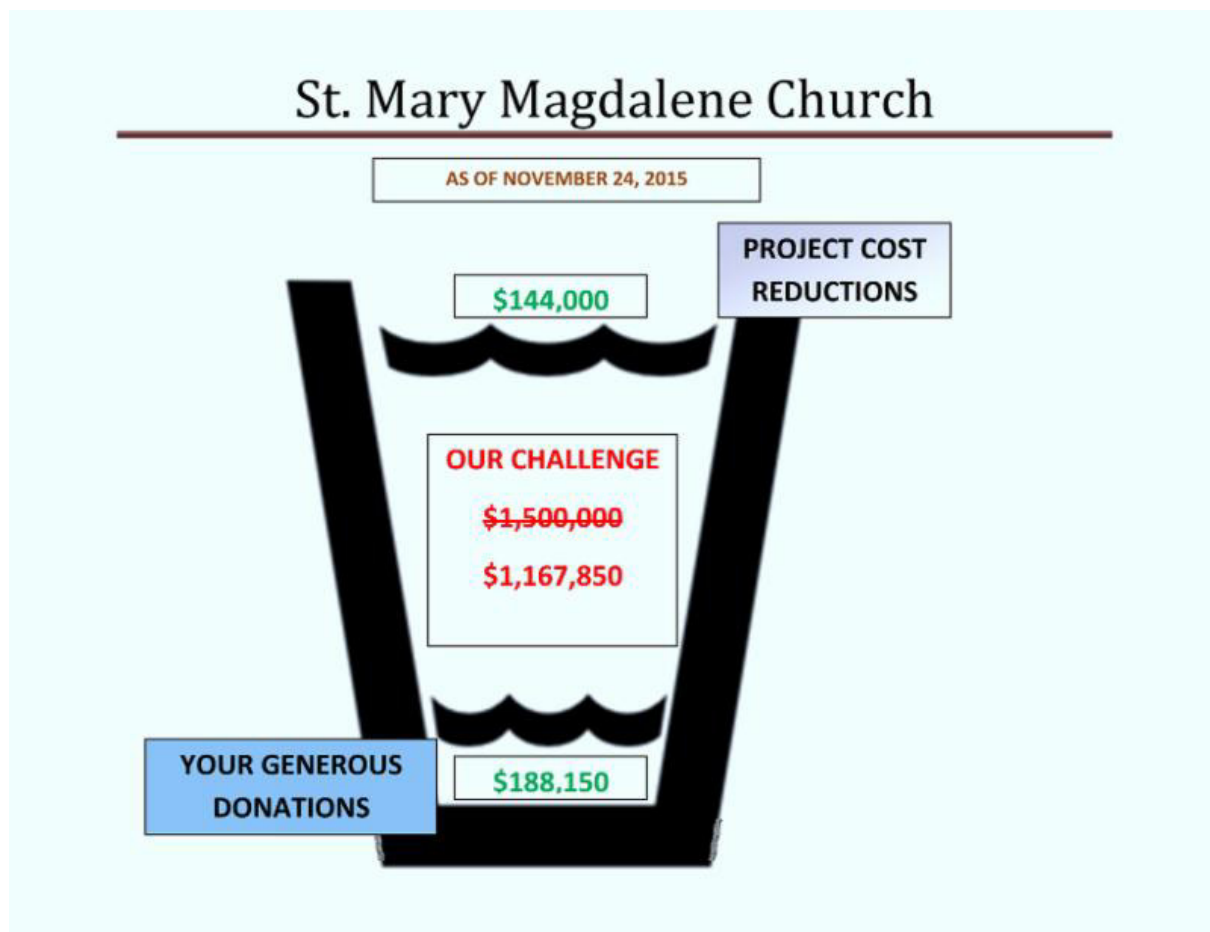
The Water representative says, "*Mister, I have the authority of the Federal Government with me. See this card? This card means I am allowed to go wherever I wish on any agricultural land. No questions asked.*"

The old rancher nods politely and goes about his chores. Later, the old rancher hears loud screams and sees the Water Representative running for his life. And close behind is the rancher's bull chasing him.

The old rancher immediately runs to the fence and yells at the top of his lungs: "*Your card! Your card! Show him your card!*"

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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.