

To: PLANNING TEAM
From: Fr. Bernard
Date: June 22, 2016
Re: PARISH CENTER

Parish Center concept

The Parish Center is the welcoming place to receive parishioners and others.

The Parish Center is the place not only as a reception place but also for holding parish meetings – parishioners from the southern area of the parish would not have to travel to the north and the northern parishioners would not have to travel to the south. They would meet in the center of the parish territory.

The Parish Center would house a parish office.

The parish office houses the safe, files, office equipment etc.

The parish office is the work space for the parish staff.

The parish office, unlike the Parish Center, is not open to the parishioners and the public.

Location:

The Parish Center should ideally be located centrally to all the parishioners.

If the parish center is located in the north at Holy Cross then the parishioners living in the southern part St. James the Apostle, would psychologically /emotionally feel alienated/distant and the same is true if the Parish Center is located in the southern part of the parish territory then the people in the north will psychologically /emotionally feel alienated/distant from the parish. The tendency for parishioners with those feelings is to leave the parish and gravitate out of the parish.

St. Francis Solanus Church in the parish of Mary, Mother of Mercy, is centrally located.

The Church building with the annex would easily adapt itself to not only being a Church but a Parish Center. As a Parish Center it has parking, handicapped accessible with an ADA Accessible Toilet.

The upper level of the Annex – a small part – could be isolated as a reception / welcoming area, and at times, when opportune, used as a personal interviewing area. Other private interviewing areas in the building could be the “crying room” / confessional area and/or a renovated sacristy – which needs a renovation.

The parish office located in the Parish Center would be in the Annex downstairs. It is an open area – an adequate large room. The public would not be welcome in the Parish Office. It has been reported that if the area was regularly occupied with the humidifier and heat in the winter the room would lose it's foul odor. The room has, every six feet, electrical outlets on the open walls. It has a separate heating system – not the best but functional and certainly adequate.

Regarding the report from Mr. Sean Moran, the Diocese's new Buildings & Properties Manager, he gives a budget figure of \$120,000 to renovate the lower level of the Annex:

"Remove the kitchen" – the kitchen is necessary to the building and its events, therefore the kitchen cannot be removed.

"Provide elevator to access levels" – the public will not be using the parish office. If a person with disabilities is hired a chair lift is an alternative to an elevator.

"ADA Accessible Toilet would need to be on the same level" - because the Parish Center has an ADA Accessible Toilet, is a second ADA Accessible Toilet required for the building?

"Replace heating and air conditioning... to dry the air in this below grade space" - this would be ideal but it is seriously questioned if it is necessary.

If one takes the above items into consideration, the budget figure is \$0.00 cost not \$120,000. However, there will be a cost related to making the room a parish office – a cost that would be far less than any renovations required at St. James the Apostle and Holy Cross.

Future:

Hypothetical – if St. Francis Solanus Church in the Parish of Mary, Mother of Mercy, is used exclusively as a worship site and it being the smallest of the three churches and it being central to the territory, one can conclude that the church building is superfluous and the parishioners do not need a third church, and that parishioners can choose to go to the north or the south and therefore, it would be advantageous to sell the church and property.

Therefore, if St. Francis Solanus becomes the Center for the Parish, uniting the North and the South, then there is a purpose for the Church building beyond a worship site and this would give cause to think again about selling.

If St. Francis Solanus Church is sold, the Parish of Mary, Mother of Mercy will have little chance of developing into a unified parish with the result ending in two parish communities – one in the north and the one in the south. The only thing that will unite them is their unified finances (and you can be sure this will always be a dividing factor).