

Renewing the Church in Manville

Discernment Team Meeting August 27, 2012

Attendees: Rev. Stanislaw Slaby, C.Ss.R (Pastor of CTK and SH), Msgr. Joseph Celano (Episcopal Vicar of Somerset County), Deacon Tom Giacobbe (CTK), Deacon Bill Stefany (SH), Peter Lachac (CTK), Joseph Gazo (SH), Kathy Tartaglione (CTK), Stanley Jasinski (SH), Dolores Finlan (CTK), Joseph Ketusky (SH), Philip Strollo (CTK), Mark Peltack (SH), Angelo Corradino (CTK), Msgr. William Benwell (Vicar General), Tom Toolan (Exec. Dir. Dept. of Administrative Services), Monica Demkovitz (Dir. Office of Properties and Facilities Management), Kyle Hanson (EI Associates), Richard Basta (EI associates), Jeff Korgen (Exec. Dir. Dept of Diocesan Planning), Kristen Silowka (Exec. Asst. Dept of Diocesan Planning).

Reflection of the Scripture (ROMANS 12:1-5): Msgr. Celano stated that we need to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. We are constantly being given new information in our lives and we need to be open to the possibility of changing our way of looking at things. These past few months this discernment team has been given new information about our parishes and now we need to use that information to discern a new church structure for Manville.

Repairs at Christ the King: Monica Demkovitz provided a handout of all repairs done at Christ the King with original price quotes and actual costs.

Q – Why doesn't this include the raising of the electrical panels?

A – That was not included in the estimate because that work was considered phase 2 which was never approved by the Bishop.

Q – Were the rubber stair treads put on all stairs leading to the basement?

A – The rubber treads were only to be put on the stairs leading to the bathrooms.

Feasibility of Church Built at School Site: Monica Demkovitz, along with Kyle Hanson and Richard Basta from EI Associates did an assessment of the Christ the King School property to see if a church could be built there. The site is just over 5 acres, including the school and is zoned S1. Any additional building would need approval from the Manville Planning Board. To build a 600 seat church there would need to be 200 parking spaces. A church this size could be built off Chestnut St with parking behind, but only 100 parking spaces would fit. There would be a need for additional zoning to accommodate the parking issue. One solution would be to build a parking deck, but they are unsure whether the town of Manville would approve it. Another solution would be to work out an agreement to share parking with the nearby high school.

Q – Is some of the land for the proposed site wetlands?

A – Per EI, it is not delineated on the survey. A delegate stated that there are wetlands behind the townhouses, but was unsure whether it runs onto the school property or curves just behind. If there are wetlands then there are set-back requirements for building. Additional information will be needed to determine where the wetlands are and if there are set-back requirements that would prohibit the building of a new church and parking lot.

Q – Is there a ballpark cost for building a new church?

A – Per EI, the rough estimate would be between 7.5 and 10 million dollars and does not include a basement. Msgr. Benwell stated that if this is going to be the undertaking, it is the Bishop’s decision that both parishes must take on the project together.

Q – Does this mean that we would sell Sacred Heart and Christ the King churches to build this new church?

A – Both churches would need to be sold to pay for the building of the new church.

Q – Would a new rectory be built?

A – No, there is no room to build a new rectory.

S – EI stated that another option would be to convert the existing gym into a church and build a new gym behind, but it would cost more money, there would be more construction because the new gym would have to be connected to the school, and there would be less parking. The existing gym is also not as easily accessible.

Q – Has any thought been given to taking a portion of the school on Chestnut St and build a church connected to the school from 13th Ave backward?

A – Per EI, there is not enough room in the grassy area to build a church. We would need to use a portion of the existing school and there are even more zoning issues.

Q – Is the Diocese going to pay for the new church to be built?

A – No, the money would need to come from the parishes: existing investments, sale of properties, and a capital campaign.

Feasibility of Natural Gas Generator at Christ the King Church: Monica Demkovitz asked if this generator would be used to run sump pumps. Fr. Stan indicated that it would be used for sump pumps, as well as other equipment to keep water from coming in to the basement. The generator discussed would cost \$7-10K. Kyle stated that small sump pumps with the generator mounted 5-6 feet up would not keep out 9 feet of water. There is no way a sump pump would be effective against a flood of recent magnitude. This would, however help with water at ground level. Another concern would be structural damage to the foundation if the basement doors are sealed to prevent water from entering. The foundation structure would need to be evaluated in detail before this option could be put in place. There is the possibility the entire church could collapse if the foundation gave way under outside water pressure.

Internal Audit Report: Tom Toolan reviewed a letter prepared by Marie Zissler, Director of Internal Audit for the Diocese of Metuchen which stated that, although the audits have not yet closed and reports have not been finalized, the 2011 Financial Statement and Reports submitted by Sacred Heart and Christ the King parishes were materially correct (see the letter posted on the Diocesan and parish web sites).

Parish Financial Reports: Tom Toolan asked if there were any questions on the Parish Financial reports that were handed out at last month’s meeting.

S – People in the parish would like to see the past year’s financial statement for Christ the King, including the insurance money received from the flood.

A – The Office of Finance has not received the final report for FY2011-12, it will be sent in early October.

After-Meeting Email Finance Query:

Q – If the CTK School were financially neutral (achieved by greater enrollment or closing), how much cash flow and money in the bank (or pledges) would be required before a newly combined parish in Manville could begin building a new, \$10 million Church?

A – Tom Toolan stated that the approval of the construction of a new Church in Manville will be done by the Diocese of Metuchen College of Consultors as a recommendation to the Bishop of Metuchen. Their requirement for financing the construction will be that the Church have 50% or 5 million dollars in the bank before construction.

- Using FY 2010-2011 figures, the Parish of Christ the King and the Parish of Sacred Heart has about \$2 million in the bank. We will need to see how much that number is as of June 2012. It may be more or less due to Church operations, especially when you consider School subsidies.
- The Parishes will need to raise an additional \$3 million in cash before the College of Consultors will approve the construction. The \$3 million can be raised through a Capital Campaign, collections at the parishes, or through sales of buildings that won’t be used anymore. The sale of the Christ the King buildings or the amount the parish might receive from the sale might be impacted by the flood zone it is on.
- After the Parish raises \$5 million for the original start up money, they will have to borrow the remaining \$5 million. If the \$5 million was borrowed for 25 years at an interest rate of 4.09% (which is the rate of a loan being written up today), the monthly payment to pay off that loan would be \$26,640.94 or \$319,691.28 a year. Banks would only allow this loan to exist for 5 years. After that, they would renegotiate the loan and the new interest rate would be more or less than the current rate.
- This payment of the construction and loan has nothing to do with the operation of the Parish today. That would operate separately.

Canon Law: What You Need to Know: Msgr. Benwell defined Juridic Person and Patrimony:

- Juridic Person – Entity (such as a church or school) other than a natural person (human being) created by law and recognized as a legal entity having distinct identity, legal personality, and duties and rights.
- Patrimony – all of the assets and debts owned by a Juridic Person.

According to the previous interpretation of Canon Law, when a Juridic Person ceases to exist, the Patrimony goes to the next higher Juridic Person. For example, if a school is closed the buildings and money would go to the parish or if the parish was closed, all assets would go to the diocese. Since, the Holy See has changed the interpretation of the Law to define only 2 parish closure scenarios:

- A. Closure (suppression) where the assets go to the diocese – this will only happen when three walls have fallen or there is no pastoral activity for 100 years.
- B. Closure (suppression) where the assets follow the people – this happens when the parish is closed to create a new, stronger parish composed of the people of two or more parishes.

Hopefully this puts to rest the thinking that the diocese is trying to close parishes to get money.

In the case of Manville, the outcome of the Renewing the Church process will determine what happens to the Juridic Persons and patrimonies of Sacred Heart and Christ the King. In order for the 2 parishes to be suppressed and become 1 new parish, the following must happen:

- 1. The Bishop will consult with the parishes and his council of priests (Presbyteral Council) before making any decision.
- 2. All patrimonies would combine and belong to the new parish.

Q – *If 2 parishes merge will the church have a new name?*

A – If the 2 existing church buildings remain, the churches would maintain their names but the parish name will change.

Q – *What is the benefit of keeping all church buildings open?*

A – People want to be married and buried out of their church. The benefits of a merger with multiple worship sites are as follows:

- 1. Mass schedule is adjusted to accommodate fewer priests
- 2. Buildings no longer needed can be sold
- 3. There is only need for 1 set of staff.

Q – *How do we handle duplicate ministries?*

A – You would create 1 new, unified Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Council. You should combine duplicate ministries such as Altar Rosary Societies, CCD programs. If the existing parishes have ministries specific to their cultural identity, they can remain independent.

Q – *If we do build a new church will we be able to bring statues from both existing churches?*

A – Absolutely. That is part of the patrimony from each existing parish.

Brainstorming of Options for Proposal to Bishop: The following 3 options were proposed by the Renewing the Church in Manville delegates:

- (A) Close and Build** – close both parishes and churches and build a new church for the merged parish.
- (B) Leave as is until flood emergency** – stay as two separate parishes cooperating together until a flood forcing the closure of Christ the King Church occurs. At this point the two parishes would merge and use Sacred Heart Church as the worship site of the new parish.
- (C) Immediate merger** – merge now as a new parish with two worship sites. If a flood closes Christ the King Church, Sacred Heart Church becomes its only worship site.

Q – If we merge will the name of the school change?

A – The name of the school does not have to change. In the case of the cemetery, because it is a sacred place it would be very difficult to change the name.

Q – Do we currently have the money for option A?

A – Not right now, but that does not mean that it can't happen. You will need to sell buildings that are not needed in the new parish, take out loans, have a Capital Campaign, run fund raisers, have a second collection in each church, ... Right now you would need to reduce expenses to become profitable in order to get loans. Selling extra buildings would also save money in insurance premiums and utility bills. Option A in reality would be C+A.

Q – Option A may be acceptable to the Christ the King parishioners, but would they have the perseverance to wait out the 3-5 years it would take to raise the money and build the new church?

A – The CTK delegates believe they would.

Q – Would option A be acceptable to the Sacred Heart parishioners?

A – The SH delegates believe their parishioners will question closing a church that has never had any water damage.

Next steps:

At the next meeting, the pros and cons of each of these three options will be discussed. We will pray over them, and discern finalists—probably two or three. There will then be open meetings in each parish to get feedback from parishioners. A format for this meeting will be discussed at our next meeting.

Q – Is there anything in George Connors' package that should be considered by the group at large as we enter discernment period?

A – It was noted that the package was only sent to the Christ the King delegates. The Sacred Heart delegates never received it and knew nothing of the contents. Fr. Stan will now forward the package to Sacred Heart delegates.

S – The Christ the King delegates stated that the mitigation steps described in the package would only work for 2-3 inches of water, it would not help in the case of a major flood. If we choose to go with option B or C and keep both churches open, we should still do some work to preserve the church from minor water damage.

In closing, Msgr. Celano commended Fr. Stan for his increased communications through pulpit announcements, bulletin inserts and the parish web sites in addressing the parishioner's questions about the Renewing the Church process and the repairs to Christ the King.

The next meeting will be Monday, September 24, 2012 at the parish offices at 7:30pm. Before the next meeting all delegates should reflect on the 3 options, talk to parishioners and bring back pros and cons for each to the next meeting.