

Summary

Wishes and Hopes for the Future

21. Looking to the future, if you could imagine or transform St. Mary/St. Frances Cabrini Parish in any way you wished regarding our mission, ministries, presence, facilities ... what three things would you do to enhance our parish's life and vitality?

Many expressed a desire for creating a youth group. Some advocated for the establishment of a “youth advisor,” “youth coordinator,” “youth director,” or “youth minister” so that youth participation in the parish increases. The youth director would possibly be a “student out of Catholic college.” Others liked the idea of youth group activities so that would “close the gap between youth and older members.” Therefore, the parish should “allocate a budget” to develop a youth ministry.

Several spoke on the need to engage current members and “attract new members.” Current members who are not active should be visited and asked reasons for their inactivity. One stated that implementation of “more family-oriented activities” such as “picnics, team sports, exercise classes and game nights” would encourage those families who do not attend Mass to participate in parish life. Many expressed the need to develop a music ministry in the parish “including a choir and bell choir to name a few,” as a way to involve new and engage current members.

It appears that facilities usage is a major issue with many, due to financial and other concerns, but few offered any constructive solutions. A few suggested “closing either St. Mary's or St. Frances Cabrini,” as a way to cut back on heating and air-conditioning costs. This being a non-viable option, others stated “heating one of the churches and not the other,” is the best option at this point in time. Furthermore, some stated that the convent could be converted to an “assisted living center” for the religious as a way to make use of the building and possibly generate some income. Others expressed the idea to create “one activity center that reflects the ambiance of both churches” in order to save some money and unite as one parish.

Given the many survey responses, our team feels the overall theme is that the parish needs to start moving in a discernible positive direction. One way to do this is to put more stock in the youth. The obvious first step, creating a youth group, would present the youth of the parish with opportunities to grow in their faith through faith based activities.

The issue of engaging current members, and attracting new members seems more difficult, as it relies on knowing reasons for non participation in the parish. The responses strongly favor engaging current members through home visits, and new members through parish events or gatherings. Finally, responses about facility usage included various suggestions, but no consensus on a solution. Therefore, the decision on facility usage should be discussed by the board to come up with a solution.