

GESU CATHOLIC CHURCH

September 8, 2023

To: Gesu Church and School Community

Re: Proposal to Redevelop Gesu's Parish Center into Mixed-Income Senior Housing

Dear Members of the Gesu Community,

As most of you know, Gesu's parish center, built in 1938 as a convent for the IHM sisters who lived, worked and ministered on our campus, is now serving as offices for the parish. As some of you know, this building has been in a state of underutilization since the sisters moved out more than twenty years ago, and is also now in a state of disrepair that would require us to invest significant funds (in the millions of dollars) to bring the entire building back to a state in which it could again effectively serve the Gesu community. Additionally, even if Gesu were to invest the funds necessary to bring the entire building back to a usable state, it would be incumbent on our community to designate an appropriate use for the building that could allow it to coexist with the church and school.

For the above reasons, we have recently been doing exploratory work to ascertain if there might be other solutions for the use of the parish center that would allow Gesu to partner with an outside developer that would be able to secure funds, manage design/construction, and manage the use of the building after completion of a project. **We understand that there is a pronounced need for mixed-income senior housing in the city of Detroit.** After setting up an advisory board of parishioners to manage this process—and after much investigation and discussion with possible developers—we have chosen **MHT Housing as a partner to explore the feasibility of such a project.** Mr. Emmett Moten, a longtime Gesu parishioner, was instrumental in arranging initial discussions to create this exploratory partnership. MHT Housing and its president, Mr. Van Fox, have extensive real estate development experience in the city of Detroit as well as with redevelopment work with the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Most of the details of this project have yet to be worked out. However, it is our wish to share with you the idea, as well as the preliminary steps that will allow us to determine if such a project is possible. There are many benefits that such an undertaking would provide to Gesu:

- Renewed vitality for the parish center and environs that would also provide mixed-income senior housing—something that would be valuable to our city, to our own community as well as to our neighbors.
- The presence of senior housing would be a good fit with the mission of the church and school.
- Outside funding would cover nearly all expenses for the redevelopment.
- Income from the project would help to sustain Gesu for years to come.

To undertake such a residential project, **rezoning** of several of Gesu's parcels of land will have to be completed. I would like to invite you to attend a **public hearing to discuss this that will take place before the city planning commission at 5:15 pm on Thursday, September 21, 2023 on the 13th floor of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Avenue in Detroit.**

In the long-term interests of Gesu, for the betterment of our local community, and for the greater glory of God, we are pleased to inform you of these plans during their beginning stages, and we will communicate regularly regarding progress as we move forward.

Blessings in Christ,



Fr. Lorn Snow, S.J.
Pastor