



Joint Parish Planning Town Hall Meeting Thursday, August 22, 2024 St. Joseph's Church

The second Town Hall meeting regarding the planning for the Rome parishes was held on Thursday, August 22, at 6:30 PM at St. Joseph's Church. Approximately 50 people were in attendance representing St. Paul's, St. John the Baptist/Transfiguration, St. Peter's/St. Mary's, and St. Joseph's Churches.

Father Robert Kelly, Father Seán O'Brien, Father Paul Angelicchio, Father Emmanuel were present. Introductions were made by Father Seán O'Brien. The opening prayer was offered by Father Robert Kelly.

Father O'Brien then gave a background on the reason that we are merging into one parish and information about the process to create one parish. The primary factors driving this decision are the limited number of priests available to serve in the Syracuse Diocese, and the data that was collected by the Diocese from 2017 – 2023 for Vicariate 4 (which includes the Parishes of Rome, Lee Center, and Holland Patent) which was detailed in the March 25, 2024 issue of the Catholic Sun. The data collected for each Parish included: weekend Mass attendance vs. Church capacity; enrollment for Faith Formation and Sacraments celebrated; distance between Churches and distance driven by priests to cover weekend masses. The trends indicated that change was necessary to adequately meet the pastoral needs of our community. Father O'Brien indicated that Father Paul Angelicchio will be the Parochial Vicar and Father Seán O'Brien will be the Pastor.

The Parish Councils of each Parish meet on a regular basis and subcommittees have been formed to work through the details to accomplish this goal.

Father O'Brien then opened the floor to questions:

- **Based on the FAQ, there needs to be contingency plans for emergencies. How many priests will we have?**
We anticipate that there will be a minimum of 2 (Father Seán and Father Paul) and possibly a maximum of 3 (Father Seán, Father Paul, and Father Emanuel).
- **Why is St. Paul's not called an oratory?**
The status of St. Paul's has not yet been decided. Being designated an Oratory is not necessarily a good thing. St. Paul's may be more than just an oratory.
- **Will we have a number to call when we need a priest?**
For funerals, you will call the new parish office. For hospital visits, it may be more challenging. Father Seán suggested that people not wait too long to request last rites. Father Seán also noted that Funerals and Weddings can be celebrated by a Deacon, if either service does not include a Mass.

- **What will happen to the Transfiguration Adoration Chapel when Transfiguration is sold?**
It would be moved to another location, but that is unlikely to happen in the next 5 years.
- **Can Deacons provide a communion service?**
No, Deacons will not provide communion services.
- **Can you live stream a mass to another church and receive communion there?**
No, that is not currently allowed.
- **During the Synod listening sessions, ideas were raised about more participation from laymen, women, etc. and about recruiting for Deacons. Are those ideas being addressed?**
There are efforts to recruit Deacons. It is important to remember that when someone chooses to become a Deacon or a nun, it is a calling, and therefore not the same as recruiting for a job. Efforts are also being made to evangelize teens, young adults, etc.
- **What is the plan for Faith Formation?**
Plans are being formulated by the Faith Formation Subcommittee. Though nothing has been finalized, it is likely that there will be two (2) Directors of Religious Education (DREs), one for grades K-6 and another for grades 7-10. Instruction will be held at multiple sites using the same curriculum.
- **How do parishioners influence the subcommittee process and the potential outcomes?**
If you have ideas, concerns or questions, speak to the members of the subcommittees or your Parish Council Members. All subcommittees prepare minutes for each of their meetings. Ask for copies if you are interested.

Father Paul made some closing remarks.

The closing prayer was offered by Father Paul.

Next Town Hall: Saturday, September 14th, at 2:00 PM at St. Peter's

(NOTE: Thank you to Joe Stanton for providing the microphones and recording equipment.)

(This summary of the Town Hall was derived from the minutes prepared by a member of the Communications Subcommittee who was in attendance.)