



THE
EPIPHANY
OF THE
LORD
PARISH

Mar. 9, 2023

Anne-Marie Welsh, the Director of Diocesan Communications for the Diocese of Erie, wrote an article last May summing up the status of the Pastoral Planning Process in the Diocese.

“It has been five years since the **first phase** of parish restructuring was implemented in the Diocese of Erie as a result of pastoral planning. At that time, through a series of mergers and partnerships, and after a significant process that included dialogue, feedback and refinement, the diocese reduced the number of its parishes from 117 to 96.

‘Change is never easy,’ says the Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie. ‘But it’s encouraging to see that the majority of parishes have handled their transitions very well. The primary goal remains creating healthy, vibrant parishes where people can grow in their relationship with Christ.’

As Bishop Persico has said on numerous occasions, planning will be a way of life within the diocese going forward. To that end, a series of resources and options were created by diocesan administrators for those involved in a **second phase** of planning during which a number of parishes in several regions have been exploring the possibility of merging or partnering in the future.

While not as public as the first-round effort, this second phase of planning has been transparent within the communities involved, including the parishes of St. Agatha, St. Brigid and St. Mary of Grace in Meadville, that have now come together as one: the Epiphany of the Lord Parish.

Recognizing that a number of parishes in need of planning next steps would benefit from a more structured approach, Bishop Persico now has introduced a **third phase** of pastoral planning. The national Meitler organization already has been engaged, first to update key data that will be useful for planning in three deaneries [Bradford Deanery, the Oil City Deanery, and the West Erie Deanery], and secondly, to outline the steps that need to be taken to bring plans to fruition.” (Bold added.)

In our own case, we are halfway through the architectural studies necessary to present an informed preliminary plan for the facilities to the parish. More to follow when we receive the completed study.

There have been numerous economic and demographic changes since the founding of many of our parishes in mid-19th through the early 20th century. Bishop Persico plans to engage the services of the Meitler organization to gather and analyze the data regarding these changes for *all* regions of the diocese to provide a factual basis for pastoral planning. The Bishop, priests, and the faithful are called to work together in this effort to build a strong and enduring future for the growth of the Catholic Church in Northwest Pennsylvania.



Dec. 13, 2022

Properties Committee Update

Architects Weber Murphy Fox have toured and studied our facilities. They should soon be releasing a report giving us numbers regarding the feasibility and sustainability of using each facility. This information will be used to help us to decide which one will be kept and which will be placed on the real estate market.

A Church can be relegated to profane (secular as opposed to sacred) but sordid (unbecoming) use. The diocese governs this.

Feb. 21, 2022

Pastoral Plan: Properties Committee Update

We are still waiting for the report from the walk through with the architectural firm. Nothing has been decided yet, but rest assured this page is kept up to date.

Nov. 15, 2021

Pastoral Plan: Properties Committee Update

On Nov. 10 we did a walk through of the church properties with an architectural firm to evaluate the feasibility and sustainability of the two properties in light of our ministry goals. They likely will look into the properties with additional personnel as well. The study will help us to see what's possible physically and financially. This data will help us make a decision about the property we choose. No decisions have yet been made.



Oct. 12, 2021

Pastoral Plan: Properties Committee Update

As we mentioned in our first update, a Properties Committee was formed with the goal to explore how we can fulfill our mission as a parish in either the St. Brigid or St. Mary properties taken as a whole. A subcommittee of people representative of both parishes and involved in the usage of the two facilities was formed to develop a plan for how each facility could be used to hold the functions that are presently in both and what modifications or additions to them would be needed. This has been completed.

Our next task is commission an architectural firm to do feasibility and sustainability studies for each of the two plans seeking to ascertain short-term costs for modifications and long-term costs as we continue using one of the facilities. We are now in the process of securing such a firm.

Please keep us in your prayers. More updates to follow as we move forward.

Sept. 19, 2021

Pastoral Plan: Properties Committee Formed

As we mentioned in the Pastoral Plan “The new parish will eventually need to assess the use or repurposing of various parish facilities (e.g., social halls, rectories, etc.). Until that time, these facilities will continue to function as they have been.”

In the interest of proceeding in a deliberate and informed manner I have brought together a group of knowledgeable people to function as a Properties Committee. Our first goal was to explore how we can fulfill our mission as a parish in either the St. Brigid or St. Mary properties taken as a whole. We sought



input from our Religious Education and Youth Ministry personnel and people involved in major social activities to evaluate the potential of each property if we were to retain it as well as any changes required to enable it to accommodate our pastoral goals and continue all our activities.

We have made no further decisions. Updates to follow. Please keep us in prayer as we journey together as the Epiphany of the Lord Parish.