



Summary

Communication was a recurring theme throughout many of the listening sessions. Comments mostly centered on two main areas: the need for developing more varied and frequent methods of sharing news about the ministries and activities in the parish; and the desire for more clarity around how decisions are made: who makes those decisions and dialogue around decision making. Many benefits of improved communication were implied in the discussions, including: wider support for parish ministries and activities, stronger sense of welcoming and belonging, broader pool of volunteers, more leadership opportunities, better meeting the needs of various sub-groups, and greater utilization of the skills and talents within the parish community.

Coupled with the call for improved communication and transparency from parish leaders, were calls for a greater role for the laity in parish leadership, more support from the parish staff, and more clarity around the various leadership roles in the parish. Decisions seemingly made without consultation was of particular concern to some.

Participants expressed real concern about the financial situation of the parish and requests were made for more frequent updates as well as greater transparency into plans to address the deficit. The importance of financial stability to the ongoing work of the parish was acknowledged by many, as was the desire for careful stewardship and for creative efforts to increase revenue.

Detail

Need for more effective and transparent communication around parish life

- Disconnect between the school and the parish.
- Creating a Smaller Community Feel: Exploring ways to create smaller, niche groups within the large parish to foster a sense of belonging.
- Gift Sharing: Encouraging parishioners to share their gifts more effectively.
- Communication Enhancement: Improving how events and news are communicated at the parish level, which could help new ministries emerge.
- Inclusivity in Volunteering: Making it clear how people can help and ensuring they feel directly reached out to.
- Extended Ministry Fair: Proposing that the ministry fair be held every weekend for a month to ensure everyone has a chance to attend.
- Diversified Communication: Looking beyond the bulletin and annual report for communication, suggesting quarterly reviews, creating more conversation opportunities, and reaching out to those less connected to the parish.

Communication, Leadership, and Finances

Need for more effective and transparent communication around parish life, continued

- Bulletin Use: Suggesting a bulletin page dedicated to each ministry, detailing activities and contact information, presented as part of a cohesive community rather than as separate entities.
- Unified Events: Addressing the perception that events are for specific sub-groups within the parish and not for everyone.
- Targeted Communication: Focusing on subgroups like parents with young children and leading with common content in newsletters.
- Improved Bulletin Practices: Ensuring the bulletin includes all announcements and that it is thoroughly checked before publication.
- Cultivating a Welcoming Community: Emphasizing the need for relentless dialogue and abundant communication to create a welcoming environment.

Need for more effective and transparent communication from parish leaders and on decision making process

- Challenges in communication, especially after the merger/lingering uncertainty post-merger.
- Dissatisfaction with decisions made without consulting parishioners.
- Concerns about institutional distrust and the need to project community values.
- Concerns about the lack of communication from the parish office.
- Challenges associated with being labeled a "Comboni Missionary Parish."
- Listening Sessions: Holding sessions to better understand and address community needs.
- Clarity in Liturgy: Doing a better job explaining the parish's actions, including in the liturgy, and using Mass and the bulletin as platforms for this.
- Transparency and Ongoing Communication: Communicating clearly about the pastoral plan and parish activities, possibly through a public relations campaign, to avoid confusion during transitions.
- Vision and Dialogue: Questions about who crafted the vision statement and priorities for real dialogue with the pastor, avoiding manipulative language, and genuinely listening to all viewpoints.
- Preparation for Pentecost: Questioning readiness for Pentecost and the need for a smart plan moving forward.

Communication, Leadership, and Finances

General Feedback Around Leadership

- Opportunities for laity and deacons to take on leadership roles.
- Calls for shared leadership, especially involving women, and open communication with pastors.
- Lack of clarity on the roles and decision-making processes within the new parish structure.
- Priests should be willing to make difficult decisions for the betterment of the parish.
- There's a need for leadership renewal, as long-serving leaders might inadvertently harm the parish by distancing people from the ministries.
- A desire to see priests engaging with the community outside of Mass.
- The need for more staff members to adequately handle parish work, with concerns about the current staff not being welcoming to parishioners.

Finances

- Concern that negative views of the Archdiocese have affecting giving.
- Exploration of the possibilities for fundraising and optimizing the use of parish properties.
- Cash Flow Concerns: Questions are raised about the sources of parish funding and the need for greater clarity on this issue. Will we continue to be able to support the work and ministries of the parish given our financial means?
- Transparency in Giving: There's a call for greater transparency regarding the specifics of why parishioners should increase their giving, and a desire for detailed explanations of how their money is being used. In addition, a call for clear articulation of parish financial goals.
- Regular Financial Reporting: Suggestions include improving transparency around parish finances by providing frequent quarterly reports, not just annual ones.
- Community Involvement in Finances: The text suggests including the broader parish community in fiscal planning and management.
- Gratitude for Stewardship: There's an expression of gratitude towards the Finance Council for its stewardship and appreciation for the communication of financial information through mailings and bulletins.
- Addressing Financial Challenges: Emphasizes the need to highlight the parish's financial challenges to boost stewardship and ensure the financial health of the parish, particularly in its integration with the school.
- Strategic Contributions: The parish is encouraged to think strategically about securing contributions from families with the means to give, to maintain accessibility for all families.
- Economic Viability: Acknowledging that the parish's work cannot continue without financial resources, there's a call to be conscious of how the parishioners give.
- Budget Management: There is a need for better money management and a balanced budget to ensure a fluid financial process.
- Resource Allocation: It is noted that parish financial resources should support both the parish ministries and the maintenance of buildings, which should be prioritized in the budget.