



Dear Fellow Parishioners of Stella Maris Parish,

As of Friday, November 6, the 17 acre parcel of land that we owned on the corner of county roads A and F no longer belongs to us. It now belongs to the Northern Sky Theatre. The trustees and I signed the papers on behalf of the corporation with the proxy of the bishop and the vicar general who are also officers of the corporation. Although property is always sold with mixed feelings, it is done because we need to close one part of our story and open another one, to adjust to new circumstances and to adapt to what the Lord is calling us to do at the time. I do not want to evaluate the past. The leadership at the time of the purchase thought that it was a foregone conclusion with consultation of the diocese that the parish would be building one new church building. They also felt that a central location such as that one would be the place to do it. Since that time, we have adapted to the general sense of the parish and Bishop Ricken's desire to keep all parishes open if possible. It is working for us. The other scenario could have worked as well but one goes with what one has chosen to do and lets go of the decisions of the past so that we can make the most of the present.

Another area of mixed feeling is the purchase price. The property was originally purchased for about \$212,500 or about \$12,500.00 an acre for 17 acres. We have sold it for \$165,000.00. We have been trying to sell it for years. We started off at \$199,000.00. It was hardly even looked at for that amount of money. Some people suggested that they would look at it if it was parceled out. We were beginning to consider that when we received this offer to purchase. We know that the price is not what we would have wanted based on what we paid for it but it is better than waiting and waiting and not selling it at all. The piece of property surrounding it which this piece was separated from has been highly priced for a long time and has not sold for longer than we have owned this property.

The one true and solid benefit from selling the property is that we are no longer paying property tax. Church land is only tax exempt if the church is actually using the property for church purposes. Since we never used the property for a church purpose we have been paying \$1,600 a year in taxes. We no longer have to worry about paying anything on land that we are not using. That will be a concrete benefit although a small one going forward.

We are very happy with the group buying the property. We never used the property at all for anything so it will be good that it is being used for something. The Northern Sky Theatre which has purchased the land is not only a long standing Door County tradition but a family friendly and locally connected cultural force which greatly benefits the community. I know that I have enjoyed many of their productions and would feel comfortable bringing any member of my family or friend to their productions. They will be bringing together many parts of their organization which have been located all around the peninsula. Their offices, storage for costumes and staging, as well as, a winter stage will all be on the grounds. The president of their board is a good faithful member of the parish who has kept us informed and connected. The whole group only has the best interests of the community at heart.

As we close one possible future of Stella Maris and focus on another one, let us thank the Lord for the ways that He has led us and helped us to be what we are. We thank the Lord for helping us to buy the land and sell it. We thank the Lord for the people who have helped with all of it as well as for all the ways that the Lord has worked. If you have any thoughts or concerns, do not be afraid to contact me or the trustees. Thanks. Best wishes and prayers.

In Christ's love, Fr. Dave Ruby, Pastor