

# CATHOLIC PARISH OF WELLINGTON SOUTH

We are a community of joyful  
disciples growing together and  
sharing Christ's message.

Ko tātou tetahi hāpori o ngā  
ākonga harikoa, e whakatupu  
ngātahi ana, e ruia ana te karere o  
Hēhu Karaiti.



## PROPOSAL

TO CARDINAL JOHN DEW  
OCTOBER 2019

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In February Cardinal John Dew 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 marginalised, 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.

Across the Catholic Parish of Wellington South we have a talented, diverse community who live out their faith and exhibit missionary discipleship in many ways – both within the parish and within their lives in the wider community.

During the last eight months we have consulted with our parishioners, listened to what is important to them and reflected and prayed deeply about our future.

As a parish, we have to face the uncomfortable reality of:

- Our financial situation: parish finances have been running at a deficit for several years and we face substantial costs maintaining our four churches and presbytery in operating expenses, overdue maintenance and earthquake issues.
- Falling congregations: our Mass count has fallen by over 20% over the last 20 years, over 10% in the last 10 years and will likely continue to shrink.
- Reducing numbers of priests: we must realistically assume we will be a one-priest parish within 3-5 years or sooner.

For us not to face this reality and plan for it would be irresponsible.

So, within this context, we believe that the parish needs to:

- Accept that we will need to become a one-church parish within ten years.
- Plan for that eventuality and renovate and expand our facilities in a way that will support our mission, our youth, ethnic communities, refugee communities, faith formation in schools and colleges and prayer and family groups.

To achieve this outcome in the next decade, the parish should over the next five years:

1. Work with St Francis de Sales School and 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. In time this could include transferring ownership of the church to the school.
2. Work with the St Joseph's community to support and sustain the strengths of their unique intentional community and plan its transition from the St Joseph's location to the St Anne's campus, closing and selling the St Joseph's church and land.
3. Work with the St Bernard's community and school to create a sacred space and weekday-only Mass centre within the St Bernard's school hall, closing and selling the church and presbytery within 1-2 years.
4. Work with all communities to grow the St Anne's campus into a community and facility suitable for and truly shared by all our parishioners. This will require the St Anne's community not just to welcome and accept other parishioners. It requires them to also welcome and accept changes to liturgies, Mass times, music and leadership that reflect and retain the strengths and preferences of the parishioners currently connected with St Joseph's, St Bernard's and St Francis de Sales.

Additionally, the St Francis de Sales presbytery needs significant and expensive overdue maintenance and is no longer ideal as accommodation for priests. Over the next few years we will create a new presbytery on or near the St Anne's campus. We will also explore future options for the St Francis de Sales presbytery – such as creation of a youth mission house or the sale of the property – in consultation with the parish.

We know this recommendation to Cardinal John will be saddening to many of us, and evoke anger, disappointment and other emotions. Wanting to postpone and minimise change is natural and human. But the uncomfortable reality of our ongoing falling Mass numbers, reducing number of priests and financial situation is undeniable.

So, if we are truly to be missionary disciples and want to grow and sustain the strengths of our community as it changes, we need to embrace this change and support each other through it – not fight change and each other. Now, more than ever, we need to work together to ensure a positive and sustainable future for our parish.

# INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In February 2019 Cardinal John Dew wrote to all parishioners, Parish Councils and Leadership Teams in the Wellington Archdiocese, directing all parishes to begin (or to actively progress) a review of their churches and presbyteries. This review was to be completed and proposals developed by 30 October 2019.

We were directed to:

- Respond to the critical situation with the availability of priests.
- Make wise and prudent use of our buildings.
- Ensure that parishes are supported in making and implementing decisions for the future.

He has reminded us that 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.

Cardinal John highlighted that both as parishes and as an Archdiocese:

- 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 marginalized or disadvantaged.

Wellington South Parish currently faces the uncomfortable reality of:

- Our financial situation: parish finances have been running at a deficit for several years and we face substantial costs maintaining our four churches and presbytery in operating expenses, overdue maintenance and earthquake issues.
- Falling congregations: our Mass count has fallen by over 20% over the last 20 years, over 10% in the last 10 years and will likely continue to shrink.
- Reducing numbers of priests: we must realistically assume we will be a one-priest parish within 3-5 years or sooner.

## NOTE OF THANKS

The Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Leadership team would like to thank all those who have contributed to and supported this review in so many ways.

This has been a difficult and upsetting challenge to address for many parishioners - and for the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Leadership team. We greatly appreciate the goodwill and generosity of so many parishioners who have actively engaged in the different opportunities for consultation and contribution. These have all informed and enriched the decision making processes.

We would also like to thank the Parish Finance Committee for their work and advice.



# CONSULTATION PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

At the start of this review, the Pastoral Council decided that we should honour and respect the talents and contribution of our many parishioners by actively including them in the review in as many ways as possible.

As a result, over the past eight months, we have:

- Run discernment sessions in May/June at every church after every Sunday Mass, open to all parishioners. The insights and priorities shared by parishioners were facilitated, documented, analysed and summarised.
- Run a Stewardship Day in August, where we gave all parishioners the opportunity to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of different future scenarios for the parish.
- Shared and communicated the outcomes of those processes widely and in detail.
- Spoken to our neighbouring parishes to understand the issues they face and how changes in our parish could impact them.
- Met with local Catholic primary school principals and the chairs of their Boards of Trustees to understand their concerns and needs as they guide the faith formation of nearly 500 children.
- Considered 37 individual submissions from parishioners.
- Consulted with the Parish Finance Committee and taken careful note of the financial situation of the parish and their estimates of future income streams, operating costs, long term maintenance and earthquake strengthening costs.

# POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND MASS ATTENDANCE TRENDS

Wellington City Council population projections for our parish area show an ongoing increase in the total population in coming years. Growth is particularly strong in Newtown and Te Aro (some of which falls within the northern area of our Parish). Unfortunately, however, whilst the population of Wellington has been growing steadily over recent decades, our Mass attendance has been steadily declining.

In Wellington South Parish:

- Our Mass count has fallen by over 20% over the last 20 years, and by over 10% in the last 10 years.
- The number of baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals that we are celebrating across the parish are also all static or declining in numbers.

As such, we find it necessary to plan with an assumption that despite general population growth, our Mass numbers will likely continue to shrink.



# PASTORAL LEADERSHIP, CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST AND LAY LEADERSHIP

Currently the Parish celebrates four Sunday morning Masses, both Saturday and Sunday evening Masses and frequent ethnic and other Sunday Masses. Every weekday we celebrate Mass plus two liturgies of the word with Holy Communion.

To do this, we are very reliant on having two priests, our lay pastoral leader and several other local priests who preside at a Sunday Mass when available.

Given the aging and declining numbers of priests in the diocese, we have been advised that we must realistically assume we will be a one-priest parish within 3-5 years or sooner. In addition, we will also be less able to rely on other local priests not appointed to the parish to preside at Sunday Mass for us as they do now.

There is considerable interest in celebrating lay-led liturgies on Sundays amongst some parishioners. However, under Archdiocesan Norms Sunday worship in the absence of a priest cannot be celebrated when a Mass is available for parishioners nearby – so we cannot currently pursue this. Growing lay-led liturgies on other days is, however, foreseen and encouraged both within the Parish and the Archdiocese.

As our number of priests reduces, we also foresee that we will have to move to baptisms, funeral services and marriages being celebrated by lay pastoral leaders rather than priests.

Given our proximity to Wellington Hospital, it is also foreseeable that the call upon our priests to support hospital chaplaincy may also grow as the number of priests in the Archdiocese continues to decline.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Summary financial statements are included in the attached appendix.

The Parish has been running at a deficit every year for the last three years – operating costs exceeding collection and other income.

In addition, the long-term maintenance costs we face are significant – estimated by the Finance Committee at \$724,000 over the next ten years. These are also detailed in the appendices.



# RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

During the consultation we have been particularly cognisant of our relationship with local Catholic primary schools as:

- Two of our churches are co-located with schools on the same land titles (St Anne's and St Francis de Sales). It is unrealistic to consider selling the land or church buildings on those sites without significantly impacting the schools.
- St Bernard's School and Community are closely located but separate.

During our consultations, we have met twice with local Catholic primary school principals and the chairs of their Boards of Trustees to understand their concerns and needs as they guide the faith formation of nearly 500 children. In addition the principal of St Bernard's School has been part of the Pastoral Council throughout this year as the representative of the principals of the three Catholic primary schools within the parish.

Cardinal John has reminded us that our youth are the future of the Church and so we are also conscious of our relationship as a parish with St Patrick's, St Mary's and St Catherine's Colleges, both through the attendance of those colleges by many of our young parishioners and through their periodic use of facilities within the parish, such as St Joseph's for retreats.

# RELATIONSHIPS WITH SISTERS OF COMPASSION AND OTHER ORDERS

We are fortunate to have the Sisters of Compassion and the Home of Compassion in our community and within our parish boundaries. We are also conscious of our duty of care and relationship with the Mercy Sisters, Society of Mary, Sisters of St Peter Claver, the Little Company of Mary and other Orders. As we grow and change as a parish, we believe it is important to consult with them, learn from them and also support them as they too navigate a changing future.

We are particularly grateful to the Society of Mary for their contribution to maintaining our existing Parish Mass timetable.

# THE WAY AHEAD — A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Cardinal John requires us to face the uncomfortable reality of our present situation. This includes:

- Our financial situation: parish finances have been running at a deficit for several years and we face substantial costs maintaining our four churches and presbytery in operating expenses, overdue maintenance and earthquake issues.
- Falling congregations: as detailed earlier our Mass count has fallen and will likely continue to shrink.
- Reducing numbers of priests: we must realistically assume we will be a one-priest parish within 3-5 years or sooner.

For us not to face this reality and plan for it would be irresponsible.

**SO OUR CHALLENGE AS  
A PARISH IS:  
HOW CAN WE GROW INTO A  
STRONGER COMMUNITY AND  
NOT SHRINK INTO A SHADOW  
OF OUR PAST?**

When we asked our parishioners what was important to them they gave us the following feedback.

From the Discernment sessions in May/June we heard about the importance of:

- Existing faith communities and concern about the loss of community.
- The need to use buildings wisely to promote the mission and vision of Church.
- That the Church is sacramental and somewhat inward looking.
- Knowing the roles of laity and priests.
- The importance of the church /school connection.

At the Stewardship Day in August, we heard about the desire for:

- Retaining two churches.
- Developing multi-use spaces that we can share with the wider community.
- Ensuring future financial stability.
- Working hard to ensure we build one parish community.
- Ensuring that ethnic and Samoan communities' needs are met.
- Supporting and growing family groups, prayer groups, youth activity and CCD for children.
- Considering the links between schools and churches.
- Honouring and respecting the legacies of the past.

As more information and analysis surfaced during the process, we have also come to realise that whilst shrinking to become a three or two church parish could be a more comfortable option, it is also not financially sustainable in the medium or even short-term.

So whilst we can move to three and then two churches in the short-term, we need to plan for the inevitability of becoming a one-church parish. By actively planning for this we will ensure we sustain, grow and embrace the strengths and talents of all those in our community as we make that transition.

Therefore, within this context, we believe that the parish needs to:

- Accept that we will need to become a one-church parish within ten years.
- Plan for that eventuality and renovate and expand our facilities in a way that will support our mission, our youth, ethnic communities, refugee communities, faith formation in schools and colleges and prayer and family groups.
- Provide sacred spaces in our schools where weekday Masses and school Masses can be celebrated.

To achieve this outcome in the next decade, the parish should over the next five years:

1. Work with St Francis de Sales School and 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 supports Christ's message and mission in the school and community. In time this could include transferring ownership of the church to the school.
2. Work with the St Joseph's community to support and sustain the strengths of their unique intentional community and plan its transition from the St Joseph's location to the St Anne's campus, closing and selling the St Joseph's church and land.
3. Work with the St Bernard's community and school to create a sacred space and weekday-only Mass centre within St Bernard's School, closing and selling the church and presbytery within 1-2 years.
4. Work with all communities to grow the St Anne's campus into a community and facility suitable for and truly shared by all our parishioners. This will require the St Anne's community not just to welcome and accept other parishioners. It requires them to welcome and accept changes to liturgies, Mass times, music and leadership that reflect and retain the strengths and preferences of the parishioners currently connected with St Joseph's, St Bernard's and St Francis de Sales.

Additionally, the St Francis de Sales presbytery needs significant and expensive overdue maintenance and is no longer ideal as accommodation for priests. Over the next few years, we will create a new presbytery on or near the St Anne's campus. We will also explore future options for the St Francis de Sales presbytery – such as creation of a youth mission house or the sale of the property – in consultation with the parish.

Over the past eight months we have listened to the views of our parishioners. We have reflected and prayed deeply about the choices and dilemmas we face as a parish. We know these recommendations will be saddening to many of us, and may evoke anger, disappointment and other emotions. Wanting to postpone and minimise change is natural and human. However we feel these recommendations offer a sustainable future for the Parish of Wellington South.

Ngā mihi nui,

Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Leadership Team

31 October 2019

### **Pastoral Council Members:**

Stephen Neal (Chair)

Francis Fanning

Ivan Moss

Rachael Cahir

Rain Forest

Melania Luka-Lui

Penny Holden

John Whiting

Andrew Pozniak (School principal representative)

Joe Green (Lay Pastoral Leader)

Fr Dennis Nacorda (Associate Priest)

Fr David Dowling (Parish Priest)



## Profit and Loss

### Catholic Parish of Wellington South

	31-Mar-19	31-Mar-18	31-Mar-17
<b>Income</b>			
	\$ 43,555	\$ 43,190	\$ 42,825
Collections, Donations and Fundraising	\$ 310,058	\$ 296,747	\$ 320,361
Interest earned	\$ 15,161	\$ 16,549	\$ 32,840
Rental incomes	\$ 108,233	\$ 94,558	\$ 127,360
Publication sales	\$ 1,838	\$ 2,043	\$ 1,871
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 435,290</b>	<b>\$ 409,897</b>	<b>\$ 482,432</b>
<b>Less Operating Expenses</b>			
Archdiocese - Levy (45% excluding insurance)	\$ 205,538	\$ 188,861	\$ 208,663
General Depreciation - Fixed Assets	\$ 11,142	\$ 10,240	\$ 9,014
General office, utilities and sundry expenses	\$ 36,413	\$ 39,881	\$ 38,402
Pastoral / Liturgical expenses	\$ 25,032	\$ 26,763	\$ 25,724
Personnel costs and associated costs	\$ 73,166	\$ 74,590	\$ 82,704
Property - Repairs, Maintenance, Rates, etc	\$ 86,941	\$ 105,747	\$ 128,831
Travel - Vehicle and other costs	\$ 21,602	\$ 14,495	\$ 10,249
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 459,834	\$ 460,577	\$ 503,587
<b>Net Operating Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>-\$ 24,544</b>	<b>-\$ 50,680</b>	<b>-\$ 21,155</b>
<b>Other Non Operating Income</b>			
Revaluation of 28 Ellice Street	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000
Insurance proceeds	\$ 46,060	\$ 110,784	\$ -
Income - Other - General Transactions	\$ -	\$ 6,028	\$ 5,186
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>\$ 46,060</b>	<b>\$ 116,813</b>	<b>\$ 55,186</b>
<b>Other Non Operating Expenses</b>			
Direct Costs - Non-operating Insurance Costs	\$ 70,788	\$ 74,660	\$ -
Property - Seismic Work SFdS Church	\$ 2,103	\$ 27,290	\$ -
Property - Brougham Street Project	\$ 28,446	\$ 32,432	\$ -
<b>Total Non Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 101,337</b>	<b>\$ 134,382</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Non-operating Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>-\$ 55,276</b>	<b>-\$ 17,570</b>	<b>\$ 55,186</b>
<b>Total annual Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>-\$ 79,820</b>	<b>-\$ 68,250</b>	<b>\$ 34,031</b>

## CPWS - 10 Year Property Deficit Summary

### 10 Year cash deficit for each property (excludes insurance and depreciation)

St Josephs	-66,695
St Annes Church and Hall	-159,000
St Bernards	-125,500
St Francis De Sales Church and Hall	-188,400
SFDS Presbytery	-184,500
Total	-724,095