

St. Anthony's Parish
Berwick
March 28, 2018

Opportunities

- We would have a Priest.
- Easier for the Priest. (x3)
- Sacraments more available (x3)
- Less committees required. More people to draw from for committees. (x3)
- With technology now have Mass filmed & projected in different locations.
- Less snow to plow. Less upkeep. Just one to sustain. Easier fundraising, Save money.
- Pooling of talents, interest. (x2)
- Spread Christian outreach programs like Open Arms.
- Get to know each other more from other Parishes.
- Pooling of youth - able to do more together. (x3)
- More programs available.
- Exposure to more cultures.
- People will be challenged to do more.
- Larger congregations. (x2)
- Fewer buildings to maintain, less expense, greater purchasing power.
- Priest would be accessible for parishioners – not so much travel.
- Temporal works in our community.
- Centralization of resources. (x2)
- More Mass times.
- Adult education, ALPHA.
- Transportation.
- One representative from each Church community.
- Gender balance on new regional Pastoral and Financial Council.
- Larger group of families & young people in one place.
- Leadership team with Pastor & Deacons.
- The reorganization might help to lighten the load for the parish priest especially if more of his tasks are shared by Deacons and laity. This should help to prevent clerical burnout.
- The possibility of growth in the number of deacons. Parishes are now much more comfortable with deacon-led services so perhaps this could be promoted and nurtured more easily.
- Women may be given more leading roles in the various services that are now dominated by males. (x2)
- Shared funds would help churches that require more expensive repairs and other needs.
- A good music ministry (which can be a powerful spiritual force in touching souls) might be more accessible to more Catholics who would gather in larger numbers at fewer churches.
- The possibility that some of the sacraments could one day be administered by laity when a priest or deacon is not available (example anointing the sick or dying, baptisms).
- The possibility that one day a new Catholic church would be built with a modern, energy efficient design that promotes community gatherings in all areas of the church including the main entrance. As well as all the technology that can quickly enrich a service and communicate via the Internet with Catholics and others anywhere in the world.

Constraints

- Travel Distances. (x10)
- Controversy & conflict over past territories.
- Seniors won't be able to attend because of Commute/ Health (x2). Difficult for folks with no car.
- If all resources go to one area then could cause local challenges for small area churches. Need to be self-sufficient.
- People stop giving because they can't physically attend.
- Give up our investment in our own family community & in our building.
- Lose our sense of identity, belonging, family spirit. (x3)
- May lose programs (fear).
- Loss of control.
- May lose money. People may give more money locally rather than central. (x2)
- Harder to attract new people/families to a larger Parish, easier if it is smaller & close knit .(x2)
- Only one Priest.
- Funding – where is it coming from? Support of larger churches for smaller churches-financial.
- Possible reduction in revenue.
- More conflicts - members/councils-ego.
- May lose members. (x2)
- RC factor to change.
- Demographics.
- What is out of our control? We don't know enough.
- Centralization of resources.
- How to bring people back if there is no physical site close by.
- Getting people to change. Age of Parishioners -reluctant to change.
- Liquidating properties.
- Concentration too general.
- One large building less personal.
- Not enough people to fill & maintain our current building.
- How will the smaller parishes hold onto their supportive faith community and their family of Catholics when Mass is no longer offered on a weekly basis? (x2)
- The longer distances to drive to the main churches presents challenges at night and during winter driving conditions. This will especially affect some drivers and also the youth who need an adult to take them to special events.
- Parking issues and overcrowding at the main churches: What if the main churches cannot hold the extra parking needs and what if they cannot accommodate the growing numbers attending? With the ALPHA program in full swing the numbers will start to increase and this is the prediction. The next baby boom is already evident in communities. Absent Catholics are beginning to trust the system a bit more.
- Having one priest could present problems: Examples: if the priest falls ill for a long period or if dealing with the loneliness of being the only priest, or what if the priest is a big turn-off for most congregations (for whatever reason). In this last example the numbers would fall off quickly.