

All Things New Parish Hall – September 8, 2025

Father explained that the plans presented today are in this format because this is the template the Diocese has given us. There are certain expectations from them about what is contained in these plans and their structure.

The Mission Statement for our ACC comes from the original ACC planning committee. It fits in well with the Guiding Principles from the Diocese. The Diocese stresses the importance of the Guiding Principles and how the Design Parameters align with them. Our Primary Goal for these plans – to “Refocus on what it means to be a parish” – is meant to align with the following Goals in the plans.

Goal 1: Foster Greater Unity

Father has divided this first goal into three sub-goals, for clarity.

- Goal 1-1 – Unified in One Corporation.

Father read through this goal. A few notes:

- + The “SMART criteria” are a requirement from the diocese.
- + Action steps – some need to happen in a specific order.
- + The “Discussion” section is what the All Things New Planning Committee have talked about in their meetings. The “Feedback” section synthesizes the feedback the Committee has received on a topic. The “Conclusion” section summarizes that particular goal.

- *Comments and questions for Goal 1-1:*

- + Parish vs. corporation seems like we’re focusing on the business side, rather than on the family life of the Parish. “Parish” is a technical canon law term, so that is why that language is used.
- + Would being one corporation really make Father’s job easier, if he still has to cover the same amount of territory? Because we are currently four separate corporations, there are many things that need to happen separately and legally in each corporation, such as a finance council for each. By becoming one corporation, Father’s time is relaxed a little by having one Finance Council, one staff, etc., while still maintaining the territory.

- Goal 1-2 – Unified in the Liturgy of the Mass

Father went over the options from this area from both plans, the “3 Church Site Option/St. Barbara Plan” and the “2 Church Site Option/St. Brigitte of Sweden Plan.”

- + Some decisions, such as Mass times in our ACC, will be internal decision, which the diocese does not mandate.
- + Again, we have some technical language. “Primary Church” is when a church will have a weekend Mass and always have the holy days of obligation. “Partner Church” is when a church will have a weekend Mass and might have a holy day of obligation.

- Goal 1-3 – Unified in One Office

Father went over this section of the plan.

- *Comments and questions for Goal 1-3:*

- + When are we going to one corporation? Can we start that process now? We need the Bishop’s approval before we begin. We cannot close parish corporations.
- + Could we go to one corporation before closing churches, and see if that changes our situation? Moving to one corporation would most likely take place before other things, but we would look for guidance from the bishop. It likely would happen before closing churches, as there are more legal problems when you close churches and then merge corporations.

- + There was a recommendation that we not hire a business administrator internally, since that person would likely have a bias towards one church or another. We should hire externally, someone who doesn't have a vested interest in any of the parishes.
- + Father mentioned that the diocese is working on a 2nd Guidebook, that talks specifically about transitions.
- + Father also clarified that, since the old corporations would no longer exist once we move to one corporation, all staff would technically be laid off and then need to be hired again. They would submit resumes and interview, but the plan is to continue with the same staff, perhaps in slightly different roles, after this transition.

Goal 2: Be Prudent Stewards of Property and Finances

- Father went over this section of the plan. It could be divided into sub-goals as well, but because so much of it is interwoven, it is here as one.
- The new budget will take a long time to balance, so we don't know how long this will take.
- *Comments and questions for Goal 2:*
 - + Selling churches will take a very long time. We can't plan for if churches will or won't sell. We can plan for our preferences with the plans, but will have to see how it goes. Example of Christ our Light – because it took a long time, they had to adjust their plans as things came up.
 - + Has a market analysis been done of the church buildings? Yes, Father just received it today. The staff also did an overview of each building and potential costs and maintenance repairs that may need to be done in the future.
 - + Do we continue to operate churches while on the market? This will have to be adjusted as we go. You can really cut back on costs and operate very minimally, if you need to save.
 - + We should get the churches on the market as fast as possible, if that is the plan.
 - + Who approves the plan – the CAP (Committee for Affirmation of Plans) or the Bishop? The CAP will receive the plans from each ACC, which they review and give feedback (the Bishop will be observing these meetings). They then accept them and have a meeting with the ACC, so everyone can see the plans and make further changes. Then, the plans are submitted to the Bishop, who has the final approval.

Overview of plans as a whole and further comments and questions:

- Father discussed how the layout of the plans might be confusing, but that he is trying to include all the information possible. We are complying with the diocese's guidelines and beyond, including the feedback and discussion sections.
- Parishioners can submit feedback through the end of September. The plan is to submit the plans to the CAP at the beginning of October.
- St. Anne's Chapel – options for what will happen to the chapel should be included in the 2-site plan. The hours are mostly covered by Foreston and Milaca parishioners (100 hours) and 18 hours by other parishes. It could be a unifying place in our ACC.
- Does the corporate office have to be at the Primary Church? The Primary church location is different in the two plans. Milaca is the Primary in the 2 Site option; it has more Catholics, so 2 Masses will need to happen there, and so it makes sense for it to be the Primary Church. Mora is the Primary in the 3 Site option, as it has the best worship space for liturgies. An argument could be made for having Mora be the primary church for both plans, but it seemed to make more sense that, if you have multiple weekend liturgies at a location, that it be the primary church. The Administrative Office doesn't need to be at the Primary Church. Father did ask the Diocese this specifically. It will depend on where you have the space for it. Mora has the most space currently. It would make sense for the priest to live near the corporate office, but not necessary. In our situation, we would need to either build additions to the church for offices or buy another house for the priest for this to work.

- Can we have secondary offices at the partner churches? This is a possibility. Time should be maximized at the main office. There is a possibility to have limited office hours at another location.
- Has Father talked to the staff about the move to one office? How do they feel about this? There have been conversations about this.
- What about the social cost of closing parishes? What money are we losing by closing parishes? For example, closing Foreston might decrease some social events because of the size of the hall in Milaca. Father will look at some numbers of these things, but stressed that there will be struggles and loss with any plan. There are ways that we can come together to make things work.
- Father gave the example of having to move. You might not understand why and you might feel the pain and loss. Is the effort put into renovating the old house a waste? It's about a family, not about the building. We in our ACC are going through a move and change, and it's hard. We come together and trust that "Dad" (the Bishop) will know what's best for us. There are reasons for this change and there are opportunities.
- What will happen to the cemeteries? Even if the church property is sold, the cemeteries remain in the control of the larger corporation of our ACC. Maintenance would happen through the care fund. It's not terribly expensive to upkeep. There would still be income from plot purchases and special envelopes from parishioners. Some money from the sale of a building could be used for the perpetual care of their cemetery.
- How does the Committee take the feedback? Is it tallied or used to vote in some way? The feedback from parishioners is included in the plans. No vote happens. The committee looks at all of the feedback and takes it into account, while still looking at what is the most reasonable option from the parameters from the diocese.
- Does going to one corporation mean we have to go to one location? In the committee's mind, one location doesn't seem very reasonable. It would splinter the communities existing more.