

Catholic Parish of Wellington South

Parish Buildings Review Consultation

A discernment process

The response to Cardinal John's letter should be the product of prayerful discernment. Discernment is a process of making decisions or arriving at answers in a prayerful way.

You may be familiar with it in the context of The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. Pope Francis often talks about discernment: *"Discernment is one of the things that worked inside St. Ignatius. For him it is an instrument of struggle in order to know the Lord and follow him more closely... Discernment is always done in the presence of the Lord, looking at the signs, listening to the things that happen, the feeling of the people, especially the poor."*

Pope Francis, August 2013

Father James Martin SJ explains the essence of discernment: *"At heart, the process begins with the belief that God wants a person, or a group, to make good, healthy and life-giving decisions; and through the 'discernment of spirits,' that is, sorting out what is coming from God and what is not, one gains clarity about the best path. God therefore both wants and enables individuals and groups to arrive at good decisions."*

Our relationship with God is at the heart of discernment. God respects our freedom by acting very gently with us. This means that we need to continually fine-tune our listening to God. Listening to God amid the other interior and exterior voices in our lives is discernment. How do we know that we are listening to God and following the movement of the Spirit within ourselves or in a group? Ask, *"Am I at peace with this? Am I at ease now, especially if what I had previously thought was the best course of action is not what I now think? Or am I uneasy or anxious?"*

A good discernment process brings clarity and inner peace. If there is unease or anxiety, personal issues are getting in the way.

Individual discernment

If you wish to make an individual response to Cardinal John's letter, this simple process may help you develop clarity about what you want to say.

1. Take some silent time to pray about how you will arrive at your response. Don't focus on the topic initially. Instead seek the freedom to follow where God leads, to let go of biases and negative feelings, and the patience to allow your response to evolve over time.

2. After a time of prayer, reflect upon the words of Cardinal John: *"We are called to be "missionary disciples", which in the words of Pope Francis, makes an attitude of "we've always done it this way" not only damaging to the Church, but invalid."*

3. When you come to consider the topic, be willing to first let thoughts and feelings which may be influencing your response to surface:

- How do I feel about this topic?
- Are my feelings the result of my experience? Are they influenced by other people?
- What happens if I bring my imagination into play?
- What is God saying to me about this topic?

Negative thoughts and emotions or feelings of anxiety triggered by the topic get in the way of hearing what God is saying. We know we are listening to God when our thoughts are refreshing, peaceful, generate new inspiration and ideas, and direct us beyond ourselves.

4. Make notes as you reflect for use in preparing your input to the consultation. Your response can be emailed to the Parish Office or placed in the collection basket.

Pastoral Letter from Cardinal John - 15 February 2019

Dear Parishioners

In the last few days I have sent your Pastoral Team and leadership group a document which contains a directive. It is very rare that I direct parishes to take a certain action, so this indicates the seriousness of what I am asking of you.

Between 2013 to 2017 the Archdiocese carried out a parish amalgamation process, resulting in the reduction of the number of parishes from 47 to 22. This means, of course, there are now parishes with two or more churches, more than is necessary for worship and pastoral care. In some places the integration of church communities has been slow.

In addition, the Archdiocese continues to experience pressures that compound the present situation and carry major implications for the future:

Earthquake resilience issues mean we have unsustainable insurance costs and buildings with unacceptable NBS ratings.

The reduced number of priests, which is accelerating each year, means that in most parishes there is a single priest (often elderly) expected to minister in more than one church. Availability and ability of priests are highly significant factors governing decisions for our future that cannot be delayed.

The 2017 Archdiocesan Synod voted for new priorities which must be addressed. They cannot be simply "add-ons" to what we already do. They require us to look with new eyes and, with Pope Francis, to radically rethink how we are to be "the People of God" in today's environment.

We are called to be "missionary disciples", which in the words of Pope Francis, makes an attitude of "we've always done it this way" not only damaging to the Church, but invalid.

Here is our situation:

- We have too many churches and presbyteries for our Mass count, and for the number and age of our priests.
- Some of the churches require large sums of money to address their earthquake resilience and general maintenance.
- Pope Francis and the Synod have challenged us to be more outward-looking and to serve those who are marginalised or disadvantaged.

If we are to respond well to present and future challenges, we need to act together in favour of the common good of all parishes, and support one another in a process of change. This is not an easy task for any of us.

Some of you may see this as a threat to the status quo, but I would like you to see our situation as an opportunity to let the Holy Spirit work in our midst to create a sustainable and mission-oriented future.

So, I am directing every parish to carry out a review of its churches and presbyteries, including parishes with only a single church. The review is to be with me, complete with developed proposals, no later than 30 October 2019.

The review will identify how many churches the parish needs to cater for its Mass count (taking into account the availability of priests and lay pastoral leaders), and the ideal location of the church or churches. For most, if not all parishes with more than one church, this will mean reducing the number of churches in the parish. Provision for accommodation of priests is part of the review.

The review involves collecting and analysing information, and consultation among parishioners. It should result in proposals that are both realistic and practical. Your Pastoral Team and leadership group have received more detailed information, and will be meeting in the near future to look at how the parish might carry out this process.

You need to be prepared to be radical in your thinking and discernment. The theme of parish amalgamation was "A Future Full of Hope". This hope-filled future will only start to take shape when we honestly and courageously engage with and answer the many questions about our buildings.

Yours sincerely in the Lord

John A Cardinal Dew
Archbishop of Wellington

Parish data to be considered in the review process

Mass Attendance (numbers)

Average weekly Mass attendance in 2017 / 2018			
St Francis de Sales 6pm Vigil 1st/3rd/5th Sundays	68	St Bernard's 6pm Vigil 2nd/4th Sundays	48
St Joseph's 9am Sunday	162	St Anne's 9am Sunday	162
St Francis de Sales 10:30am Sunday	138	St Bernard's 10:30am Sunday	73
St Anne's 5pm Sunday	149		
Based on the above figures, average numbers at the four Mass times:			
6pm Saturday Vigil	60		
9am Sunday	330		
10:30am Sunday	210		
5pm Sunday	150		

Summary of the current situation with our buildings

Churches						
	Numbers (overflow)	Meets NBS	Easy to maintain	In good condition	Parking for 240	Hospitality
St Anne's	200 (300)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
St Bernard's	140	No	Yes	No	No	No
St Joseph's	300	Yes	No	No*	No	Yes
SFdS	550 (600)	Yes	Yes	No**	No	No
Presbyteries						
Island Bay	Aging, uninsulated and not up to required living standard					
Brooklyn	Aging and requiring significant repairs and investment					

* issues with roof and high maintenance costs

** e.g. no heating and inadequate toilets

Factoring in our Parish Schools

Our schools will necessarily be part of the wider consultative process.

These notes are based on observations made by our Parish leadership team.

	Roll in 2018	Use of parish buildings
St Anne's	130 - numbers steady	Uses full campus (including hall) Uses church on a regular and routine basis
St Francis de Sales	297 - numbers growing	Just started to use the church after 6 years classified as an earthquake-prone building. Using 'hall'. School does not have an assembly area large enough for the whole school (other than the church)
St Bernard's	55 - numbers steady	Doesn't use church because it does not meet NBS Has class Masses in classroom, school Masses in the hall – both are adequate. Design of church unhelpful for school use

Statement of Financial Activities for Year Ended 31 March 19

Profit and Loss Summary for year end 31 March 2019

	2019	2018
Income		
Offertory Collections	296,084	278,650
Donations - Devotional, Koha and Other Appeals	7,649	9,838
Other Revenue (Interest Rec'd, Sales of Publications)	15,753	18,483
Unconditional Grants- Bequests and Legacies	700	12,400
Other Revenue (Rent)	108,367	94,667
Total Income	428,553	414,038
Less Operating Expenses		
Levy for Support of Clergy	118,517	108,893
Levy for Archdiocesan Costs	48,139	44,238
Parish Insurance	38,882	35,730
Sunday Mass Supply for Parish	4,950	5,050
Parish Operating Expenses	42,984	44,989
Pastoral Services	17,195	17,007
Personnel Expenses	73,166	74,591
Depreciation	10,221	10,240
Property - rates	29,075	28,276
Property - repairs and maintenance	62,883	75,540
Special projects – Brougham Street	9,331	32,432
Vehicle Running Costs	21,602	17,124
Total Expenses	476,945	494,111
Net Profit / Loss	(48,391)	(80,073)

Notes from the Parish Finance & Property Team

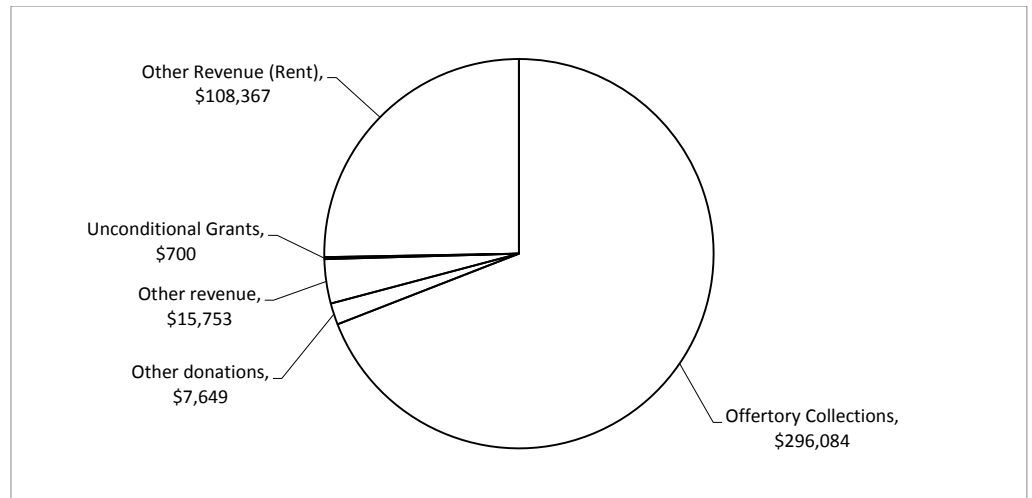
Our Catholic Parish of Wellington South has a net operating loss of **\$48,391** for the last fiscal year (2018-19). Although total operating income is higher than the prior year by **\$14,515**, combined losses for the newly combined Parish since 2016 are now **\$170,159**. We are obviously drawing on our investments at a rate which is not sustainable. It was positive that the offertory collections are up by approximately 6% from the previous year, but the overall financial picture is less than ideal.

Operating expenses are lower than the prior year by **\$17,166**. Repairs & maintenance costs were also lower as no major repairs were undertaken on our rental properties. Insulation was installed in these properties, however this is considered a capital cost. The Brougham Street project is currently awaiting the completion of final tender documentation.

The re construction of the Island Bay retaining wall is being covered by our insurers and has been beset by ongoing delays. We are still awaiting tenders to be approved for work to begin.

The Parish is running a lean cost structure. Future growth will require increased giving and/or new sources of income. The Parish operates only on the participation and generosity of our congregation. Thank you.

Overview of Parish Income for year ending 31 March 2019



Overview of Parish Expenditure in year ending 31 March 2019

