



## **Update on the new Church Project**

12 September 2025

Dear Parishioners of St Patrick's Parish,

Thank you for your commitment to our beautiful parish. Thank you for all your prayers, your presence, your commitment to the Gospel and to living the Faith. Thank you for your support for one another, your sacrifices and generosity. Thank you for your presence and witness in our schools and community.

Thank you also for your patience with me. I know I have long promised an update on the proposed new parish church project. I ask your pardon. I can assure you that our Parish Building Committee (PBC) and I are working very hard to keep this project moving forward. The simple reality is that there is much going on, and, more specifically, a lot of moving parts in the project, and that when one aspect gets advanced or approved, another question, issue or possibility arises, either neutralizing or pausing the settling of the state of affairs to the point that a definitive update is impossible. That's not going to change for the next little while, and so I wish at least to update you on the flux and the different aspects of the project as it currently stands.

First, know that I and our Parish Building Committee, are committed to doing everything we can to continue to make this dream a reality. Much effort is being made; we have not "pressed pause" or put anything on hold. **We are moving forward.**

A bit of history: in May of 2018, under the direction of our beloved Fr Vito, a "Class D" Cost-Estimate was done by a professional cost-estimating firm. This high-level report anticipated a cost of \$12.9M (plus taxes, contingencies, etc., as is standard), for the design and build as prepared by Fr Vito and the architect Renzo Pillon. Since then, we have lost Renzo and Fr Vito, and have endured the wretched Covid pandemic.

In place of Mr Pillon, Fr Vito brought on Global Architects to continue the project (confirmed by our PBC), with whom we are still working. Fr Vito is, of course, irreplaceable, but I am committed to doing my best to serve you and to build the new church. A lot of people who came to the parish, and a significant number of donors, were devoted to Fr Vito; sadly, his passing has meant their departure from the parish and the project. As regards the effects of the Covid pandemic, you are all familiar with the supply-chain issues and the resultant inflation (and not just for building materials); the prices on materials skyrocketed, and remain significantly higher than pre-Covid norms. A "Class C" Cost-Estimate done last year projected the price for the original church as designed to cost \$23.5M (plus taxes, contingencies, etc.) , an almost 95% increase in 6 years.

Having seen the updated projected cost of the new church, the Archdiocese of Toronto asked the PBC and I to look for all possible cost savings: we have reduced the size of the original project by over 20% (while keeping the overall design and “look” of the new church). Although official municipal and regional projections anticipate close to 60,000 new people living within the borders of the parish, the profile of those coming is unknown (and currently unknowable). The revised plans for the new church have reduced the seating from almost 900 seats to under 600; office and storage spaces have been rationalized and reduced, and alternative materials have been looked at to lower anticipated costs as much as possible. All of which sounds rather dismal, I admit. Perhaps it is better to say, that despite the hard work and sacrifices of many, significant challenges remain.

***Now for some good news!*** Again, the Parish Building Committee, I and the Archdiocese remain committed and are working behind the scenes to keep us moving forward. Among the positive signs, there remains a significant interest among parishioners and many in the wider community to see this project through. Secondly, since coming here to St Patrick’s, I have made some wonderful friends and continue to meet and solicit pledges and promises of help *when we start building*. Among these are a \$1M pledge (to be paid upon starting the project), a planned \$1M bequeathal from an anonymous parishioner, and a third \$1M pledge from an area business. Additionally, personal friends of mine have pledged close to \$500,000 for when we begin. Another friend of mine has promised close to \$1M worth of materials, and there are others who are committed to doing the same. Among those are the works necessary for site servicing (land levelling, sewers and pipes, drainage, paving and concrete, etc.), which, taken together, are an *anticipated* savings more than \$4.5M on the project. That means we have pledges of \$3.5M in direct monetary donations, and up to the same in anticipated building supplies. Assuming all of that comes to pass, we could knock \$8M off the finished church, or more than a third of the total cost. That is AMAZING, and we must be grateful.

We cannot, however, build a church on promises. We have to deal with reality. Right now, we do not have enough money raised, despite our best efforts, to afford to build the new church. However, because the revised design is several thousand square feet smaller, we are now in a position where we have excess land on the new site. This land may be used either for sale (with limited immediate income potential), or for development in a long-term lease arrangement (with greater returns over the long-term and with a guaranteed revenue stream to support the paying down of a future mortgage and/or to cover operational expenses, in a manner consistent with the Church’s mission and the community’s needs). I have been working with several developers to discuss how best to monetize the excess land. These discussions are coming to fruition with the potential partners in conjunction with the Archdiocese. (If you are still wondering why an update has been so long in the making, you can now appreciate the number of moving parts in this endeavour, and how last week’s updates can quickly become obsolete as one of the numerous parties makes adjustments, withdraws, suggests something new, or is not available for an all-hands meeting to decide something). Important meetings are being held next week with officials of the Archdiocese of Toronto; *please keep this intention in your prayers*.

An encouraging possibility is the conversion of the current church into a private Catholic school or a small Catholic teachers’ college (while keeping at least the sanctuary of the current church as a small

chapel, to preserve the religious and spiritual patrimony of this sacred space where Mass has been offered for over 200 years). Either of these options – each with several parties to satisfy and work with – are promising, filled with hard decisions and much sacrifice, and will offer revenue-generating potential to maintain the current church and to contribute to the new church, while preserving the Catholic presence on the site and ensuring the long-term viability of the current site in its integrity.

Moving forward, a sign marking the site as the location of the forthcoming church building is soon to be built once the permit is secured (expected in October). Additionally, Mayor Brown (Brampton) and Mayor Groves (Caledon), and Region of Peel Chairman Nando Iannicca, continue to offer valued support and guidance. The Planning Department at the City of Brampton, in particular, has been incredible. They have bent over backwards to keep our site plan proposals (original and twice revised) moving forward quickly and with intelligent, useful and timely input. The City of Brampton has further agreed to allow staged permitting – that is, they will not require full and finished plans, drawings and specs before we can apply for and receive a permit for performing the site servicing, but will allow us to go ahead with a Site Servicing Permit while the final touches on building design and coördination are being completed by the consultants, allowing for work to proceed at different levels contemporaneously. This means we do not have to wait any longer than necessary to proceed. Hopefully, when we have “put spade to ground” and begun, interest, excitement and further financial support will follow. We have hired a dedicated and talented Project Consultant (Mr Marc Ferguson, President of Bemocon Contracting), who is ably guiding, advising and cajoling the various parties, in concert with our Architects, to move to “shovel ready” before year’s end.

To be clear, I am going in to meet with the Archdiocese of Toronto on 18 September, along with a few members of our Parish Building Committee, with a plan that **a/.** outlines the current state of the project; **b/.** explains in honest and full detail the financial and demographic realities of the project and the area (already, two new Catholic schools are anticipated for the lands east of The Gore Road between Castlemore and Countryside; site servicing for that residential development is to begin no later than the Spring); and **c/.** communicates the expectation of clarity and concrete support from the Archdiocese.

Again, my apologies for the delay in the update. As you can see, there is much happening, and a lot of it comes “last minute”. I ask your pardon and for your continued patience. Know that I am committed to doing better on that front. I welcome your contributions, input and assistance, to help keep these updates more timely and regular.

I wish to conclude by thanking each of you once again for all that you do to make St Patrick’s Parish such a loving, supportive and joyful parish and community. In addition to the wonderful volunteers and those who give of their time and talents to serve this parish, I would like in particular to thank those of you – in the parish, in the community and elsewhere – for your financial support of this project. We are building a dream: the dream of a new home for generations to come, a dream of Father Vito, the dream of you parishioners, and, dare I say, the dream of St Patrick himself. This is not a small or inexpensive project, and by words alone I am unable to express adequately my profound gratitude and esteem for those who have made financial contributions, big or small, to get us to where we are.

I am sure of two things: first, *God will not be outdone in generosity*. We are building His home. What is being done is for His honour and glory. Secondly, what each of us does – each according to his or her own ability and capacity – will be repaid one hundred-fold (*cf.* Mt 13:8). It is not the amount given, but the spirit with which it is given and the sacrifice that it requires. Whether we give our gifts out of our wealth, or in poverty put in what we have to live on (*cf.* Lk 21:4), it is used wisely, prudently and intelligently for the advancement of our dream.

A final question, and a challenge or three: in the coming week, as you give some time to personal and familial prayer, ask yourself, in all honesty, if you have been as generous as you can be. I take nothing for granted, and this is not an accusation or suggestion. I am also acutely aware, personally, of the expenses and prices and demands placed on you. But, if your heart is telling you that you can do more, please do so. If you are certain that you have done everything you can do, be at peace. In either case, may God bless you richly.

Secondly, I invite you to join me in praying a 30-day Novena to St Joseph, the Patron Saint of Canada and of the Universal Church. Building a new church is first and foremost a spiritual project: if we “get right and stay right” with God, graces will flow. The Church exists and will be built for His honour and glory. I ask you to pray at home, individually, and/or with family and friends, starting Tuesday 23 September, leading up to Thursday 23 October, the day before our Gala. On Friday 24 October, the 8:30 a.m. Mass will be celebrated in honour of St Joseph. You may find the Novena prayers here: <https://www.knightsoftheholyeucharist.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Novena-Saint-Joseph-Holy-Cloak.pdf> (or scan the QR code below). Perhaps the Lord wants us to show Him our prayerful desire so that He can respond. We have nothing to lose, and all to gain.

Finally, are you coming to the “Loaves and Fishes Gala” (24 October) this year? Each year, a majority of attendees are non-parishioners. It will be a strong indication to those with resources who attend our Gala that you parishioners want your new church building when they see that each of us have made the sacrifices necessary to be there.

I will keep you posted as we move forward. Again, I welcome your help on this, and your input. Above all, I ask for your prayers.

With gratitude, affection and my fervent prayers for each of you and your loved ones, I am



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Msgr. Owen', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right. It is located on the right side of the page, below the text 'With gratitude, affection and my fervent prayers for each of you and your loved ones, I am'.