

## Renewing the Church in Manville

September 24, 2012

### Meeting Notes

Attendees: Rev. Stan Slaby, C.Ss.R ( Pastor of CTK and SH), Rev. Msgr. Joseph Celano (Episcopal Vicar), Deacon Tom Giacobbe (CTK), Deacon Bill Stefany (SH), Kathy Tartaglione (CTK), Stanley Jasinski (SH), Dolores Finlan (CTK), Joseph Ketusky (SH), Angelo Corradino (CTK), Peter Lachac (CTK), Lucy Jaime (SH), Philip Strollo (CTK), Joseph Gazo (SH), Mark Peltack (SH,) Jeff Korgen (Exec. Dir. Dept of Diocesan Planning), Kristen Silowka (Exec. Asst. Dept of Diocesan Planning).

Observers: Rev. Slawomir Romanowski, C.Ss.R, Rev. Mariusz Mazurkiewicz, C.Ss.R.

### Prayer

Prayer was led by Fr. Stan Slaby, C.Ss.R, with reflection by Msgr. Joseph Celano. Msgr. Celano's reflection focused on the idea of discernment. It's different than decision making. It's discovering the will of God. The Holy Spirit should lead us to a decision that's best for the Church in Manville. We should be aware that the easy choice—the path of least resistance—may not be the best choice.

### Discernment Considerations

Jeff Korgen reviewed the Msgr. Celano's definition of discernment and provided suggested reflection questions:

- *Which of these models leave me with a sense of closeness to God?*
- *Which leave me filled with faith? With hope? With love?*
- *Which make me want to go out and share them with the people I love? With my fellow parishioners and friends?*
- *Which leave me with a deep-down peace and tranquility? With a sense of rightness? With a fits-like-a-glove sort of feeling?*
- *What would best foster the spread of the gospel and serve the mission of the church?*
- *What would best foster cooperation, unity, and help heal division?*
- *What choice, even if it is the difficult one, leads me to conviction about its rightness and brings about the fruit of peaceful resolution?*

### More Semi-Finalists Added

The Discernment Team first reviewed the three semifinalists from last month's meeting:

#### Semi-Finalists

- (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.

Then additional options were added:

- (D) Leave parishes as they are. When flood closes Christ the King Church, Christ the King Parish closes as well. Bishop assigns people and patrimony to Sacred Heart, which would become a territorial parish with a Polish apostolate.
- (E) Merge Christ the King and Sacred Heart parishes immediately. Delay building until finances allow on site to be determined.

There was an Option F, but upon further review it was identical to Option B.

### **Discussion of Semi-Finalists**

The discussion of pros and cons included the following statements:

- The Sacred Heart site may be vulnerable to floods as well.
- Option B simply summarizes where we are right now—there is no new thinking there.
- In the current economy it may be difficult to raise funds for “close and build.”
- The school property, if a church were built there, would be more convenient to some, less convenient to others.
- It may work better to amend A and E to “site to be determined,” since a feasibility study would provide more detail.
- We need to look at our real situations, not just our feelings.
- Both parishes have large elderly populations-- would long-term financing be too challenging?
- The group was reminded of Tom Toolan’s analysis that raising \$10 million for a new church was possible with existing assets combined with a capital campaign.
- A merger will bring some degree of cost savings from streamlining and bigger purchasing power.
- A question about having various handy parishioners do construction work was raised. Diocesan experience is that some of the small aspects can be done by skilled parishioners, but the major work needs to be contracted out.
- Properties that could be sold may have depreciated somewhat, below that brought on by the economic downturn—even on the Sacred Heart site. This would need to be explored in a feasibility study.

### **Narrowing to Finalists**

In order to get a sense of the group, Jeff asked all members of the Discernment Team to put two “Amen!” stickers on the semi-finalists they liked best. The results were:

- A. 2
- B. 0
- C. 12
- D. 1
- E. 9

The Discernment Team discussed the possibility of using C and E as finalists. One delegate blocked consensus, stating that the wording of E was not yet right. The wording was amended, but another delegate was not satisfied with the new wording. The Discernment Team agreed to defer a decision on the finalists until next month’s meeting, praying and reflecting on the wording in the meantime.

Current Wording, to be discussed at next meeting:

- I. **Immediate Merger**—Merge now to become a new parish with a new name and two worship sites, each church keeping its original name. If a flood closes Christ the King Church, Sacred Heart Church becomes its only worship site.
- II. **Immediate Merger with “Close and Build” Plan**— Merge now to become a new parish with a new name and two worship sites, each church keeping its original name. Both churches stay open until feasibility study completed, funds raised and new church built on site to be determined.