To: Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archdiocese of Chicago
From: Brian Salinas
Date: November 26, 2019
Subject: Installing an AC system to increase mass attendance in extreme weather conditions

Executive Summary

Currently the parish's lack of proper air conditioning results in lower attendance on summer days that have extreme heat temperatures. When the weather becomes unbearably hot, people are less likely to come to mass because they know the church provides no refuge from the heat. By installing a proper Air Conditioning system the church will become somewhere that people know they can go to and properly enjoy the word of God without sweating or fanning themselves with the book of hymns. The cost for installing such a system will be around $180,000 based on an estimate from my father who is an HVAC installer and technician but these costs are attainable and worth it. By doing a round of second donation collections on Sundays that go directly to the funding of this system and a series of fundraisers and events we can fund this AC system.. It is also worth mentioning that Sunday collection also suffers on the days of low mass attendance so increasing attendance will also result in greater donation numbers on these days. As someone who has attended St. Gall church for over 10 years, I have seen the effects bad weather months have had on church attendance including on the days where I have even considered staying home because of how bad the weather can get.

Purpose

The purpose is to seek approval for the installation of an Air Conditioning unit by using fundraising techniques to achieve increase in attendance of mass services on days where the weather is harsh and uncomfortable. By installing an Air Conditioning system we can increase attendance on the days of extreme temperature.

Problem

Currently on days where the temperature becomes uncomfortably hot, the attendance rate declines as people would rather stay in their cool homes where they have air conditioning or other means to cool themselves off. With our attendees ranging from families who do not want their babies heating up and sweating to older attendees whose very health can suffer from being exposed to extreme temperatures, it is only the physically strong catholics who attend on hot days. As we are a church who welcomes the sick and the poor and most importantly pride

ourselves in giving a home to all, we should seek to give a suitable home as we would have in our own personal homes.

Proposal

The installation of an AC system in the church will do well for the community that attends the various services we offer. On our most popular mass on Sunday, attendance is usually high and we fill up our pews but on Sunday's where the heat is in the high 80s or 90s attendance noticeably drops. This not only leads to less money coming in from collections, which we need for our operating expenses, but also less people to spread the word too. The one day a week we ask our community to devote to hearing the good word can sometimes be difficult for the young and old to attend. By installing an AC system and no longer using the ineffective standing fans we can continue to attract our community without dependance on the weather of summer days. To prove that this method is effective we can gather testimonials or conduct a survey, at the request of the Archdiocese, that will see if an AC system will be appreciated.

My father is an HVAC technician and installer and estimates that the cost to purchase the multiple AC units for the church and installation will cost about $180,000. While this amount seems large, we can obtain these funds over the course of around 10 months through a second Sunday collection and fundraising events. We have already proven the eagerness of our community to help in collecting funds for something that benefits the whole community with our parking lot renovation so I do not overestimate the capabilities that our community has.

According to my father, installation would conservatively take around 2 months of labor. 1 month at most to install the AC units needed to cool down the church and 1 month or less to install the duct system needed to deliver the cool air through the roof and walls of the church. Because the AC units are installed outside the parish and the ducts are in the walls and roof the church can even remain open during this time.

Budget

According to my father, based on his assessment he estimates a cost of $180,000 for the purchasing and installation of the system. An industrial AC unit can be bought for around $5000 a piece (cheaper if used) and my father estimates the need of 5. The main cost would be in labor due to the large size of the church. While this depends on the company that we hire to install the system, the rates of labor should be fairly similar between them. If we start to gather money at the start of the new year 2020, we can expect to have the system in place by Spring of 2021 (After letting the winter months pass and installing the system in the spring).

My Experience

I have been attending the church for 12 years and had served as part of the youth group for 5 years. Throughout this time and over the years I have noticed and heard the problem that the church has in regards to how hot the church can become on ~90 degree days. The heat combined with bad ventilation and crowded pews can lead to sweaty attendees especially if we are wearing our Sunday best. You will see people of the community attend in shorts at times which is not ideal for being in the house of God. I write this proposal as someone who cares about the healthiness of the community and sufferer of those hot days. My parents are also servants of the Eucharist on Sundays and have also suggested that an AC unit is necessary to avoid hardships presented by the weather.