

# Long Range Planning Committee Overview

In May of 2012, Fr. John Michalowski, Pastor of SS Mary & Joseph Parish in Salem NH, asked Fr. Tom Frink, Associate Pastor, to head up a group of individuals to evaluate the long range future of the Parish's two churches. Initially, the Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee consisted of six individuals who had all formally been on one or more of other parish committees including Pastoral Council, Twinning Committee and Finance Committee. They were tasked with looking at all possible alternatives for providing a vibrant Catholic presence in the Greater Salem area, given two aging campuses plus an eventual priest shortage. The LRP Committee met regularly as a group, in subcommittees, and via phone calls and emails over a period of 24 months. There were informal conversations with members of the Town of Salem Municipal Offices, local real estate developers, and numerous contractors, builders and architects.

The approach was to first look at the Parish's present condition, from a financial, program, and facility standpoint. After gathering initial information, they then met at a special weekend meeting called "What good looks like", held with the Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Committee, Ministry leaders, and office staff. This meeting not only dealt with what it would take to make our Parish strong and vibrant spiritually, but helped develop a separate list of "what good looks like" for the physical requirements we needed to help achieve those goals. These "good" features became the primary focus of the Committee when looking at all the components our Parish complex should have. A Parish-wide survey further enhanced this list from which we developed prospective options.

After speaking at all Masses, the group met with the parish community as a whole to present their findings and obtain further input. All suggestions were taken into consideration and further refinements were made. The Committee was then expanded to include our then School Principal Leeann McCormack; Steven Barretto, PCM & local business owner; Jim Frahm, former PCM & local builder; Ken Fure, Finance Committee Member; Office Manager Carol Kater; Judy Ryan, PCM & Health Care Professional, and Keith Wolters, St. Joseph Regional School Board Member and local builder. It became quite evident after several meetings that we needed to eliminate any options that were not feasible. Again, after reviewing all remaining potential options, it was determined that there were three viable strategies to pursue. Each had their own unique advantages and disadvantages, and the documentation that was sent to the Diocese outlines each of them. They are:

1. A strategy to consolidate onto the St. Joseph campus. This involves selling MQP and tearing down the convent (yellow house) and expanding the existing church to accommodate the LRP Committee requirements. No major changes to the school or St. Julie Hall other than necessary renovations would take place.
2. A strategy to consolidate onto Mary Queen of Peace campus. This involves selling St. Joseph's Church as well as the convent and the rectory. MQP would be expanded to include more office/classroom space, a larger gathering space (Narthex), a new commercial-grade kitchen, renovation of existing rectory space, and construction of a large function hall. As in item 1, this strategy would leave the school and St. Julie Hall as is, except for necessary renovations and with potential changes to the school property entrance and egress.

3. A Two-Site strategy where we would keep both churches open, with St. Joseph's being used primarily for weddings, funerals, morning masses, and special occasions as needed. It would still require the renovations outlined in Strategy #2, but would obviously not require the selling of St. Joseph Church. The yellow house and the Rectory would still be sold to help pay for the MQP renovations.

In the packet of information sent to the Bishop for his review we included:

- A summation for the use of Parish properties for each strategy.
- Financials for each strategy, along with an annual cost impact.
- A comparison of each "good" feature for each strategy, listed in order of relevance.
- Advantages and disadvantages for each strategy.

It was noted that preserving the Regional School is a critical component of our long term growth for all three strategies, and no changes other than some necessary renovations were included in the proposals.

Since we do not anticipate significant savings by cutting staff, the funding for each strategy will require a capital campaign. Expanding St. Joseph's Church will require the most significant campaign due to the cost associated with expanding a much smaller facility and gaining no revenue from the sale of the convent or current Rectory.

It should be noted that the report also accounts for expenses for the next ten years, including those covered by the *2012 Turner Engineering Survey and Parish Priorities (TESPP)* prepared by the Finance Council. If none of the proposals are acted upon, there would still need to be a smaller capital campaign to complete the recommended renovations in the report, including the parking lot at MQP, etc.

As of February 12, 2015 we have received no decision from the Diocese as to which option we should pursue, or if further information is needed. A meeting between Fr. John and the bishop will be scheduled very soon. We believe we have given the bishop all the information necessary to make a well informed and fiscally responsible decision to keep SS Mary & Joseph Parish vibrant now and into the future. Please pray for the Bishop as he discerns the fate of our Parish.

Respectfully submitted,

LRP Committee Members