

## ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH

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Feast Day 2015

Dear Parishioners:

**Generations** is about faithfulness not only to our mission statement which has led us since 2007: *We are connected to our past, committed to our future and compassionately focussed on being a Family of Faith with something for everyone* but also our four Core Values:

Eucharistic Spirituality

Hospitality and Welcome

Evangelization

Faithfulness to Who God Made Us to Be

These values built upon the legacy of faith given to us over 155 years ago by the founding families of Hespeler to do all things For the Glory of God . Just like when we walked in faith and undertook our Parish Centre/Parking Lot Expansion in 2009, we are at a point where we are called again into a new chapter....which we are calling Generations. This undertaking comes from the vitality of our community but also because of our trust in God. During a parish Town Hall Meeting in June 2013 we outlined the basic principles of Generations have guided these past two years:

Expanded Parking

Addressing Maintenance

Children s Wing Addition

A Parish Team for the Future

Making Sunday Matter

Our new parking area at 15 Cooper Street has become a well-used place for parking. The rooms of our new Children s Wing are being well utilized and have given us the opportunity to reach out to many more families and minister to many more children and youth in our parish community.

Within our goal of a parish team for the future was that of Lay Leadership. Our Leadership conference in Fall 2013 has yielded a significant increase of involvement in parish life. This Fall we will be hosting a Leadership Summit which will be an opportunity to reflect on the parish vision statement, look at different ministry initiatives and speak about a healthy culture. Invitations will be going forth soon.

Making Sunday Matter has been seen in so many ways, one of which is our Heart to Home , a weekly publication which continues reflections from the weekly homily. Prepared just for our own parish, this is an excellent tool not only of evangelization but also personal growth and prayer for the growing number of parishioners participating in small groups. Our focus on Digital Evangelization has been highly successful since the start of Generations. Our website receives the highest number of hits of any local Catholic parish, our facebook and twitter feeds, and our parish blog, are also viewed in high volume. Our e-newsletter Sursum Corda is weekly distributed to over 300 parishioners weekly. We have also been able to provide a weekly audio feed of the Sunday homily for listening and downloading. We have produced several parish videos which have been acclaimed by both local parishioners as well as the

Diocese itself.

Our commitment to World Mission remains strong and active. The recent visit of missionaries from Kenya outlined our partnership there and we continue to make a difference with our new Homes for Haiti focus and our commitment to a Mission Trip in November 2015.

Much has been accomplished since the start of Generations as we have sought to enhance our campus. Our new LED sign for the front of the Church, we are a light on the hill (Matthew 5:14-16) with our new red light in the bell tower which symbolizes the red tabernacle light. Our new votive candles at the shrines of Our Blessed Mother and the Sacred Heart, installed sound panels and larger monitors in the Parish Centre Narthex, replacement of the rectory garage roof and addressing plumbing issues in the lower level of the Church to name a few. On going maintenance is constant. We also continue to seek to creative ways to develop space as a result of the healthy growth we are experiencing, and so we:

- will be repairing a few parts of our main parking lot, and rectory parking lot, which are sustaining signs of “wear and tear”. We will also repaint the lines in both lots.
- will be installing new general storage cabinetry in the Hearth room and will also be installing some storage cabinets in the office area in order to house our parish archive materials.
- will, as mentioned in Spring 2014, be undertaking a minor renovation to the rectory garage area in order to facilitate the creation of a new storage space. This will become the new home of our food pantry. This dry and secure space will provide additional access opportunities for members of our St Vincent de Paul Society at times when the Parish Centre is inaccessible. It will also provide storage for general parish purposes. We will be re-purposing the current food pantry/storage room into a small meeting room which will aide with the growing number of parish groups.

We are also at this time preparing for Phase 2 of Generations. As mentioned in the Spring of 2014, this would see a small expansion to the front of the Church in order to address two needs - the staircase to the choir loft, and also the creation of a barrier free family bathroom at the main entrance of the Church. This phase also continues to lead us in working with our neighbours to address our need for additional parking. More details on Phase 2 will be shared soon in order to present our plans and obtain your input.

During this year it is our desire to finish raising the remaining \$20,921.00 in order to reach our objective of raising our \$75,000 objective. To date we have raised a little less than half of this goal. We are so grateful to those who have not forgotten the “Generations” campaign as an important parish undertaking in their financial giving to the parish. But we also need others to come forward and donate as we continue to work.

Detailed information on Generations is available in the Parish Centre Narthex. We are open to anyone wishing to make specific donations to any of these projects - you may wish to use a “Generations” envelope found at the Welcome Desk and specify your giving. It is imperative that we meet our goals in order to progress in the next phase of Generations. We pray for this goal to be met during our two remaining weekends. Thank you for all of your support during the various aspects of Generations. May Our Lady of the Visitation continue to be our inspiration, model and guide.

Together in the Lord=s Service

*Father F. Freitas, Pastor*