

ST. ANN / ST. BRENDAN PARISH COLLABORATIVE

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To the Members of St. Ann Parish and St. Brendan Parish and School:

It was a pleasure to introduce ourselves at the liturgies a few weeks ago. With this letter, we extend our introduction to all the members of the parishes. We have been warmly welcomed. Thank you. Fr. Bob joined your parishes in early May and Fr. Brian will arrive in early June. Together we are a “team ministry” which means that neither is a “pastor” for we share equal leadership roles; Fr. Brian, as designated “moderator” is a bit more equal in relationship to the Archdiocese. Fr. Brian begins a six-year term and Fr. Bob, nearing retirement, will be here for about two years. We also share with you an update on the financial status of both parishes. We come to St. Ann and St. Brendan Parishes with a willingness to work with you to assess the present situation, evaluate viable options and develop a plan of action to meet your spiritual needs. We will work with the leadership of the parishes – Parish Council, Finance Committees, School Board and Staff – in a consultative and collaborative manner that focuses on the mission of the Church—building one’s relationship with Jesus Christ. Above all, complete transparency is the norm.

After the recent joint leadership meeting we know that there is lots of “information” circulating. This letter offers you the reality without conclusions. When we accepted this assignment, we knew there would be financial challenges; we discovered it was more serious. Looking forward, the question is clear: “How will the Church best serve the spiritual needs of the Catholics in this area?” **On Monday, June 11, at 7:00pm, there will be a Joint Open Meeting for members of both parishes at St. Brendan Church** (the larger space). Enclosed is a financial analysis report for the two parishes and St. Brendan School. With total transparency we can work together for the common mission of the Church. We know that you will have some concerns, some confusion and some complaints. We pledge to be frank and honest, keeping you informed and working with the leadership to surface doable possibilities for the future. Together, guided by the Spirit, with your commitment, a constructive solution will move the community forward. The three reports offer the facts of the financial reality. Numbers can be confusing, so here is the broader context:

- Attendance and financial support has steadily decreased in both parishes. Each parish has an average of 275 people at Sunday liturgy with each offertory collection a little over \$3000/week. [Note: the deficit between income and expenses for May and June is \$40K+ for St. Ann and \$26K+ for St. Brendan] The cash flow is impossible to meet. Moreover, the people attending Mass are “aging.” Despite being as generous as they can, those who attend can’t support all the expenses of a parish. Hard decisions are necessary.
- Over the past six years, the Archdiocese has forgiven loans and offered grants totaling over \$404K: St. Ann School (for transition, \$243K), St. Brendan Parish (\$30K), and St. Brendan School (\$160K). In the past three years, the Parish Collaborative has borrowed \$700K+ from the Archdiocese [St. Ann \$280K+; St. Brendan \$245K+; St. Brendan School \$175K+. These loans covered only operating expenses, cash flow and paying outstanding bills. No repairs were done. In the next six months, the two parishes will need \$200K more.

- Deferred Maintenance. In 2015, Parish Property Management, Inc. did a complete survey of all the buildings, offering the following estimates: St. Ann Church: \$105K; St. Ann Rectory: \$36K; St. Ann Convent: \$90K [Total: \$231,000]. The deferred maintenance cost for St. Brendan Church: \$922K, St. Brendan House: \$68K, St. Brendan Office: \$339K (includes 2017 updated pointing/exterior/roofing priority), St. Brendan School: \$405K (including \$220K priority) [Total: \$1,734,000] The office is bad; the church is deteriorating: window and roof leaks, broken gutters, foundation issues, side window wells blocked and water coming into the lower hall during storms. Inside the church, there is extensive paint peeling, ruined floors, broken elevator (thus, no ADA access), cement steps repair and door problems.

There is no one “fault” for this situation; the past reasons are complex. What will be the future? Two points should be made about your pastoral leadership over the past many years. First, there has been too much instability of leadership and transparency may not have been as thorough which is unfortunate; but after acknowledging the past, we must face “now” - together. Second, no pastor leads a parish insidiously. Loans are borrowed to get over the operating “hump,” hoping for a change and help. Repairs are postponed. In today’s loss of religious affiliation, trying to keep every parish afloat is very challenging. Please be aware that decreased attendance, financial support – and deferred maintenance – is common for most of the parishes throughout the Archdiocese. Ours is more critical and needs attention.

In the short time we have been with you, it is obvious that in the past, there is a rich tradition in both parishes. Now, we hope to address the future honestly, openly and creatively. Change, like transparency, can be painful, but essential. We don’t have the answer and we need one. We hope this first open meeting will be constructive and respects everyone’s opinion and sensitivities. From there, with your parish leadership, we will move forward, guided by the Holy Spirit, to direct us to a solution that serves the future of all the faithful in this area. God bless you and your families.

Peace,



Rev. Brian Clary, Team Ministry



Rev. Robert Connors, Team Ministry

**KEEPING IN TOUCH
WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS**

We can keep you more informed by using our “blast” email system. If you have NOT been receiving the blast, please email the office so we can add your email address to the data base. Please do this as soon as you can. Thank you.