

*Summary of the Question & Answer Session  
At St. Francis Parish on 10/25/21*

**Question:** Were 4 churches January 1 a minimum requirement, i.e. could New Britain have gone with less?

**Answer:** That was a minimum and a way to allow each current parish to retain a property.

**Question:** Did you have any choice in second priest?

**Answer:** While I did not have a choice in the matter, I explained our needs to the Archdiocese and am confident in their being understood and appreciated.

**Question:** What will happen with Money counters?

**Answer:** Probably teams from people of all four parishes, but the collections need to be recorded separately. We will not have 4 distinct teams counting each week.

**Question:** Has the archdiocese considered lay administrators so priests can just focus on evangelization?

**Answer:** The Vatican recently reaffirmed that a pastor is to have administrative authority in a parish. As a pastor, it is important to be a good steward of the parishes' resources and to direct them to evangelization. But, we do have competent lay staffs who are involved in administration and management who are heavily relied on and do fantastic work.

**\*\*Question:** Were Mass attendance numbers taken into account and not just registered households?

**Answer:** Mass attendance is a factor but is tough to tell with Covid, and who is coming back and who isn't. But yes, how many people go to Mass is a factor in pastoral planning moving forward. *(This question needs more follow-up)*

**Question:** Did Fr. Keough and Granato ask to be moved?

**Answer:** Fr. Keough, Granto, and I all agreed that none would want to stay as an assistant in the new arrangement and potentially be source of division. Whoever would be named pastor, and it could have been any of the three, the others would help in any way possible and request to be assigned elsewhere as pastors.

**Question:** Did the recent safety door project happen to make the building more saleable?

**Answer:** No, the safety doors happened for safety but there was a consideration that St. Francis would be active in any new configuration. This is also one of the reasons why all major expenses need to be approved by the Archdiocese.

**Question:** What happens to the endowment?

**Answer:** In any merger the money follows the people and if money was restricted for the mission of the parish that mission continues in the new merged parish. If it

was restricted to the building, it may go back to the estate. *This point was confirmed by the lawyers present.*

*Here there was a comment about including the second collection totals in the bulletin each week.*

**Question:** Will music be the same in each Church?

**Answer:** Right now music will stay as similar as possible, same musicians and hymnals. We want to make things as easy as possible for everyone involved. Hopefully in the future, everything will be more standardized and the musicians can rotate as well as the priests.

**Question:** Will the parish name change?

**Answer:** The Archbishop will decide on a name when the new parish is made. No way to tell, it is up to him although we will give our input.

**Question:** Can you explain the transition team more?

**Answer:** The transition team will be made up of members from each parish. It will advise on some more long terms things such as building sales and continuing Mass schedule needs. It may take a few months to get it going as we see who is onboard with the new direction and wants to help decide about the future. It may not be immediately clear who is best suited. Will be done also in consultation with current pastors.

**Question:** Concerns about parking and capacity at St Francis

**Answer:** We will make it work and St. Jerome is larger and may be better suited to the most popular Mass.

**Question:** Why don't we just move to St. Jerome right away all together?

**Answer:** We need to start with 4. But maybe that is where we head. Even possibly building a 100 person chapel where current Newman House stands for students, while everything else happens at St. Jerome

**Question:** What is the condition of the facilities?

**Answer:** St. Jerome and St. Francis are in the best condition. Others have some disrepair. Will learn more as we go. Diocese will do a whole study.

**Comment:** We need to make a very real effort to be inviting and welcoming. Inviting others.

**Response:** Yes. May need to wait for things to settle but then need to reach out to new people.

**Comment:** We need to welcome people in these different churches

**Response:** Yes!!! But carefully--on January 1<sup>st</sup>, it is welcoming someone to *their* church not *our* church.

**Question:** What will happen to other ministries, i.e. youth, young adult etc...?

**Answer:** Everything that is currently happening will be given priority. What can combine will be combined. No one will find themselves locked out on Jan 1st.

**Question:** Will people meld?

**Answer:** I hope so. Some won't. I think a lot of people will be onboard and a vocal minority will make very difficult for many.

**Comment:** We need to help bring people together

**Response:** Yes! Coffee and... after Mass and things that help people get to know each other. Also I hope people will go based on time, not on building.

I asked about Mass time preferences:

**Response:** If we have to change at St. Francis, we go later rather than earlier. College students prefer later.

A lengthy discussion about Mass time options. Clear preference for less Masses (3-4 on Sunday + a vigil). Don't want the priest to run out and not be with the people. Also a preference for Religious Education attached to a Mass.

**Final comment:** This is being engaged in a very good way by our parish. This can be an ugly process but our people are approaching it with optimism and flexibility that the commenter had not seen elsewhere. Came specifically to defend me in case of opposition and felt he could have just as easily stayed home. Thank you!

*This was met with applause. And the meeting ended with a prayer.*

*Summary of the Question & Answer Session  
At Holy Apostles Parish on 11/3/21*

**Question:** Will Masses stay the same until January 1, 2022

**Answer:** Yes, everything will stay the same until January 1, 2022, including the preplanned Christmas liturgies

**Question:** Will the Lithuanian Heritage be preserved?

**Answer:** We will do everything possible to preserve everything from each church, including the heritage and history. Things will have to be carefully inventoried.

**Comment:** Things should be inventoried to be preserved.

**Response:** Yes, we will do this as close to January 1 as possible

**Question:** If a building isn't being regularly used, is there concern about vandalism?

**Answer:** We will do a minimum of a weekly walkthrough to ensure proper condition of the property.

**Question:** Will there be one Bulletin?

**Answer:** Yes, we will have one bulletin beginning the weekend of January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Question:** Are St. Mary and St. Anne involved in this?

**Answer:** No. St. Joachim Parish which comprises St. Mary and St. Anne Churches will remain as is on account of the diverse communities they serve.

**Question:** What about our envelopes?

**Answer:** We are still working that out. Until one parish, each collection has to be separate. But if you write a check to any of the four, it needs to be deposited in the proper bank account. The credit will always still be given in the individual parish database.

**Suggestion:** You can always mail the offering in. Or do online giving.

**Answer:** Yes, that works too and got us through COVID.

**Question:** What happens to St. John's rectory? Does the address change?

**Answer:** The address won't change, the rectory won't disappear, but the main office functions will happen at one centralized office, most likely at St. Jerome. Still make your check out to your own parish.

**Question:** What about Eucharist Ministers?

**Answer:** We will keep all current ministries in whatever way we can. It may look different but will still continue

**Question:** What about Mass intentions?

**Answer:** Holy Apostles is the only parish that began to take intentions. We will do our best to accommodate or to return the offering. Going forward, we will probably open the Mass intentions on a rolling quarterly basis.

**Question:** What will the other changes be over the summer?

**Answer:** Hopefully by July 1 at the latest, the corporations will merge into one canonical parish. This will allow for greater sharing of resources and streamline many of the processes that go into financial security and transparency.

**Question:** Will the new parish have a new name?

**Answer:** Yes. To be 100% honest, if it could be St. Francis Catholic as the umbrella with St. John Campus, St. Jerome Campus, St. Francis of Assisi Campus, and St. Joseph/Peter Campus, and the CCSU Campus Ministry. The money and design that went into designing the current St. Francis Catholic logo, website, email addresses make that name the easiest to simply apply to the whole corporation.

**Question:** Where do you find your priest?

**Answer:** You can call the office. We will be reachable and will still live in the city, most likely at St. Francis Rectory.

**Comment:** This seems very impersonal, corporate, and cold.

**Response:** It will still be a parish first and foremost. There are requirements to run an efficient business and be good stewards of parish property.

**Question:** How will you get to know all the people?

**Answer:** It will take some time but we will get to know each other. This is also part of the desire for having less Masses, so we all can get to know each other.

**Question:** Is this only happening in New Britain?

**Answer:** No, this is happening in many places and did happen in many places in 2017.

**Question:** Did the population that attended Mass increase because of this?

**Answer:** I don't have those statistics. Also COVID changed any chance to measure that. Some parishes are growing, but it is tough to measure against those who leave or die.

**Comment:** This is happening with all forms of organized religion

**Question:** Where will you live?

**Answer:** St. Francis is the only rectory that can house three priests right now.

**Question:** What about religious education?

**Answer:** We will have one religious education program. It will be small to start and will need a lot of work, but we should have the minimum needed to begin a good program.

**Question:** Did you apply for this position?

**Answer:** No, the Archbishop ultimately is the one who makes assignments.

**Question:** Who will be the assistant?

**Answer:** That decision has not been finalized and announced yet.

**Question:** Could the rectory be used for something like the Prudence Crandall Center?

**Answer:** There would be an openness to that. Priority will be given to any usage which furthers the mission of the Church and the works of mercy.

A discussion about Mass time options: Early Mass at St. John will be difficult. Some preference for option #6. No preference for a 6:30 am or no Mass at St. Jerome on Sunday.

**Question:** Why not two Saturday Vigils?

**Answer:** We won't do simultaneous. And with a 4pm and 5:30pm, the 5:30 is already getting dark and probably won't be attended enough to be viable.

*Summary of the Question & Answer Session  
At St. Katherine Drexel Parish on 11/07/21*

**Question:** What will the plan be for Holiday Schedule?

**Answer:** For holidays and Holy Days, we will try to keep things as centralized as possible to allow more people to know where to go. Most things will most likely be at St. Jerome.

**Question:** What will happen with CCD? Will they be combined?

**Answer:** For the rest of A.A. 2021-22, CCD will stay the same, UNLESS it is tied to a Mass, then it will need to change to be more accessible regardless of what Mass someone attends. More details will be worked out after Mass schedule is finalized.

**Question:** How will we communicate further changes?

**Answer:** We will use website, bulletin, and other normal means of communication for minor changes. We will most likely send a mailing for major changes so everyone knows.

**Question:** Will there be a Saturday Morning Mass in honor of Our Lady?

**Answer:** I hope we can have Mass every Saturday morning, not just first Saturday.

**Question:** Will there be Bible Studies?

**Answer:** Yes. Msgr. Matera offered to lead one, and I would welcome any others who want to start something up. Also it can be done in someone's own home, not necessarily tied to parish property.

**Question:** How do we make schedule work if someone is sick?

**Answer:** We will be sure the schedule accommodates emergency changes. Possibly no confessions before Mass in such an unlikely situation.

**Question:** Will the Music change?

**Answer:** For now, music will stay mostly the same, as much as possible. We will work toward a unified program when we can legitimately do so without disrupting what people are used to. Hopefully we can have a future joint choir too.

**Question:** Will there be Adoration?

**Answer:** Yes. Not sure when and how yet, but Adoration will definitely be part of the new schedule. We may conclude the 5:30pm Daily Mass with Adoration.

**Question:** How will Mass intentions be handled? Will there be multiple intentions per Mass?

**Answer:** We will schedule Masses three months at a time and give initial Sunday priority to parishioners from that parish. Hopefully, we will not have multiple intentions per Mass, if there are other open intentions during the week.

**Question:** When will the Mass schedule be finalized?

**Answer:** By Thanksgiving.

**Comment:** Lay collaboration and religious collaboration is important in all this. The pastor can't and shouldn't do everything.

**Question:** Will you continue as Vocations Director?

**Answer:** Yes, that is the plan as of right now.

**Question:** Role of Eucharistic Ministers going to Jerome Home and Hospital of Special Care?

**Answer:** This is an essential ministry, and will need to continue. Eucharistic Ministers may not be as needed during Mass, but definitely for the Nursing homes, Hospitals, and homebound.

*Fr. Casey indicated possibly keeping the Corporation/ parish name, St. Francis Catholic. This was met with approval and applause.*

**Question:** Will the Knights Councils come together?

**Answer:** Yes, as soon as possible. We will not have duplicate ministries. Definitely by the time we become one parish.

**Question:** What will happen with the house at St. Jerome?

**Answer:** It will stay maintained and used for various purposes until all property futures decided.

**Question:** Will there be one Bulletin?

**Answer:** Yes, hopefully on January 2.

*Summary of the Question & Answer Session  
At Divine Providence Parish on 11/14/21*

**Comment:** You are assuming all 906 people are staying, some will leave.

**Response:** Yes they will, and we will be sad to see them go, but it is a reality.

**Question:** Will the Music stay the same?

**Answer:** As much as possible, but it will need to come together in the future.

**Question:** Where is Fr. Keough going?

**Answer:** We honestly don't know.

**Question:** What about COVID with larger Mass attendance?

**Answer:** We will not be that jam packed and will try to have enough Masses in big enough spaces to accommodate people.

**Question:** What about Christmas and Easter?

**Answer:** We will probably try to utilize the bigger churches and will have more Masses if needed.

**Question:** What about Historical Restoration Grants?

**Answer:** We can look into that, but our first consideration for Church selection is capacity.

**Question:** What about the Hospital?

**Answer:** Fr. Daniel Wojtun will be the full time chaplain for New Britain Hospital and Midstate in Meriden.

**Question:** What about vocations?

**Answer:** Yes, we need more priests.

**Question:** What about nuns getting more involved?

**Answer:** We can hopefully get them involved in different ways but ordained ministry, particularly for Mass and confessions, right now is for priests only at this time.

**Question:** What about priests from outside the country?

**Answer:** We are trying but we really need to live within our means. We have enough priests and capacity for our people.

**Question:** What about two vigils?

**Answer:** They would be at different times. We won't have two Masses at the same time in different locations.

**Question:** Did we consider foot traffic when making the new Mass schedule?

**Answer:** For Sunday Mass, yes. For daily, we took CCSU walking distance to St. Francis.

**Question:** How will we meet the Spiritual needs of our people?

**Answer:** There will still be Mass on Sunday.

**Question:** Who makes the decisions in the process for selling?

**Answer:** I will lead the discussion but work with the parish council, finance council, and Archdiocese. The Archbishop makes the final decision.

**Question:** What about the senior housing walking distance from St. Joseph

**Answer:** There will be Mass on Sunday. For daily, we will need to see what works best.

*(After the fact it was discovered one person walks to daily Mass at St. Joseph, who also is able to drive).*

**Question:** Where does the money go from selling churches?

**Answer:** Money follows the people. The people are still cared for, just in another church building.

**Question:** Do you know how much it would cost to update St. Joseph?

**Answer:** Not yet.

**Question:** What is someone wants to buy St. Joseph campus?

**Answer:** We strongly consider all offers to purchase church properties.

**Comment:** It seems like the decisions are already made.

**Response:** Not totally made. There are certain parameters and some things are more logical than others, but all voices are being heard. We will have to start somewhere.

**Question:** What about other groups that are using the churches, all of the ministries.

**Answer:** We will keep all ministries as much as possible, and will offer space to anything that needs to move.

**Comment:** Divine Providence is the most culturally diverse. That should be considered.

**Response:** Every person and culture will still be welcome in the joint parish.

**Suggestion:** What about offering rides to daily Mass?

**Response:** Great idea. We have to see how needed or feasible it is. For Sunday we are still providing for Mass attendance.

**Question:** What about Faith formation?

**Answer:** Faith formation will still be offered with as little disruption for the students as possible through the end of the school year.

**Question:** What about a university Church, which brings life and energy?

**Answer:** That is what St. Francis is growing into. We will keep that momentum going.

**Comment:** We are part of the universal church

**Response:** Yes! We are all one community.

**Question:** Will we commit to having morning Mass at St. Joseph?

**Answer:** No. We won't commit right now.

**Question:** How many students go to 8am Mass.

**Answer:** Very few, which is why we are looking at the 5:30pm daily at St. Francis.

**Comment:** We should do a survey about needs.

**Response:** Yes! As soon as we are together.

**Question:** Where does the money from sales go?

**Answer:** It follows the people.

**Question:** What about deacons leading communion services?

**Answer:** That is intended for extraordinary situations where priests are not available. We are not in that situation here.

**Question:** What about using other priests?

**Answer:** We need to live within our means.

**Comment:** Families are the future!

**Comment:** Religious Education shouldn't be tied to a Mass.

**Comment:** We need to consider churches with cry rooms.

**Response:** Yes!

**Question:** So, what church from Divine Providence is staying open?

**Answer:** Most likely St. Joseph on January 2.

**Comment:** What happened with St. Thomas High School shouldn't happen here.

**Response:** That wasn't my decision. We want our buildings to be used.

**Question:** What about the New Britain Council of Catholic Women

**Answer:** We will try to provide for every group currently using the properties.

**Comment:** Priority should be given to the elderly for daily Mass.

**Question:** Every Mass with less than 75 needs to be reconsidered?

**Answer:** Every Sunday Mass

**Question:** Will we redo the whole Mass Schedule?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** We need to use more lay people.

**Answer:** We currently have much lay collaboration. It will be a big part of the parish going forward.

**Question:** Are students involved in different ministries at St. Francis?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Comment:** Where there is youth there is growth.

**Question:** Can students use space on campus?

**Answer:** Yes, but then it would reserved exclusively for registered CCSU students.

**Question:** What happens at CCSU when your tenure is done?

**Answer:** The pastor of the parish will be the chaplain at the university.

**Question:** What about support staff?

**Answer:** Everyone will work together. There will be plenty of work.

**Question:** What is happening on July 1?

**Answer:** We hope to have the corporate merger completed by then.

**Comment:** Churches should not be called buildings. They are churches. Within each building is a faith community. We are destroying the faith community! We are destroying St. Peter's community. It only needs one Mass per week. We already killed the communities with the closing of schools. Now we are doing it with the churches.

**Comment:** People won't be welcome and they won't be comfortable in another Church.

**Response:** Every Person is to be welcomed and made comfortable in every church, regardless of where they came from.

**Comment:** Not all churches are pointed to God. We want to pray in a place that points toward God.

**Question:** What happens to everything in the Churches?

**Answer:** We will try to save as much as possible for the new parish community in the buildings being used.

**Question:** What about the Deaf Apostolate?

**Answer:** We will continue to provide space for a signer as much as needed.

**Question:** What about the rectories?

**Answer:** The priests will live at St. Francis. We will use the other rectories as needed for other parish needs.

**Question:** What about the food bank?

**Answer:** We will keep providing all the services we can.

**Question:** Will the property be taxed?

**Answer:** The properties will not be taxed, while we own and use them.