

Prayer for Building Anew

E te Matua i te Rangi
Father in heaven,
You have made the whole world a temple of your glory.
It is right that we praise and glorify your name.

With Jesus Christ its cornerstone,
You built a Church of living stones,
So that all who gather in your holy house
May come to everlasting salvation.

Hear our prayer
as we embark on this mission of building anew.

Enfold us once more in the love of the Holy Spirit.

Guide our vision,
Open our hearts,
Bind us as one body.
Enable us to wait with trust,
Discern with patience,
Face the challenges,
Embrace the sacrifices
And speak with reverence;
That we may come to true holiness
As we serve your purpose
In building this sacred dwelling.

We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

PREAMBLE

St. Joseph's Parish was established in 1924. The parish history is rich, treasured and there is a strong sense of carrying this ninety year history forward with the next steps of this parish's journey. This growing parish is building a new church and possibly other needed spaces; it is not the start of a new parish. St. Joseph's is deeply immersed in Catholic traditions, devotions and missionary outreach and some describe their parish as "pilgrims journeying to heaven together." It is common to meet families who have two and three generations actively engaged in the parish. The primary school, which is a 'foundation' of the parish, has nourished generations of the past and present, and foresees a strong future. The community is ethnically diverse with at least 27 nationalities present and growing, yet they are one parish. The reflection of society is found in this parish with an established youth group, growth of young families, those immersed in the work field, semi-retired and fully retired. Care for elders and those with special needs is clearly evident. Anticipating the growth within their parish boundaries, the parish wishes to plan well for the future and be able to use their resources to meet both current and future needs.

PROCESS

Fr. John Adams, PP, invited Marianne Daly, a Parish Advisor for the Diocese, to come and meet with the Parish Planning Group and discuss how the parish could take the next steps forward in a process toward building a new church. Marianne presented a process to the group who accepted it and asked her to facilitate.

This conversation and work is being undertaken due to the devastating earthquakes that began in 2010, and continued in 2011. For this 90 year old parish, the earthquakes destroyed the larger of the two parish's churches, St. Joseph's. Bishop Barry Jones has affirmed that the church be demolished and a new church built.

An invitation was extended to the parish to reflect and converse on *who we are as a parish and on our future*. Three parish meetings were planned, the first on the 27th July. This was a three hour open meeting with 75 participants. A prayer was crafted for *Building Anew* which opened the meeting. Marianne facilitated the meeting. The meeting began with the premise that:

"the process of building a church does not begin with a building or a site plan, but first taking time with a community to reflect on who we are as church and how are we called to live out that mission."

Four questions were posed and parishioners shared in small groups:

1. Who are we?
2. What do we do?
3. What are our treasures and values?
4. What do we need?

All responses were recorded and summarized. After the meeting, the St Joseph's Planning Group reflected on the responses and comments of parishioners and felt that there may be more views to consider, noting the presence and absence of various groups and ministries of the parish. A summary of all the responses was made available to the parish both on the website and in printed form. The process was adapted to invite additional responses to the four questions and be submitted within the week. These were added to the working document from meeting one.

An invitation was extended to the parish to prayerfully reflect on these four questions and the responses in preparation for the 2nd parish meeting which would prioritize their needs. On 24th August, the second meeting was held with 77 participants some of who were not at the first meeting. The Sisters of Mercy requested an alternative means to participate as they were committed to a religious community event the date of meeting two, prioritizing. The Parish Planning Group affirmed Marianne repeating the second meeting with the Sisters of Mercy, which was done the following day in the same manner as parishioners participated. This was made known to the parish at meeting two. The results are prioritized here.

Alongside prayer, two key characteristics of this process are openness and transparency. The Parish Planning Group has provided information on what is known and that which is not yet known to the parish through meetings, bulletin notices and updates at Mass these past five months.

The purpose of this process is to create and articulate Concept or Vision Statements which describe the qualities and priorities of the faith community of St. Joseph's Parish. The work engaged in is designed to identify what the parish desires regarding the new church and associated structures.

The third meeting is scheduled for Sunday, 19 October following the 10:00 am Mass. At that time this report will be shared with the parish, asking for affirmation that it indeed accurately reflects the conversation and concepts selected by the participants from meetings I and II. If corrections need to be made, they will be identified at this meeting. Each idea was received with respect and seriously considered. These are the areas of greatest consensus.

It is the intention that this document will be shared with potential architects and will be a springboard from which a dialogue will begin as the search for the best architect or architectural team is undertaken. This document, along with the Diocesan *House of God* resource by Bishop Barry Jones, are two key sources of information for those who may consider working on St. Joseph's new church.

VISION - CONCEPT STATEMENTS

I. Church Style, Atmosphere and Artwork

The area which received the most attention and support was that of the style, atmosphere and artwork of the Church. The Parish desires a church traditional in style. This is in keeping with the Diocesan document *House of God*. "Visibility of the altar from all areas" is asked for. There is a desire for beauty and an atmosphere of sacred space to permeate the building. "Greater respect for the altar and sanctuary" is a priority. Clear placement of icons and statues is desired. The single most artistic element prioritized is stained glass.

II. Daily Mass Chapel

A Chapel, in addition to the church proper, was the second area which received the most support. In addition to a chapel for daily Mass, adoration and the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word with children were specifically noted. Further discussion on perpetual adoration will be needed.

III. Finance

This area is a combination of several threads woven under 'finance'. The first was that the new building be "low maintenance and energy efficient." Noted was the support that the parish bear in mind the "expenses and keep the costs under control, making the funds go further." Within this category was strong support for the 'best use' of the school and church land. "Recycling and reusing what is possible from the old St. Joseph's church" is also a priority.

IV. Acoustics and ICT [Information, Communication Technology]

Excellent acoustics and sound equipment is clearly desired. Specifically noted was a system that can "work with hearing aids." Clear visibility to projector/s is asked for.

V. History of the Parish

The preservation of the history of St. Joseph's is clear. One of the additions to the original list of needs was that of recovering the prayer logos that are on the floor in the entrance to the church.

*'Carry the footsteps of all the parishioners over the past years
into our Church of the future'*

was the single most identified priority. Along with these is the acknowledgment of the history of the church and school. The presider's chair crafted by Fr. Noonan, the pictures of the four Evangelists (and Holy Spirit) and the original foundation stone have been requested to be retrieved. More importantly, a legacy has been identified. The community

is asking to acknowledge the people who have come before and bring their history into this newly created space.

[The parish is aware that the Parish Planning Group has already identified these and other treasures within the broken church to be salvaged if at all possible.]

VI. Church Size and Accommodation

The ability to accommodate the school community and parents in the new church is a priority. The ability to “cater for those larger celebrations such as Easter and school Masses” is a priority. Noting the possibility of expanding the church in the future, when the need arises has been noted.

Additional:

There was strong support that the “parish centre remain.”

Noted too was the support for the “parish centre and church to be linked.”