

FAQs

1: WHY DO WE HAVE TO REDUCE OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS?

In February Cardinal John wrote to parishioners, Parish Councils and Leadership teams directing us to radically re-think how we are to be "People of God." In particular, our call to be missionary disciples – and that "if we are to develop our support for the poor and marginalized, we may have to make sacrifices."

He also requires us to face and plan for the uncomfortable reality of our shrinking congregations, reducing number of priests and financial situation, including the burden of ongoing maintenance of our many churches and presbyteries.

Importantly, he exhorts us to look to the future and not cling to the past, telling us that "we've always done it this way" is both invalid and damaging.

We have been required to undergo an analysis of our buildings, financial situation, and Mass attendance and make a realistic proposal regarding our parish buildings.

2: WHY DID YOU NOT CONSIDER KEEPING THREE CHURCHES?

Parish finances have been running at a deficit for several years and face substantial costs maintaining our four churches and presbytery in operating costs, overdue maintenance and earthquake issues. The current financial picture indicates that we cannot sustain four or three churches, it would be irresponsible to put forward a proposal that we know isn't viable and give our congregations false hope that we can sustain these building when we know that we can't.

Alongside this we must also consider our Mass count which has fallen by over 20% over the last 20 years, over 10% in the last 10 years and will undoubtedly continue to shrink. We also must realistically assume we will be a one-priest parish within 3-5 years or sooner. One priest cannot be sacramentally present and pastorally responsive effectively when stretched between three churches, congregations, and schools. This is an unrealistic workload.

3: WHY DID YOU OPERATE ON THE BASIS OF ONLY ONE PRIEST?

Because of reducing numbers of priests in our Archdiocese and the age of the current priests Cardinal John has asked us to consider the future reality of one priest in our proposal.

4: WHY DIDN'T YOU SHARE THE FINANCIAL SITUATION UPFRONT?

It was shared in simplified format and graph as part of the Consultation Document handed out with the Parish Newsletter on 19th May 2019.

5: WHY DID THERE SEEM TO BE A BIAS AGAINST ST JOSEPH'S IN THE TABLE PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSLETTER ABOUT THE CHURCH BUILDINGS?

This table was not a building or structural analysis, or a analysis of finances. It was merely a cross section of the perceptions of the current buildings by parishioners. We acknowledge that this could have been made clearer, and thank all those who made written submissions that stated their feelings and gave us a different perspective on the table shared.

6: IN THE SECOND ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS IT WAS CLEAR THAT WE WANTED TO KEEP TWO CHURCHES BUT THE PROPOSAL TALKS ABOUT GOING DOWN TO ONE CHURCH, WHY IS OUR CLEAR PREFERENCE BEING IGNORED?

We considered the information from the initial discernment process, the stewardship consultation day, we have spoken to neighbouring parishes and met with local Catholic school principals. 27 individual submissions from parishioners were also considered. We took seriously the views expressed in all these mediums and have also considered building reports and financial analysis. In light of all this information it is clear that the Parish needs to move to one church within a ten year period. We have however managed within our plan to keep two church buildings operational. We will work with St Francis de Sales School and the wider parish community to renovate St Francis de Sales church into a new shared facility that is both a sacred space, a weekday-only Mass centre and a multi-use space that support's Christ's message and mission in the school and community. We will look at transferring ownership of St Francis de Sales to the school.

This means the parish will only retain ownership of one church but all going well two churches will remain open and will continue to be used by the community.

7: WHY HASN'T MORE ATTENTION BEEN GIVEN TO THE FACT THAT ST JOSEPH'S IS AN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY?

Many written submissions outlined to us the significance of the St Joseph's intentional community for its congregation. We read and took these into consideration in the proposal process. All of our church communities are distinct and rich, they all bring and add value to our parish as a whole, it would be a mistake to assume that other communities within our parish are not intentional in their approach to community or to worship. We hope and pray that as we make a graduated approach to one church over the next 10 years we will all bring our strengths to create a new vibrant intentional community that lives out the mission of the Church in a way that is alive and active.

8: WHY HAVEN'T OUR SUGGESTIONS AND FEEDBACK AROUND THE ROLE OF LAY PEOPLE AND THE CLERGY BEEN VOICED IN OUR PROPOSAL OR MORE ATTENTION BEEN PAID TO THIS ISSUE.

We were given a mandate by the Cardinal to undergo an analysis of our buildings, financial situation, and Mass attendance and make a realistic proposal regarding our parish buildings in light of the churches mission. The role of lay people and clergy cannot be documented in this proposal and is also not a matter that an individual parish council can address. These questions, concerns and suggestions can be emailed to the Cardinal directly if you wish to propose changes in these areas.

9: WHY ST ANNE'S AND NOT ST JOSEPH'S OR ST FRANCIS DE SALES

St Anne's is situated in the centre (heart) of the parish, it has both the hall and Church and has space and land capacity for expansion and development. It is central to the missionary work of the parish as it is home to the largest ethnic communities and is utilised regularly for youth activities. It is also easy to get to on public transport.

10: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We have submitted our proposal to be considered by the Cardinal alongside the other parishes in the Wellington Archdiocese. We will wait to hear back from the Cardinal.

Once we hear back if this proposal is to be actioned we will look at creating working groups of interested parishioners from all church communities to begin making the changes outlined in this proposal and making concrete plans for the upgrade of the St Anne's campus into a community and facility suitable for and truly shared by all our parishioners

11: HOW WILL THE MONEY FROM THE SALE OF ASSETS BE MANAGED?

The money will remain within the parish to be used to:

- Increase and grow the missionary discipleship work of the parish.
- To develop the St Anne's Campus in consultation with the parish.

12: WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CURRENT CHURCH BUILDING CLOSES AND I DON'T HAVE TRANSPORT TO GET TO MASS AT ST ANNE'S?

You are encouraged to talk to others in our wide parish community and explain your situation. We will all help each other get to Mass with car-pooling, or public transport. Please know we want to work together as a supportive community.

13: WHAT IS THE PARISH COUNCIL, WHY DO THEY GET TO MAKE DECISIONS AND WHO IS ON IT.

The Archdiocese Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils states that a Parish Pastoral Council is:

- **Community** - you are a team of parishioners.
- **Mission** - you take special responsibility for what your parish is and does.
- **Vision** - in consultation with the parishioners you plan where you should be going as a parish and how to make that happen.
- **Service** - you inspire other parishioners and draw on their talents and gifts.

The Wellington South Parish Pastoral Council is made up of nine members - two from each church community - who act on behalf of, and in the interests of the Parish as a whole.

The Pastoral Council also has a Principal Representative of the three Primary Schools: St Anne's, St Francis de Sales, and St Bernard's. This representative rotates regularly between the three Principals.

The current members of the Parish Pastoral Council are:

- Stephen Neal (Chair)
- Francis Fanning
- Penny Holden
- John Whiting
- Melania Luka-Lui
- Rain Forest
- Rachael Cahir
- Ivan Moss
- Andrew Pozniak (School Principal)