

## **Notes from Holy Cross Parish Meeting – After 5:00 Mass**

Members of Planning team present: Gerry Frank, Kathy Sinkiewicz, Karen Rinefierd, Lee Anne Fox.

Opening prayer offered by Father Brendan.

Gerry opened the meeting by reviewing the merger process which explained the two parts of a merger.

Comment was made that consideration of distance for members needed to be made. See it as an advantage if it can be made one. Some people will stop going and that will have an impact if Holy Cross is closed.

Confusion on exactly what the merger means and how it would affect the Mass schedule. The bishop has sent a letter saying merger and not cluster. It was explained that there would be one Parish Council, one Finance Council, one parish office. Possibility of Masses at all three churches but planning committee was leaning toward only at two but not unanimous. Will have additional parishioner meetings if this happens. There have already been 25 mergers and 2 besides us in the process. These mergers have merged at least two and as many as six churches.

One advantage of merger would be shared ministers.

Further explanation of merger asked for.

Creation of a new parish with a new name but churches would keep their name. One parish council, one finance council, one set of financial accounts.

What would happen with fundraisers if a particular church does it - would it be just theirs or would it go in the general account for all 3 churches?

It would depend on how the publicity was worded—if it was a fundraiser for the parish at large or for a specific purpose.

If we don't close a church we have the same finances needed for maintenance. How does this make sense?

In the Church it is impossible to merge parishes and close a church at the same time. These are two separate canonical processes. Closing a church could happen in the future. One of the factors making sense for this merger is the shortage of priests. There are a lot of retirements coming up but not as many ordinations to fill those vacancies. There will be less and less Masses throughout the diocese. Bishop looked at numbers in these 3 parishes and that's what changed it from clustering to merger.

What happens if someone bequeathed money to a parish and that one closes?

The intent of the person giving the money needs to be respected. It depends how it is done - if it is for a specific thing and that church closes then it needs to go back to the donor's family and the courts to determine if the money can be used differently.

This church has no say about what happens to it. The Bishop has not been here. He has not been near us. There is a distance problem, we are not a city, especially as the population ages.

We are a rural county and we do not get the recognition of the other counties.

Holy Cross has taken steps to correct the financial situation presented to parishioners in November 2014. While savings are small and major repairs would require significant fundraising, the parish ended last year in the black. Last year's income statement ranked in the top quartile across the diocese. Members are very generous and that makes decisions even harder.

How many people would leave if Holy Cross closed and not go to St Francis or St James?

According to the survey 42% of Holy Cross would go somewhere else. This parish goes almost to Waterloo, Seneca Falls and Geneva.

Would we be able to do one Mass at each church?

We [the planning team] will be looking at this in February and March.

If there was only one Mass here would you stay with Holy Cross or go elsewhere?

Majority raised their hands saying they would stay at Holy Cross.

This church is the only one in the area that sits on a main highway making it easy to find. Lots of people attend in the summer from the parks and Boy Scout Camp as well as our summer people on the lakes.

We are the last church standing from all the large churches that were originally in the area - we would like to keep it that way!