

All Things New Parish Hall Meeting Notes - July 17, 2025

Reintroducing the All Things New planning committee: Fr. Timothy Gapinski, Julie Rhoda (St. Louis Bertrand), Nancy Frerich (Trustee, St. Louis Bertrand), Deacon Ken Rosha, Amanda Eich (St. Mary's, Mora), Cindy Thrippleton (St. Mary's, Mora), Jim Lundberg (St. Kathryn), Hannah Miller (staff, all), Jennifer Daubner (St. Mary's, Milaca), Nathan Daubner (St. Mary's, Milaca).

History of the ATN committee: Formed in January, started meeting in early March. Since then, they have met every other week to go through different options and scenarios. The first set of Parish Halls were held back in June (recordings and the presentation available on the ACC website).

Addressing comments/questions/misunderstandings:

- **Do we or the Bishop already have a plan?** No, the process is meant to involve parishioners and leadership from the parishes. The Bishop has given us a general picture and guidelines (see the ATN guidebook on the diocesan website), but there is a lot of variation. It is possible to submit multiple plans. **(ATN Audio: 00:11:19)**
- **Reconfiguration: Can the ACCs be switched?** (Mora/Ogilvie go to Isanti ACC and Milaca/Foreston go to Foley ACC). The planning committee did look into it, and it is possible to submit a plan where this happens, but the diocese is not pushing it. Father looked into it with neighboring ACCs, and they were mostly unwilling to make changes. It is not likely to go farther. Father explained briefly about how the original ACCs configurations came about. **(ATN Audio: 00:15:27)**
- **Cemeteries:** There are different possible options for what would happen to a cemetery if a church were to be sold; most likely, the cemeteries would not be sold and would operate in a similar manner. Even if we went to one corporation, the cemeteries could keep their original names. **(ATN Audio: 00:23:33)**
- **Adoration Chapel:** It is not decided what to do with St. Ann's. See Father's bulletin article from July 6. There are many possible options, including relegated to secular use and sold, moved (we don't know where, but not difficult to move - possibly to another parish in ACC, to another private individual, or to the cemetery), or (less likely) be taken down/destroyed. **(ATN Audio: 00:27:21)**
- **One Corporation:** This means that all four parishes would be combined into one new parish, with multiple church campuses/buildings. There is a general consensus among the feedback for this option. One possibility the committee is considering is naming the new parish St. Joseph (but the names of the buildings would not change). The parameter from the diocese is to reduce corporations, but they don't say by how much. **(ATN Audio: 00:34:15)**

Discussion:

- What are the other ACCs doing? We don't know, some farther along than others.
- The Diocesan legal team will provide legal counsel.
- Can the corporation be called Four Pillars? There are some naming requirements for parishes.

- Father has a big load with 4 parish corporations - with one parish, there would be one finance council, one parish council, 2 trustees, etc. Everything would be streamlined.
- Liability - we would share any liability as one corporation.
- Would 2 or 3 corporations make more sense than 3? In our situation, with one priest, it makes sense for 1 corporation.
- How would money get tracked from church to church? Could we keep finances separate? We are called to be more unified, as one. Any separation of finances would be decided by the priest, the business admin, and the finance council.
- Combining to one corporation must have permission of bishop.
- **Assets:** If a parish closes, what happens to the assets? The money goes with the people, including the income from any building sales. Money could be designated partially to perpetual care of the cemetery. If 75% of people stay in the ACC, but the other 25% move to other surrounding churches, the money would be divided so. This breakdown could be determined by parish registrations, but it is hard to keep an accurate assessment. The diocese may provide guidelines for this. **(ATN Audio: 00:55:12)**

Discussion: (ATN Audio: 01:01:06)

- What kind of state are our buildings in? Some projects need to be done (parking in Mora, rectory in Foreston, parking in Foreston, hall in Milaca). Remodels could be done in all locations, depending on the need for offices, classrooms, etc.
- What comes first - the new corporation or the closing of churches? It is not easy to sell buildings. It may make sense to become one first, but the committee is planning on discussing this soon.
- No parishes are currently in debt. Some have a lot in reserve. Father gave a brief overview of where each parish stands financially.
- **Offices/Personnel:** The guidelines state that we must hire one paid business administrator. This would make sense in one corporation. They would be finance, HR, and legal oriented. There can be (and most likely will be) other paid personnel under them (secretaries, etc). There will be other budgeted ministries, but they do not all require paid personnel (e.g., Knights of Columbus). We are also asked to have one main office. This does not mean that there couldn't be other satellite offices. **(ATN Audio: 01:10:36)**

Discussion:

- Is there room at any of the parishes for these offices? Technically, any parish could make it work, but some have more room than others.
- Is there an option for Pastoral Staff? (Deacons, pastoral associates, parish life coordinators). Generally, no. Deacons cannot do communion services in place of a Mass; the Mass schedule must be accommodated by assigned priests, with no rotation of Masses. A Parish Life Coordinator must be appointed by the bishop.
- A Pastoral associate could be hired from the parish. Something like this might be a good idea depending on finances, job description, and other factors.
- **Shared Spaces/Events:** There is the hope that, if a parish were to close, any events they had there could continue at a new location. We are in this together - we should share events, expand, not take them away. **(ATN Audio: 01:29:13)**
- **Parish Relationships:** There is real division and rivalry among some of our parishes (even amongst the cities). We can acknowledge our differences, but we are all one, all Catholics, and all called to follow Christ. These conversations and changes can be very

emotional and hurtful. We need to be kind and compassionate towards others. It is good to have conversations, but be kind. (ATN Audio: 01:34:34)

Discussion:

- **Does the feedback matter? (ATN Audio: 01:43:10)**
 - The committee is not a voting body (and the same goes for parishioner feedback). The committee is taking all feedback into consideration and it is helpful. When giving feedback, give reasons for why.
 - Do you think giving feedback is helpful? It helps to go through the options and really consider them.
- **Are we looking long-term? (ATN Audio: 01:49:46)**
 - Most people agreed to look 10, 20 years out - not short term, what works now.
 - Comments about how St. Cloud is like a mission state, and we should bring more priests in.
 - A lot of looking long-term might have to do with buildings, etc.
 - We should ask, what do we want to be in the future?
- **Deacons and Priests in the Diocese (ATN Audio: 01:57:18)**
 - Deacons will minister, for the most part, where they live.
 - Bringing in more priests isn't feasible either. The parishes cannot afford four priest's salaries. Assessments from the diocese would likely be greater as well.
- **What does a parish do? (ATN Audio: 02:01:47)**
 - Have you ever wished that your parish had a different Mass time? If you have thought this, then you would be right - parishes should have multiple Masses.
 - Father explained about how a parish should function and how this plan is to cultivate this kind of parish life in our communities. Right now, we are more like missions, with just one Mass per location.
 - We are dropping parishioners, insufficient funds, not enough priests. We have to come together as one - if we don't, we'll fail.
 - Where are the people? Where are they going?
 - As an ACC, we already are one community. Everyone is going to lose and gain things. We should address the challenges together.
 - How do we reach the "lost sheep" in our communities?
- **People and volunteers** - we are called to be missionaries. (ATN Audio: 02:18:39)

Plans: Father gave an overview of three different possible plans. (ATN Audio: 02:22:00)

- **Plan A: three churches - Foreston, Milaca, and Mora**
- **Plan B: two churches - Milaca and Mora**
- **Plan C: three churches - Milaca, Ogilvie, and Mora**
- Discussion followed on questions and pros and cons of these plans:
- Ogilvie is central in the ACC - what if we have to move to one parish? Then, we should keep this property in case.
- Do we need 2 parishes within 3 miles of each other (Foreston and Milaca)?
- How many parishioners are at each church? (Foreston: 263, Milaca: 438, Ogilvie: 102, Mora: 334).
- Churches in small towns do a lot for the community - if we don't have to close a church, then why?

- 2 Churches with more than one Mass a weekend - we get to see the same people, the kids can build relationships. We have to encourage families to come.
- Is the size of the buildings sufficient to accommodate the influx of attendees from parish closures? Could be done, for the most part.
- Alternating weekends at churches - not allowed.
- We discussed the situation at Christ Our Light. General consensus was to have churches in towns, rather than out in the country. Can we even sell the buildings? It took Christ Our Light 10 years to sell Princeton.
- People go to Masses for different reasons - they will find a Mass time that works for them.
- It's not about a building - we have a priest and the Eucharist, much to be grateful for.
- What can we do to make Father's job easier?
- There is lots of duplication of ministries at the churches, as well as holes in all. Coming together could streamline and help each parish.
- This is a long, slow process. It will allow us time to adjust and grieve.

Next steps:

- The committee will continue to meet, and will be discussing building operation costs and making drafts of possible plans. Parishioners will have the chance to review the drafts before we submit them in December.