

Town Meeting Regarding Merger of Parishes  
Thursday, November 29, 2018 at 6 PM – St. Mary's Parish Center

Monsignor Aucoin opened the meeting with a prayer. Present were Sandy & Francis Veivia, Lorna & John Delles, Noel Voos, Andrew & Joan Kilcer, Gail Patrick, Judy Stoffel, Denise Betterman, Robert & Mary Boucher, Veronica Petranichuk, Mary Jane Bertrand, Kimberly & Thomas Nowak, Kareta & Dennis Olshfski, Monica & Charles Lynch, Robert Cowan and Tammie Eggleston.

Monsignor explained the terminology as it relates to linked and merged parishes. He also explained how this will be implemented when we are associated with St. Paul's in Black River. There would be a worship site and Parish at St. Mary's and St. Paul's, a worship site and mission at St. Joseph's, and St. Rita's and St. Theresa's would become oratories.

Monsignor also presented the number of people attending weekend masses at St. Mary's, St. Joseph's and St. Theresa's. An average of 171 total attending all four masses. He further reviewed the financial status of all three parishes which reveals all are operating in a deficit. Envelopes are being prepared by Our Sunday Visitor and in updating our files a total of 144 sets of envelopes will be generated.

Monsignor also explained the present operations of the parishes and the changes if a merger occurs. At present there are 3 separate corporations, 3 sets of financial statements. Income and expenses are posted in three sections of the accounting system. A merger would result in one set of financial statements. Also, future sacramental records would be consolidated into one spiritual records book.

There was discussion as it relates to the naming of the new corporation. Judy Stoffel suggested we open that up to parishioners for discussion. Monsignor reviewed what has been his experience in the past with parishes being merged/linked.

Parishioners feel that we should move forward and asked Monsignor what the next step would be. He stated that he would meet with the Pastoral/Finance Council.

Parishioners suggested that, given both the present attendance at Masses and financial condition of the three entities, that we simply merge into one parish and only keep open St. Mary's Church, thus resulting in closing St. Joseph's and St. Theresa's. Maintaining three buildings, the parish center, and the rectory with current income no longer seems feasible. No one voiced any objections to keeping one church, St. Mary's, and closing the St. Joseph's and St. Theresa's, and keeping the parish name of St. Mary's. It was noted that St. Mary's building needs some structural work and that the parish should obtain professional advice about the work that is needed. Thus, the direction that Msgr. Aucoin will follow in further consultation with the pastoral and finance council is:

Close St. Theresa's church building.

Merge St. Theresa's with St. Mary's.

Close St. Joseph's church building.

Merge St. Joseph's with St. Mary's.

Obtain professional opinion concerning needed structural work on St. Mary's Church.

There being no further questions, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM.