



# Seven Dolors Parish Center

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **Have the renderings and floor plans that we viewed during the campaign planning study been finalized or is there an opportunity for parishioners and ministry leaders to provide input?**

The plans have not been finalized but are in development by licensed architects and engineers. Input is very much welcome. Please reach out to the parish office or to Brayson Benne (braysonbenne@gmail.com, 913-481-5288) to provide input.

### **We've heard that Catholic Charities determined that the two food pantry programs do not align. What is the long-term plan for the Food Pantry? Can it be incorporated into the new parish center?**

Catholic Charities has shared that the current structure of the two food pantry programs is not fully aligned. In response, the Building and Grounds Committee is actively collaborating with the Food Pantry leadership to develop a long-term plan that supports their mission and the needs of the parish. As part of this process, the committee is exploring options for integrating the Food Pantry into the new parish center to ensure a sustainable, accessible, and well-coordinated space for their operations. In the meantime, the Food Pantry can continue operating in its current location within the existing parish center, and there is potential for them to extend or enhance their use of that space after parish staff is moved into the new parish center (Fall 2027).

### **Before demolishing the current parish center, has the parish conducted thorough electrical, mechanical and structural assessments of the building to see if renovations are possible?**

The Building & Grounds Committee evaluated renovating the existing parish center. In consultation with local architects, contractors, and other specialists and the consistent feedback was that the building's concrete and block-wall construction limits flexibility and makes renovation complex and costly. To fully assess the option, BHS, a reputable local contractor, developed per-square-foot pricing, which showed that renovation would exceed the cost of new construction. While renovation remains technically possible, the prevailing recommendation is to consider a new parish center located nearer to the church and along Juliette Avenue, a collector street, that would improve access and visibility. Importantly, new construction also offers the opportunity to create a more beautiful, welcoming, and hospitable environment—one that invites prayer and fellowship, provides accessible circulation to the church, brings in natural light, and offers flexible spaces where parish life can truly thrive.

### **How will our parish benefit from the multi-purpose classrooms or meeting spaces?**

The four multi-purpose classrooms and meeting spaces are designed to strengthen parish life by giving ministries flexible places for formation, fellowship, and service. They can support middle and high school youth ministry; host meetings for parish groups such as the Knights of Columbus and Seven Dolors Catholic Women; provide rooms for councils and committees to work; and accommodate faith formation—from RCIA and adult Bible studies to marriage and baptism preparation and prayer groups—while also serving as an area for retreats during parish-wide events. With adaptable layouts and an emphasis on accessibility and hospitality, these rooms are built to evolve as needs change, serving a wide range of uses today and as the parish continues to grow. They do not have a single use in mind but are rather open to the creativity of the Holy Spirit.

## **Why are the offices all located on the second floor?**

While most offices will be located on the second floor, the main level will include a reception desk and one office to welcome parishioners and provide clear wayfinding. Conversations with St. Isidore's and the architect's experience on other Catholic parish centers indicate that this arrangement is both common and effective. Placing the primary multipurpose rooms on the main level prioritizes parish life and avoids moving hundreds of attendees up and down stairs and elevators during large parish-wide events. Just as importantly, concentrating administrative functions upstairs reduces foot traffic and ambient noise around the main-level adoration chapel, supporting greater reverence, quiet, and ease of devotion. Accordingly, supporting spaces will be located upstairs and remain easily accessible by elevator or stairs after visitors are greeted at the main-level reception. This layout balances hospitality, accessibility, and operational efficiency.

## **What is the purpose of the courtyard?**

The courtyard is planned to be a welcoming, flexible outdoor space that supports parish life in many forms—from parish-wide outdoor events to small-group Bible studies and outdoor meetings, children's activities, and quiet prayer. It also might provide a space for certain liturgical celebrations, such as the Service of Light before the Easter Vigil, processions, and seasonal blessings, while serving as convenient and safe spill-out space that strengthens the connection between the parish center and church.

## **Would the courtyard space be better suited to a large meeting room or event space? For example, has a large parish hall been considered instead of classroom space? Something similar to the Utopia Room at St. Thomas More?**

The idea of converting the courtyard area into a large meeting or event space—similar to the Utopia Room at St. Thomas More—was carefully evaluated. Due to the small lot, City of Manhattan zoning limits the allowable building size, making a substantial expansion for a large hall impractical. A parish hall was also assessed from an operational standpoint; after consultation with St. Thomas More regarding the licensing and insurance required to operate an event venue, the concept was not pursued. This direction was reinforced by discussions with St. Isidore's, which had similarly considered and declined a large event space. As a result, the plan prioritizes a flexible courtyard paired with multi-purpose classrooms and meeting rooms, delivering versatile ministry space without exceeding zoning constraints or introducing ongoing venue-management obligations.

## **What amenities are included in the kitchen e.g., oven, stove, refrigerator, freezer?**

Since the parish recently invested in a full commercial-grade kitchen in the church basement, the new parish center is designed with a more traditional break-room-style kitchen to support everyday needs. This space will include a residential-grade oven, refrigerator, and freezer, and will provide ample room for staging food—such as pizza, catered meals, or items prepared prior to. This approach balances functionality with responsible use of parish resources while still meeting the needs of parish events, gatherings, and meetings.

## **What are the plans for after-hours security if the only entrance to the Adoration Chapel is through the parish center main lobby?**

After hours, the rest of the building can be securely closed off from the main lobby while still allowing visitors to access a restroom when using the Adoration Chapel. Additional controls would be added to the elevator, and the stairwell door to the basement would remain locked. Another option is to use an access-control system—such as key cards or a keypad code—to allow authorized individuals to enter the lobby after hours.

***The Building and Grounds Committee will provide ongoing transparency through the bulletin, website, email, listening sessions, and at upcoming parish events. Please reach out with any other questions or concerns! And please pray for us!***