

We heard in today's first reading from the Acts, Peter filled with the Holy Spirit told the rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; has become the cornerstone.'"

Yes, indeed the same stone is the corner stone of St. Joseph's faith community of Palmyra. Christ the Good shepherd has been taking care of his sheep of St. Joseph Church Palmyra for the last 150 years. He takes care of his sheep through various sacraments administered here, various social projects various related programs etc. through the instrumentality of Parish Council, Altar Society, Knights of Columbus, Finance comm., Building and grounds com. Etc.

Christ the good shepherd made it possible that the long time dream of your ancestors was realized when St. Joseph Parish was officially established in 1866 followed by construction of this present church building.

I have often wondered how and why the people of that time were able to build this magnificent church building. Their number was smaller. Financially they were not better off than we are now. Yet they dared to build this church which is not only a place of worship but also a landmark in Palmyra.

The men and women who made the sacrifices necessary to build and grow Saint Joseph Parish for 150 years have left a legacy for us today. We have to continue that legacy for future generations. We are now heirs of these first parishioners – some of us could be direct descendants of these or related to them some how or other but certainly related by faith. Now the mantle of leadership falls to us. We have to ensure that St. Joseph continues to persevere in the future for many generations to come. We have to ensure that Christ the Good Shepherd continues to use St. Joseph to care for his flock.

As a parish St. Joseph has always tried to provide the best services to the flock through various pastoral ministries and social services.

Besides the spiritual and pastoral needs, the parish has always taken good care of the physical facilities of the parish. Just before my arrival, these beautiful glass windows were installed. After my coming also due to some increase in the weekly offertory collections we have been able to do some renovation works like new roof in the church and tuck pointing etc.

We are able to accomplish these and many many more similar other services only through your generous support and active stewardship of your time ,talent and treasure. But, offertory collections are not enough for some major renovation projects like painting of interior of the church and some other projects about which you will hear in detail from a member of the Capital Campaign Committee.

Continuing with the same zeal and inspiration our founding fathers,mothers, brothers and sisters of St. Joseph 150 years ago we now embark into a new endeavor -the capital campaign we call 'securing our future'.

This is completely different from the regular weekend offertory collections.

This fourth Sunday of Easter is also called good shepherd Sunday as well as vocation Sunday.

So, as the Gospel of today tells us, Jesus the good shepherd says,

“My sheep hear my voice and follow me”.

So,as Capital campaign kicks off today, pray and try to hear the voice of the Good shepherd in your life. Try to be good sheep in the fold of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

On this vocation Sunday, try also to discern how you can fulfill your vocation as parishioners of St. Joseph.

St. Joseph Parish is yours and and it is your duty to preserve it for the future generations as best as possible. I often hear about the generosity of St. Joseph parishioners in the past. I hope that I will not be disappointed this time.