Looking ahead with the Eyes of Faith

What is Vision 2020?
For over two years, leaders of our parish and school have met and prayed with Monsignor to formulate an over-all vision for our parish and school. Enrollment, curriculum, teachers’ salaries, and technology were some of the areas discussed. A “campus master plan” was also developed to help give a vision for the future. Several areas of need were addressed as well as several goals/dreams for the future.

What are some of the pressing needs that were identified by the Vision 2020 team?
The most pressing needs are found in the oldest part of our school building – the original almost 60-year old “hub” in the very center of the building:

- The 13 oldest classrooms need significant upgrades and the junior-high wing (the first addition added) needs a facelift.
- single-pane windows that don’t function properly,
- noisy window air conditioners,
- the boiler that has outlived its repairable life,
- inefficient lighting,
- cabinetry that is delaminating, falling apart.
- The portable that has provided two classrooms for the past 25 years was built to last just a few years.
- While the main entrance to the school provides sufficient security, modern schools demand very different security than what was required in the late 1960s.
- The security cameras, phone system, and bell system are all in need of updates and/or replacement.

In the church, the most pressing needs have been highlighted during the current pandemic. We need to update our technology in order to better provide virtual ministry to our very living parish.

Finally, the parish bell tower, a landmark symbol of our church, is showing signs of structural wear and the digital bells system is obsolete.

**What are the estimated costs to address these needs?**
To update the original 13 classrooms and front offices and entry with new windows, new HVAC, updated cabinetry, and efficient lighting would cost approximately $3 million. The needs of the church could be addressed for approximately another $500,000.

**Besides these pressing needs, what “dreams” were discussed as part of a campus master plan?**
In the honest, “free-wheeling” discussions, lots of dreams were shared, a few were studied, and a couple remain as part of a longer vision for our parish and school.
Many parishioners dream of a real “gathering space” on the front of the church to provide an exterior façade that better “looks like” a church and to provide interior space for everything from better bathrooms to a place to greet each other after Mass.

Everyone recognized that this would be a Herculean task for any architect. This remains a dream for the future.

More attainable dreams would be to continue to develop our beautiful “parklike campus” with enhanced landscaping and places for outdoor devotions, such as outdoor statues of the Sacred Heart, and St. Matthew, a rosary walk, and more permanent Stations of the Cross around the parking lot.

At the school, we still dream of additional classrooms to allow for enhanced early childhood education (like Pre-K for three year olds), a dedicated STEM lab, and a fine art studio for music and art. These construction projects were part of the VISION 2020 campaign until we had to re-adjust the campaign in light of the pandemic.

How does this VISION 2020 Campaign look different than past campaigns?

Unusual times call for an unusual approach! During previous “normal” campaigns, we would typically interview national fundraising firms who specialize in church campaigns and hire one to run the campaign. They would then provide professional literature and an onsite
consultant to help parish staff with all the many “moving parts” of a major campaign. This professional service costs around $150,000 for a parish and campaign of our size. In some professionally run campaigns, the consultants can be notorious for pressuring pledges out of parishioners. When the scale of the Vision 2020 campaign changed (from $6 million to approximately $3.5 million) and, more importantly, when the global pandemic altered the physical, psychological and financial state of the world, we knew we had to take an unusual approach.

Our Vision 2020 Approach
There are no paid consultants. No professional fundraisers are involved. We are coming together as a parish and school family to build a future for the generations to come at St. Matthew. We are counting on the power of “word of mouth” to share both our current pressing needs and exciting dreams for the future. All the materials are produced “in house” by your parish and school staff. There will be no specific “asks” to individual parishioners based on past generosity—the financial situation of many families has changed dramatically. We will not strong-arm a gift! In the end, we will address the most pressing needs according to what is raised through this campaign. If the campaign is VERY successful, we will move on to making some dreams a reality.

How can I give?
Visit stmatt.net/vision2020 and please consider a sacrificial pledge to be fulfilled over the next two to three years. Your pledge can be paid monthly or in a variety of installments. Gifts made by direct bank transfer will save you/the parish the added expenses of credit card transactions. If you prefer to give the gift of stock or through more traditional paper “pledge cards,” please contact Chris in the parish office (217.359.4224 or ckreps@stmatt.net).

I am appealing to your love for our parish – your love for the mission of our school – your love for our past – your love for our future. Love always demands sacrifice. I know you love St. Matthew. Please prayerfully consider a sacrificial pledge.  

Msgr. Stanley Deptula, Pastor