



SACRED HEART PARISH & ACADEMY



TOWN HALL MEETING SUMMARY REPORT

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN: BLESSINGS RECEIVED

As parishioners of Sacred Heart of Jesus, we have witnessed a remarkable working of God's providence over the past six years. Our church building has been restored from the brink of collapse, our community has grown tremendously, and we have pioneered a diocesan classical academy that has drawn our community together and is quickly becoming one of the more successful Catholic schools in the nation.

PRESENT VULNERABILITY AND AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

Though we have accomplished much, our parish culture, our academy, and our beautiful liturgy remain vulnerable, even fragile. This vulnerability comes principally from the fact that in all the work we have done, we have insufficiently deepened and broadened investment in our parish community. In the absence of a strong culture and community, we are vulnerable to erosion of the principles that make our parish so beautiful. The stories of the efforts that make Sacred Heart what it is today have not been sufficiently shared, nor have the exceptional efforts undertaken been sufficiently supported by organizational strength and transparency. Like many individuals and institutions, we have been too busy at the hard work creating to tell the story of what has happened, but now is the time to do so.

Living in a time of tumult in the Church and facing an antagonistic culture, it has never been more important to know, share, and defend what our little community has begun to build. We are ready to deepen our commitment to each other and to intentionally invite others to join us in this enterprise. A community that does not know itself cannot preserve itself. Right now too few parishioners are fully integrated into the knowledge, responsibility, and commitment necessary to sustain our work.

OBSTACLES AND FRAGILITIES:

As has been mentioned in the homily series that paralleled the town hall meetings, we desire to make our parish not simply "strong", but "anti-fragile". This means becoming not merely resistant to the forces that would hinder our work, but capable of growing and improving in the face of that resistance. Addressing fragility means looking to our present trajectory and seeing where the vulnerabilities lie and how we might act to strengthen ourselves against them. While we cannot predict all the future ideological or cultural challenges our parish may face, some concrete financial challenges are abundantly clear. Please see the attached Parish inventory for a breakdown of these needs. To raise the amount of money needed to fulfill our present and anticipated commitments using our current strategies would involve numerous campaigns, fundraisers, and benefits, distracting from the spiritual needs of our parish community and exhausting our volunteers. Such efforts divide our attention and our resources and are inherently fragile.

A SOLUTION: RECOMMITMENT TO FIDELITY

For the above reasons and so many more the time is ripe for our community to embrace a planned cultural renewal, including a transition to what has elsewhere been called ‘the stewardship model’ of giving. Though we believe it is much more than just about financial commitment. Firstly, this renewal is about each individual’s personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Secondly, it is a recommitment to our vocations and state in life. Finally, it is a recommitment to fulfilling our responsibilities to the work of the parish. Our hope is to become a parish of active disciples of Christ performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, deeply engaged in the life of the parish, and providing for the material and financial needs of our apostolates.

While this vision is lofty, our internal inventory of our parish shows enormous potential. Looking at the Parish Inventory in the attached packet, you can see that the current per-family rate of giving represents an average tithe of less than 2% of household income. If this number were increased to just 5% for each family, we would be able to fulfill our commitments without the necessity of special fundraising *and* we would be able to quickly proceed with the projects that are so near and dear to all of us, including the restoration and beautification of our church. If the average tithe were 8% per family, we would be able to offer opportunities like those provided by parishes and dioceses that have succeeded in operating a stewardship model. In the long term, this could even include free academy tuition for committed, registered parishioners.

YOUR ROLE IN WHAT COMES NEXT

Your prayerful recommitment to our parish is a vital part of the entire parish community taking full ownership of what we have been blessed with and what is ours to protect and preserve. We are asking each family to prayerfully discern how they are being called to conform their lives more fully to Christ and to more generously and sacrificially steward the gifts that God has given them.

Our goal is to become a model Catholic community with the life of the parish at its center. Following this transition, any visitor who attends Sacred Heart will be able to perceive our commitment to serving Christ and His Church in authentic community.

Our vision is to become a parish in which all members generously seek opportunities to refine and preserve an understood culture, the principles of which are regularly articulated by the parish leadership and universally supported by the families that make up the parish, and in which the liturgy is explicitly the source from which works of education, evangelization, and charity flow.

We ask you to now take inventory and consider your recommitment to fidelity. Please devote time to reflectively and prayerfully complete the attached Renewal of Fidelity packet. We ask that you turn in the final page to the Parish Office by January 6th, 2020. You may mail the completed form to the Parish Office, physically bring it to the Parish Office, or scan and email it to parishoffice@sacredheartgr.org.

We look forward to you joining us in this renewal of fidelity. Please be on the lookout for updated information about the renewal in the bulletin in the coming weeks. If you would like to speak to someone specifically about the renewal, please contact the Parish Office and someone will connect with you shortly.

Committed Parishioners Serving on the Parish Renewal Working Group