

Comprehensive List of Questions and Answers from Cluster Submissions

This document contains the questions and comments gathered at the parish meetings at St. Salome's and St. Thomas the Apostle on May 16 and at Christ the King on May 31 concerning the process for planning for the future of the Catholic community in our region and responses provided by the Irondequoit Pastoral Planning Group ("IPPG"). Responses to some questions raised will be addressed in a separate document and the following does not represent a complete response. Additional questions and comments that do not relate to the future planning for the region are not addressed by IPPG and should be pursued by the concerned parishioner directly with Fr. Tanck. He is open to discussing any questions or concerns with you.

BUILDING CONCERNS

1. Five churches/buildings are too many.
2. The financial burden of all the buildings is too great.

The IPPG has come to this conclusion and is attempting to surmise the best way to reduce the number of churches/buildings.

3. Real State Agents should be contacted in this process.
4. What is the marketability of our buildings?

Up to this time, we have been gathering information about the properties. A real estate agent would be engaged in the selling of property – which is not the point where we are at this time. Discussions are, however, underway regarding seeking an appraiser's assistance to help determine the marketability of the various properties. At the present time, the only data available to us is an estimated value based on the square footage and replacement costs – which IPPG acknowledges is not an accurate reflection of marketability.

5. What will be done with the excess buildings? St. Salome has taken care of theirs.

Part of the decision process involves a determination of what space and what kinds of space are needed to provide the ministries of the community in the future. Unfortunately, even though St. Salome sold all of its excess buildings, the parish still cannot support the Church without some assistance as it must use its reserves to fund operating costs on a monthly basis. It is anticipated that excess buildings in the region will be sold or leased.

6. When considering closing churches, are we looking to a future which might have to provide for increasing young families?

Core to the work of IPPG is a vision of what the Catholic community in Irondequoit will look like in the future. For instance, in our analysis of seating capacity for Masses, we have a target of increasing the number of people attending Masses in the region by about 1200 people. We are considering open spaces, classroom space and parking space.

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7. Sell excess buildings, combine all income and run as one.
8. Combined parish has a new name, yet now each building remains open, eventually closing some.

This procedure is being considered and is called "Consolidation" whereby multiple parishes join as a single corporation with single leadership and with a new name. Such a parish can have one or multiple worship sites and other building use (such as offices at one location, classrooms at another location, etc.).

9. Have we considered building one new building for all five parishes? This would be easier for the priests.
10. Is there any consideration to build anything new?

Unless and until there are funds to undertake such a project, we are not in a position to consider construction of one central facility. Our planning has to address what we have at the present time, but the future is always open to re-evaluation of a proposal such as this if the resources warrant it.

11. How do we handle the immediate building needs considering the questionable future?
12. If St. Salome's deferred funds are used now to repair its building, would that make it more attractive to keep open?
13. Are Providence Housing and other bequests being considered for the costs of repairs?
14. Please do not make all the changes suggested for our building upgrades. When we plan to trade in an old car and the tires are still legal we would not replace these tires.
15. Have the assessment of the buildings been done with diocesan guidelines?
16. Some showed no future capital expenses

The regional finance committee worked with Tom Hussey, a Facilities Management Consultant retained by the Diocese to obtain an assessment of all of the buildings of the 5 parishes (SMM school and convent were subsequently under sale contract), including necessary capital improvements. He worked with parish representatives from each parish on a standard form to gather data, then compiled it for the use of IPPG. The summary was useful to IPPG in determining the general condition of the buildings in the region with the understanding that the repair and replacement costs were based on "engineering per square foot" costs, which are higher than what actual costs might be, but did provide the committee with information relating to all parish properties based on the same calculations. It has been decided at this time that no capital expenditures will be made by any of the parishes until we have determined the future of the 5 parishes to preserve the cash on hand at each parish for its best use. When the time comes, the leadership of the parish will seek bids for necessary work – repair or replacement. We must remember, however, that a roof has a certain "life expectancy" on a commercial building just as on a residence and at some point, replacement is a better option than yearly repairs.

17. Were same set of financial standards used in developing information on handouts?

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Yes, the same criterion was used in collecting capital repair/improvement the data. The St. Margaret Mary's numbers do not reflect any capital expenditures as SMM has received a purchase offer on their school building and two other structures on their campus, thus reducing/eliminating their capital requirements. SMM had made required repairs to the church building using their Partners in Faith funds thus further reducing the immediate need for capital repairs.

18. Are there guidelines for assessing value of buildings and resources?

Any required repairs or capital improvements were only considered if the costs was \$5,000 or higher. The figures compiled were based on square footage and an engineering per square foot value for assessment and for repair. We understand that this may not be a factual reflection of what actual repair or replacement costs might be, but because the same parameters were used for all properties, the data is consistent and deemed useful to the finance committee and IPPG.

19. Are we keeping the properties up at present, and what considerations are in effect to decide on the existence of properties?

20. Are we putting needed monies into buildings?

Repairs have been made to all the buildings when a crisis would arise and work was absolutely necessary. Roofs have been patched, steps pointed and ramps installed. However, many of the parishes needed funds to keep operational and were not able to address continued deterioration or any replacement rather than repair. In our planning for the future, we are looking at what it would take to bring our buildings to a higher standard so that they would meet our needs in the future, not to just get by until the next leak or crumble or sinkhole. The considerations on the future of the properties is somewhat beyond our current planning as we need to address what we have now and what we can do to meet our current needs, with a plan for some growth in the future. If in 2 years we find that more than 1200 people have joined our Catholic community, then facilities will need to be re-addressed.

21. One worship site –STA- can seat 1,000. CTK has school, other facilities

22. What consideration is given to the facilities?

23. Size of STA allures for growth

24. Cut the masses so all are filled

25. Although St. Thomas is under-utilized in terms of attendance, it would be wise to keep the building; if parishes are physically merged there is room enough here for a large congregation and ample parking.

26. Close all churches except STA (can accommodate all). Donate CTK church to the school and reconfigure the CTK property with a new structure for social/sports.

27. Church is full on Easter and Christmas – people would come to STA if it was the open one

28. If smaller churches close, where will people go? Would CTK draw too many?

29. Consider that the school children need a worship place, when buildings are being chosen to close.

One of the reasons the process is taking so long is that we need to be sure that we act responsibly in our determination of what to do. We must balance our current economic challenge with the need to

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retain adequate buildings for our future. Seating capacity for masses is not the only or main criteria, there are many factors to consider including location, handicap access, suitable adjoining space for gathering, parking, required repairs, etc. At the present time, because CTK School is open, the church building is viewed as important. Operating a Catholic school without a church for the children to attend and learn from is not regarded by IPPG as a favorable outcome.

When a church or churches are closed, then (hopefully) attendance at the masses at the other churches will increase. If necessary, additional masses can be added so that there will be comfortable space for everyone (St. Cecilia had to add a mass for Easter 2009). While it is our goal and wish that everyone will find a home in one of our regional churches, anyone that has to find a new church to worship in and is not comfortable there will be encouraged to help create an atmosphere that meets their needs. When a church closes, all parties experience change, not just the members who must find a new worship site. We are working toward a result that recognizes that no matter which church building or buildings close, everyone in our region will undergo change and we will all grow together into something stronger and better.

30. STA has the size advantage, location and age. The building needs to be a church.
Stained glass, artwork – painful to close. No other church like it.

31. Closing an edifice of this type will hurt our community
St. Thomas the Apostle is indeed a very unique structure and it is difficult to imagine it having a use other than a church. This is one of the factors being considered. We must recognize, however, that members of each parish feel that their church has its own unique features, qualities and history. Every member of every parish in our region has to recognize that no other person wants their church to become anything other than their church! It will be painful to close any of our churches.

32. Who owns the vacant parking lot adjacent to STA parking lot?
We have not been able to learn this information.

33. Close parishes – repair property for sale. Have buyer choose saleable property.
This would be a decision made with the guidance of a real estate agent. The Diocese has an agent that handles the sale of closed properties and we believe would be able to tell us what repairs would be needed to make a property more marketable. It is possible that a potential buyer would demolish all buildings and change the use of the property – perhaps for residential use in some parish locations, or for commercial use in others, so we do not at this time favor making any repairs to make a property more attractive to a buyer – any such work can be negotiated in a sale contract. The 2nd part of the statement would be very disruptive to our communities – it can take several years to find a buyer.

34. St. Salome apartments add to its parish.

35. Consider the loss to the apartments if St. Salome church closes.
We have not seen any data to support a claim that St. Salome's has seen a significant number of residents becoming registered parishioners or active in the parish.

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36. St. Salome has given up buildings to save the parish, being a leader in this process: what about Father Hart's promise five years ago that claimed this was necessary to save itself?

Five years ago, St. Salome parish was on the brink of bankruptcy, unable to make payroll or maintain its buildings. The sale of land and buildings to Providence Housing saved the parish from bankruptcy, but did not guarantee its future. Only growth can accomplish that.

37. What will happen if the buildings get in the hands of other groups?

38. If we have one building, we must bring items from the others to keep tradition and history.

If a Catholic church is closed, as so many have in cities across America, the community prepares a ceremony to transfer its sacred items to a new location, often blending the parishes that have combined. The parish works with the Chancellor to determine what items can be sold. When a property is put up for sale we will likely not have control over who purchases it, but it is our understanding that the community will have control over what personal property is included in the sale.

39. Has anyone considered building something on STA property?

The current focus is on the buildings and facilities that are in our regional inventory. IPPG is focusing on what we have and what to do now. It would not be fiscally responsible, or probably even feasible, to plan for any future new facilities unless and until there are funds to cover construction. But we are taking into consideration the size of the parish campuses and what future use they might have.

40. What can be done with an old parish and a school?

We can only look to other parishes and school buildings that have been closed in our Diocese and in other Dioceses. School buildings are often purchased to operate other types of schools or school programs. Church buildings are sometimes purchased by other faiths and used as churches, sometimes for commercial use (such as St. John's on West Ridge Road).

41. Can properties be put to better use?

42. Is it possible to have a retreat center, library video center etc. connected to the (what will be) Church of Irondequoit?

We are hoping to put the buildings we need to the best use possible for our needs and to let go of those buildings that we do not need. Considerations include turning worship space into meeting space, convents into meeting space or classrooms, etc. However, detailed planning along these lines is beyond the scope of what we have to address at the present time and will be in the hands of the future leaders of our community.

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43. When will the issue of acoustics in STA be addressed?

44. Please consider having meetings somewhere other than in this church – maybe the school hall – I can't hear (or understand) what is said and I assume that is the case with many others.

45. Are there any plans to improve the sound at STA? This affects attendance.

The acoustics at STA are of great concern in our planning. We are advised that the acoustic panels designed by Fr. Glenn are expected to be installed soon. Other than this project, as we understand it, fully paid for by a special fund drive at STA, IPPG is not aware of any studies or estimates of the cost of otherwise amending the acoustic situation.

FINANCIAL CONCERNS

1. School allocation is unfair.

Many people feel that the school assessment is unfair. It is a core belief that Catholic education is central to our faith and crucial to our future. Since the schools are no longer owned and operated by the parishes, all matters relating to the schools are handled by the Diocese, including the determination of an allocation among all parishes to support the Catholic schools in our Diocese. Existing as part of a bigger Church, obedience to the Diocese is our present discipline and whether we view the allocation as fair or unfair, we cannot change it, although we have expressed our concern with the Diocese.

2. Collections are down.

This is a problem everywhere, not just in our parishes, and collections will continue to diminish unless we all take action to invite non-practicing Catholics back to Church, evangelize non-Catholics and continue to find innovative ways to make present members who are able to increase their giving, and to bring in new members. IPPG believes that in order to do this, the Irondequoit Catholic Church of the future must be vibrant and inviting and rely more and more on lay involvement.

3. Our budgets cannot continue to run in the red. We'll bleed to death before major changes occur.

The Finance and Parish Councils together with the Parish Trustees are responsible for the finances of each Parish. The IPPG Finance Committee believes that we can only get out of the "red" through collaboration and consolidation among our parishes to reduce salary and facility costs and create reserves for future maintenance. We must act responsibly in our planning for the future and this is why it is necessary to take action as soon as possible. It is not good stewardship of our resources to continue to operate in the red.

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4. Have the expense reports from the parishes been equitable?
5. Financial information not presented in an apples to apples comparison
6. Thought it was a “done deal” when info sheet came out. Biased numbers for capital improvements. Wants discussion about numbers.
7. Flawed matrix. Others not forthcoming at parish expense. Was the info sheet biased?

Yes. Our IPPG Finance Committee has been functioning since 2001 and performing annual reviews of Parish income and expenses to determine cost sharing percentages among our parishes. All of our parishes use the same software, follow the same procedures and are audited by independent accountants every 2 or 3 years. We have not identified any significant inconsistencies in the reporting of expense information.

8. Were same set of financial standards used in developing information on handouts? Some showed no future capital expenses.

Yes, the same criterion was used in collecting capital repair/improvement data. The St. Margaret Mary numbers do not reflect any capital expenditures as SMM has received a purchase offer on their school building and two other structures on their campus, thus reducing/eliminating their capital requirements. SMM had made required repairs to the church building using their Partners in Faith funds thus further reducing the immediate need for capital repairs.

9. Could we please be informed of each parish's debt to income ratio. This should be a consideration in deciding which church/churches close.

Various parishes have debts to vendors, the Diocese, and a few banks. The ratio of these debts to our income hasn't been a focus of our review thus far. A key factor for the future is whether our Net Income after deducting all expenses will be sufficient to cover these past debts. More work is needed in this area, especially in evaluating how possible real estate sales might be used to pay off existing debts.

10. Why there wasn't a more comprehensive financial report available.

The purpose of the report/handout was to educate, not to examine every line item or each parish budget - to give a brief yet effective financial tool to help everyone see where each parish stands.

11. Should the cluster benefit from the sale of a building?
12. What will happen with money from the possible sale of SMM building?
13. How would funds be distributed if property is sold?
14. If one church exists, how will sacramental records be kept

Each parish is currently a separate corporation and its expenses and assets, including its sacramental records, belong to that parish. When buildings are sold, the proceeds are an asset of the applicable parish. If a parish consolidates with another parish, its assets and liabilities, including sacramental records, “follow” its people and become the assets and liabilities of the surviving corporation. The proceeds from the sale of SMM school and convent will be an asset of SMM parish to be used as that parish deems appropriate unless and until the parish consolidates with another parish or closes, when

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all assets and liabilities become an asset of the surviving parish. Until the new pastoral plan for the region is in place, St. Margaret Mary has agreed not to undertake any new construction, as have all the parishes.

15. St. Salome has unrestricted fund balances – what is happening with them and what will become of them in the future, depending on the scenario?

The money and records of a Parish follow the legal canonical entity. If parishes eventually consolidate into a single legal entity, money and records would be lumped together. During a transition period of clustering, money may be advanced temporarily between the clustered Parishes.

16. How are the repair costs being determined (SS's figure was 168K)?

All of the repair costs were determined by a Diocesan consultant (Tom Hussey) working with the parish representative(s) serving on the IPPG Facilities Committee and others in the Parish. In the case of St. Salome, Tom worked with Paul Zoltoski and Donna Moll.

17. Is the income from Stepping Stones (STA) and the SS Day Care included in the amounts recorded on the handout?

Yes. This type of income is considered as operating together with the related building costs.

18. Does the school figure into finances?

The only impact the school at CTK has on the finances is on the assessment for the Monroe County Catholic School (MCCS) that the diocese imposes on each parish. MCCS no longer reimburses CTK for building expenses covering improvements or routine maintenance. However, MCCS does pay rent to CTK at a rate of \$4 per square foot, which is budgeted as income and used to offset the expense of the MCCS assessment in the normal CTK operating budget.

19. Can SMM and SC each stand on their own?

20. If a parish in the region has the facilities, the volunteers, the location and attendance - why is it being considered for closing?

There may be a perception among parishioners that their parish is thriving because it is doing all the right things, but we have learned that none of the parishes in our region can survive as independent parishes for much longer.

21. What are the costs of repair vs. replacement?

Replacement cost was consistently used by the Facilities Committee because estimating the cost of repairs is highly subjective as to how much to repair and how long the repair will last. Engineering estimates were used since it was impractical to obtain bid estimates in the short time frame we are facing.

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22. Consolidation will result in reduction of paid staff – how will it be determined who stays or loses their job?

Staffing decisions are made by the pastoral leader(s) of the cluster(s) or parish(es). Our role at this time is to examine what options the region has that it can support financially (how much a realistic budget for staffing is). IPPG will not make any decisions regarding actual job positions or personnel.

23. Growth of the Port of Rochester and the value of water real estate should be considered. Also this will bring more people to north side of town – where will they go? Holy Cross doesn't have the room.

Future demographics are being considered including the potential growth at the Port as well as the proposed residential housing in Irondequoit Mall. However, both of these proposed housing projects are speculative with no guarantee - we are focusing on more concrete data at this time.

24. How about a fund drive to provide for the repairs at STA?

It would not seem responsible to have a fund drive for repairs at St. Thomas, or at any of our other parishes, or to build a new facility at St. Margaret Mary, until we have a plan in place for the use of our regional buildings.

25. Have you thought about lost revenue when a parish is closed?

If the revenue collected by a parish does not meet its expenses, then it is not financially responsible to continue operating at a loss without taking action, even if the action means that additional revenue will be lost. Statistics tell us that when a parish experiences a change, even as relatively minor as changes in mass times, 20% of its members either stop attending mass or go to another church. We hope that our prayerful and diligent efforts to study, inform and respond, in the recent past and promised for the future, will prove the statistics wrong. As a people of strong faith and hope we believe the Spirit within us has this power.

OTHER CONCERNS

1. How does ST, MM and SC fit into this process? What about the move from the 3 to 5 cluster?

There are 5 parishes in our region plus St. Ann's Community. St. Ann's does not figure into the pastoral planning process as it is not a "parish" but it has been integrally involved in our regional activities, especially senior ministries. The current pastoral plan, adopted in December, 2006, is for CTK, SS & STA to cluster, and be joined by SC and SMM to form a cluster of 5 communities, retaining as many of the worship sites as feasible, by 2012. The plan called for evaluation of the 3 parish cluster in 2009 to insure the plan was working and to seek ways to bring in the other communities. As IPPG began the evaluation process, the Diocese brought the financial issues of our region to our attention and directed us to speed up the process to preserve our assets and stop draining our resources (including our parishioners). Currently, we are evaluating what the revised plan will include.

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2. What is the total process and timeline? Where are we now?
3. The economy (and other changes) have pushed the timeline
4. What is the process of decision making and for Dec. 31, 2009?

*The implementation committee, a subcommittee of IPPG, must come to consensus on the best path forward for the region and present its recommendation for the future to IPPG (including a proposal for buildings, staffing and ministries). Once IPPG comes to consensus, the recommendation will be presented to a joint meeting of the 5 parish councils. When the councils have come to consensus, a plan will be presented in one or two regional meetings to all parishioners and then submitted to the Bishop for approval. After the Bishop's approval, implementation of the plan can begin. The current timeline projects a presentation to the parish councils to take place approximately in July 2009. Actual implementation (clustering, consolidating, closing) will take place over a period of time. Staffing contracts run through the last Tuesday of each June so it is likely that staffing changes will use that date as a trigger, and IPPG is hoping for June 2010 as a **target** for at least some staffing changes to take place. At this time, the dates for each step in the process are targets and December 31, 2009 is not a confirmed date for any action.*

5. What really are the diocesan guidelines: does a church building really have to close?
6. How much influence does the IPPG have on the Bishop's (Diocese's) decision?
7. The Bishop has not listened before and there is a fear that he will not now.
8. Who makes the final decision and how?
9. What happens if plan is not ready?
10. Will there be a time when we can learn of the Bishop's thoughts and factors in what is going on?

Each parish is a separate corporation, tied to the Diocese in various ways. Each parish corporation must maintain itself spiritually, physically and financially. In our Diocese, the decision to close buildings is made by the parish, and approved by the Diocese, just as any construction of new buildings is financed by the parish but requires approval by the Diocese. However, if a parish cannot support itself (staff, buildings, ministries, etc.) and does not take action, the Bishop can issue a directive to the parish to take action. In the end, if necessary, the Bishop can force the parish to take action – clustering, consolidating or closing the parish or some of its buildings.

The Diocese has a Pastoral Planning Office with staff assigned to all parishes in the Diocese. Our contact with the Diocese is through our liaison, Deb Housel. Other Diocesan staff (people in communications, human resources, finance and facilities) assist us in this process. However, we are an independent group and we do not meet and consult, or receive direction from Bishop Clark directly in this process. We learn of his thoughts and factors through our liaison and in his responses to our letters, such as his December 2006 letter responding to our pastoral plan.

11. Has the diocese made the decision already; what worship sites are closing?

The Diocese has directed the Pastors and IPPG to determine what is best for the Catholic communities of Irondequoit. We have been told to faithfully and prayerfully consider what is best and most financially practical for the region as quickly as possible to minimize the financial drain on

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our resources. The decision of what worship sites will close is in our hands (although the Diocese must approve our Plan, we believe the criteria for approval will be based on its feasibility, not on any predetermined decision).

12. How will priests be able to serve us considering the shortage?

13. If the priest going on sabbatical does not return, will we get a replacement?

14. Empower lay people so priests can focus on sacraments.

We need to be very conscious of the number of retiring priests, the aging of our priests and the low number of ordinations and accept the fact that we, the people of the Church, must welcome change in worship and liturgy locations, times and format and to make sacrifices as needed instead of expecting our priests to accommodate all that we are used to. Fr. Beligotti has not indicated that he does not plan to return after his leave. If the current number of priests serving our region at this time is reduced for any reason, there is no guarantee that a replacement will be available to serve our region. We must all step forward and take on tasks that support our Church and its ministries and maintain and increase our efforts in vocations to the priesthood.

15. Have we considered using priests that are visiting our diocese, just as ours are used when they are “down south”?

The Diocese coordinates relief when assigned priests are not available due to vacations, illness or sabbatical. Our retired priests are very generous with their time, and none of our parishes could function today without their assistance, but their numbers are also shrinking. Visiting priests are not as common (we are apparently not a vacation destination!) so this is not a significant resource.

16. How are the boundaries of our parishes made? Has it been considered to go outside of Irondequoit?

It is unclear what might be meant by “outside of Irondequoit.” The Diocese generates maps showing parish boundaries and where registered parish members live. These maps show that many parishioners join parishes outside of their neighborhood and even their town. Please note that all parishes in the Diocese are in some phase of clustering and consolidation with other parishes in their area.

17. The process has been too slow.

It is difficult to coordinate getting pastors, staff and volunteers from 5 parishes and St. Ann's together – everyone has full schedules. IPPG is committed to acting deliberately and thoroughly in its attempt to insure the future of our region is the best that it can be. There are many factors to examine and work through. Most parishes have tried to hold on to what they have had for as long as possible and we have all been a bit delinquent in looking forward realistically, but we are working to catch up now.

18. Can we consolidate/sharing of services now?

19. Why can't the five parishes combine resources, programs, masses NOW?

The clustered parishes of St. Salome, St. Thomas the Apostle and Christ the King have begun consolidating and sharing but this is difficult to do and still maintain three separate offices, staffs

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and “books” and therefore happens very slowly. Across the region, each parish has staff with its own goals, styles, visions and priorities. And each parish has a community that treasures what makes it special. The specific tasks worked on since last winter among the 5 parishes in the areas of confirmation preparation, youth sponsored Mass and Living Stations and the Evangelization projects all worked well. Note though that without common consistent leadership, it is difficult to execute numerous and continuous effective programs.

20. What will be done at the follow-up meeting in June/ Will the outside parishes (SMM and SC) be involved?
21. How do the 2 other parishes play into all of this?
22. Since the “outside” two parishes are not included in the 6/6 meeting, there needs to be a meeting where all 5 parishes are invited.
23. Will there be future meetings involving the community to decide how we become one?

The June 6 meeting is a cluster meeting designed to provide responses to the questions raised at the individual parish meetings at St. Thomas, St. Salome and Christ the King. The other parishes have completed similar meetings guided by their pastors. All pastors in our region have deemed it important for each parish to have its own first meeting that focuses on the concerns of that parish. Regional meetings will take place after IPPG has presented to the parish councils (est. July 2009) and they have reached consensus on a plan for the future. Since summer is vacation time, it may not be until September 2009 before any regional meeting will take place. We are establishing a website to keep everyone in the region updated at: irondequoitcatholic.org click on IPPG in the upper left column.

24. Praise to Father Tanck for handling this unenviable task.

Amen to that! And also to all the priests – cluster priests for taking on additional tasks so Fr. Tanck can attend all the meetings he is required to preside at, and the other parish priests for working so hard to manage their parishes in these challenging economic times!

25. Once a decision has been made about closing buildings, consider upcoming weddings etc. and assure a plan is in place and communicate this asap.

Pastoral leadership will strive to do so.

26. We are at least nine months away from any plan to the Bishop.

IPPG is hoping to have a plan adopted by the end of September, 2009.

27. Need full review of data.

The members of IPPG are striving to insure that all relevant data is gathered and considered before making a recommendation to the parish councils. Summaries of the data have been shared with parishioners to the best of our ability.

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28. Why can't St. George's join with STA, city parishes could join with us?

29. If no decision has been made, why did the Bishop tell the members of St. George's not to consider St. Thomas, hinting that it wouldn't be around in 2 years? Could St. George's use this space? Clarify St. George option.

St. George's is a Lithuanian community which cannot support its buildings and whose members no longer live near the parish Church on Hudson Avenue. They are looking for a church where they can rent or share facilities to maintain their parish in another location. They are not looking to join another parish. The Diocese has organized parishes into regions based on location so that people will have a church near them to cluster with or consolidate with. It is possible to partner with a city parish (we believe St. Margaret Mary does this) but as a ministry, not as a cluster or consolidation.

Fr. Tanck responded at the St. Thomas parish meeting advising that it was his understanding that the community of St. George's is about 70 people and they would find the church to be too large for such a small community. We brought this question to the people at the Diocese that met with the St. George's members (Fr. Hart and B. Grizard) and this is what we were told: "The Bishop's office met several weeks ago with Fr. Dominic & Fr. Gintaras to discuss plan/update/process for St. George's relocation. Fr. Dominic mentioned STA as one of several parishes he contacted but it was not their 1st choice. At that meeting, we discussed what to take in consideration when relocating a parish. (needs, space, ...) At that point of our discussion, we mentioned the importance of having a long term view when choosing a new location. It may not be wise to choose a campus within a pastoral planning group which may reduce the number of their sites within the next few years. We spoke quite briefly of the fact that the IPPG was working on a plan to be presented to the communities. The point was not about the Irondequoit communities or STA but it was about securing a place long term for St. George's community. You do not want to move a community in a place which could be changed on a short term basis. It's too much work and it destabilizes a community. Our focus was not so much to discourage St. George about choosing STA, but rather, bringing awareness about changes which occur in some planning groups as they are looking for a new home/site."

30. There should be equal distribution of masses and ceremonies

The current mass schedule was developed based on historical and projected attendance, allowing for a priest to have time to travel from one church to another when necessary over the 6 mass sites in our region (this includes St. Ann's). In the cluster, the location for ceremonies and liturgies is determined by the pastor, presumably after taking into account many factors.

31. Are we considering different purposes for parishes? (ie worship site, social complex)

Within the realm of the reality of what we have, what we can do with what we have and what might be possible in the future, we are considering the various facets of what our parishes provide and need to provide including church, ministries, education, social, playgrounds, parking, etc.

32. Provide attendance by numbers, not percentages

The number of households is the number of registered households in each parish, which does NOT include people who attend mass but choose not to register. The mass count is the number of people sitting in the pews for mass – it includes each man, woman and child. While this tells us how much

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room there is in a church, which has been useful in our planning, if the data is used to determine the vibrancy and lay involvement in a parish, the data does not work. We recognize that comparing attendance numbers to seating capacity makes one look better than another. This was not our intent in the use of this data.

33. The reporting on our sheets such as mass attendance is questionable. The sacramental numbers have to do with changing age demographics.

Mass attendance figures, especially in relation to the capacity in a church, have been used primarily by IPPG to determine how much worship space is needed to accommodate our practicing Catholics at mass. The mass attendance figures represent actual attendance at Masses, so this, together with sacramental data, helps show how a parish is doing over time (as members pass on, are there new members? Are the liturgies vibrant, the community welcoming?).

34. If we open the school, more will come.

All matters involving Catholic schools are outside the realm of our pastoral planning.

35. Bingo – more will come

This decision would be made by parish leadership. However, we note that most parishes that have offered bingo have found that (i) they cannot maintain the program as it requires a constant, weekly time commitment by a continually shrinking number of volunteers, (ii) our buildings require activities to be non-smoking which discourages participation by many of the regular players, (iii) the activity ties up a building on a weekly basis so that other parish activities cannot use them, and (iv) gambling and supporting gambling is a questionable value among Catholics.

36. St. Paul wrote that we should walk by faith and not by sight. I've seen no evidence anywhere in this planning process of simply trusting God to help us. How about a novena?

You are invited and encouraged to organize this wonderful idea. Please be aware that every meeting of every committee of IPPG opens and closes with prayer and that each member is a faithful Catholic, grounded in a relationship with God.

37. We should have a Mission Statement for the process/in the process

IPPG adopted a mission statement when it was first organized many years ago: "We the Catholic Community of Irondequoit, are committed to living and giving witness to the Good News of the Gospel. On our faith journey, nourished by the Word and Eucharist, we join other churches and all who seek harmony within the human family, to make the Kingdom of God a reality in our world by extending hospitality of God's loving presence to all who are in need."

38. If we close a worship site, what will be done to draw in the people from that area?

This will be new to all of us but there are resources to help us including parishes that have been down this path and through our Diocesan liaison. Further, because our commitment it to create something new and inviting – with some change happening to some degree in all our parishes, everyone will

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have a stake in working toward creating a welcoming atmosphere and a new vision having the potential of our sum of 5 being a greater faith beacon than our 5 individual stand alone parishes. St. Cecilia's has welcomed many parishioners from nearby City parishes that have clustered or closed and has sponsored many programs to incorporate these new members.

39. After the clustering, only St. Thomas church is used – there are no other activities going on and the buildings are not used.

Given that STA has the parish center, school and church, there is a good amount of space. However, the church is used for worship and the school is pretty much used up by the tenants at Stepping Stones—who contribute some serious revenue to our operation. That still leaves the Parish Center. Some rooms are amenable to group meetings but others are too small. If a group needs a meeting room, a call to the parish office will ensure that they are given options in one of the parish buildings. The lack of handicap access is a hindrance to the use of many of the buildings.

40. SMM showed significant loss of revenue – do we understand why? Is it ongoing? IPPG has not undertaken an examination of the underlying reasons for losses in revenue or attendance; that has been addressed by each parish independently. This may cause us to reflect on enhancing our evangelization, our welcoming, our liturgies.

41. Consider the area of space in the north/south division not just the east and west. The consideration of east vs west related more to the school districts than to the layout of the town. We have a unique opportunity to unite our “two towns” in a manner pleasing to God and its residents.

42. Desire a summary of the other parishes concerns

The parish meetings at St. Cecilia and St. Margaret Mary were not held in the same manner as in the cluster parishes. They were structured more as dialogue which is why the June 6 meeting is structured in this manner. Fr. Norm wanted to better understand the concerns before having the dialogue meeting given he leads such a large group of people.

43. Who are on the committees and how did they get on?

A roster of the member of the parish and finance councils of each of the 5 parishes, the Planning Group and the Regional Finance Committee will be posted at the June 6 meeting. IPPG members are listed on this summary.

44. It would be helpful to have minutes for meetings as to understand others' thoughts and the process.

The members of the committee addressing the pastoral plan update have decided that it is necessary to keep its discussions closed until a consensus has been reached. This is to avoid any rumors or gossip or the chance for discussion to be interpreted as fact and also so that discussions can be candid. The general regional work of IPPG, including Senior Ministries, Vocations and Youth, are reflected in meeting notes and we will discuss finding a venue to provide these to interested parties.

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45. What is the future of the Basilian presence in this area?

The Basilian presence at Christ the King is by invitation of the Bishop and agreement of the Order. Either party can terminate the relationship but we have no reason to believe that this is being contemplated by either party at this time.

46. Define the terminology: cluster, region

The best place to find definitions of terms used is on the Diocese's website: www.dor.org. Some informal definitions are:

Parish: *a separate corporation (this can include multiple worship sites but will have one set of "books")- presently all 5*

Cluster: *parishes joined together under common leadership (finance councils and "books" must remain separate, any other parts may be consolidated or combined such as staff, programs and ministries)- presently SC, CTK and STA are a cluster*

Region: *these are established by the Diocese to put parishes in close proximity together for purposes of planning for the future. A region may be comprised of several rural parishes that are many miles apart or several that are very close together, as in our region (which includes CTK, SS, SC, STA, SMM, and St. Ann's)*

The definitions for Pastor, Pastoral Administrator, Pastoral Vicar, Sacramental Minister, etc. can all be found on the Diocesan website: www.dor.org.

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