

# Parish of Saint André Bessette

*of Laconia, Lakeport & Gilford*

Sacred Heart Church  
277 Union Avenue, Laconia  
603-524-9609

Saint Joseph Church  
30 Church Street, Laconia  
603-524-1442

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03/18/2023

Re: Update on St. Joseph Church, Laconia

Dear Parishioners,

May the peace of the Lord be with you.

It is with great excitement that I write to you as a follow up to my December 2022 letter regarding the future use of St. Joseph Church. After consultation with the pastoral and finance councils and the Diocese of Manchester, the Diocese proposed and we concur that the Church continue in use as a day chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament will be reserved for prayer and specifically Diocesan arranged services.

A section of the Church would be converted into a columbarium. A columbarium is a structure for the reverent housing and reposition of funeral urns. These columbaria are already in use at Catholic cemeteries in our Diocese, including the Mount Calvary Cemeteries in Manchester and Somersworth. Here, the cremated remains of loved ones would be entombed in niches with reverence and respect.

This combined purpose for the Church edifice will fulfill one of the corporal works of mercy, burying the dead. It is believed this will provide an appropriate and just use for this sacred building.

Slow, careful, and prudent discernment has brought us to this point and will need to continue throughout the process of conversion of the Church to this new purpose. There are also many steps that need to occur, such as seeking City approvals, raising funds, and facilitating necessary repairs. The cost of building repairs is estimated at \$1.5 million dollars, not including the costs to remodel the building interior for its proposed use. The St. Joseph Preservation Society has already raised funds and committed to assist financially. However, it is clear that additional funds will need to be raised. With a path laid before us, we have a direction and purpose that will provide the faithful with a continued use of this building. As more information is available, I will share it with you.

Let us continue to pray for the success of our endeavors and ask St. Joseph for his intercession. St Joseph, pray for us.

Blessed Lent,



Rev. Marc B. Drouin  
Pastor