

# Holy Trinity Catholic Church

409 CHERRY STREET  
COLUMBIA, PENNSYLVANIA 17512

December 12, 2019

Dear parishioners,

In the span of about 24 hours, we've had two incredibly misinformed rumors get back to me regarding what people have heard.

First, I received a phone call from a parishioner expressing their opposition to the news that I had planned to remove the communion/altar rail from the sanctuary. I have no idea where this came from, and there is no truth to this rumor.

Second, a photo of our beautiful mural of Jesus on the side of the school was shared on the Facebook page for Historical Columbia, which many people participate in. The first comment on the image started, "I heard that the priest there wants to paint over it..." This ignited a huge firestorm of uninformed outrage, which included some uncharitable remarks based on this rumor.

There has never been a plan to remove the mural of Jesus. We are not removing the mural. The outrage went on for two days before someone contacted the parish office to find out the truth. The truth is that the mural is not being removed, and there has never been any plan to remove it.

There has been for several months a potential project, being managed by the parish Holy Name Society, to find an artist to repair the sun and weather damage to the mural. We have contacted the original artist, who has retired, and some potential candidates he has recommended, and artists who have recently worked in the Columbia area.

The Church's teaching on the Eighth Commandment has some things to say about the sins of participating in rumors and gossip, especially when they offend charity and virtue. Anyone in the discussion at any time could have contacted the parish office to get the facts straight.

I ordinarily wouldn't respond to rumors in this way, but this seemed both widespread and potentially damaging to our relationship with the community. Please use this clear affirmation of the truth to correct the "fake news" going around.

Thank you, and God bless you,

Fr. Stephen P. Kelley  
Pastor, Holy Trinity Catholic Church