

PROPOSED PASTORAL PLAN ST. ANDRÉ'S PARISH, MALONE, NY

❖ ❖ ❖ NOVEMBER 2016 ❖ ❖ ❖



Beginning in early 2016, St. André's Pastoral Council and parish staff began a process of strategic planning. Rather than simply trying to preserve our current structures for as long as possible, we wanted to explore ways we might truly build up our family of faith for generations to come. Our goal was to refocus our parish's energies from "maintenance" to "mission." Like many institutions, we have been following a maintenance-based model, where our properties and their needs (such as fuel costs, upkeep, and repairs) have largely dictated what kind of programs we can offer (based on what sort of space we have available and what funds we have left), which has then dictated who and how we are as a parish community. Our hope was to reverse the flow and instead follow a mission-based model, where who we are called by God to be as a parish community decides what sort of programs we offer, which then decide where and how we invest our resources.

On August 20, 2016, Bishop LaValley released the *Living Stones Committee Report and Plan* for the entire Diocese of Ogdensburg, which requires every parish to work on a local pastoral plan, so as to ensure vibrant parish life across the North Country. (The document can be found online at <http://pastoral.rcdony.org/Planning/index.html>). While the diocesan plan does not foresee any changes for St. André's in its relationship with neighboring parishes or in the number of priests assigned here over the next few years, it nonetheless requires us to complete the work already begun on a parish pastoral plan—due to Bishop LaValley before the end of 2017. We are in a position to submit our plan well ahead of that deadline.

Over the course of this lengthy and involved process, the Pastoral Council and parish staff considered the essential aspects that give shape to the mission of every Catholic parish:

- Ministries of the Word and Witness (evangelization, catechesis, formation)
- Spiritual and Liturgical Ministries (sacraments, devotions, prayer)
- Ministries of Charity and Community (fellowship, outreach, stewardship)

In considering each of these, the particular mission of St. André's Parish became clear:

With Jesus Christ as our center, and the Holy Spirit as our guide, we are called to be a community of saints making saints—encountering the Lord in Word and Sacrament, and opening doors for our neighbors to experience the loving mercy of God.

Step 1 of our planning process was to identify the needs we see in our parish and the wider community. Among the needs we identified are:

- to give witness to our Catholic faith in a way that's attractive
- to overcome the fear of sharing our faith with others
- to increase attendance and participation at Sunday Mass
- to recognize that our faith is about more than just going to church on Sunday
- to provide a place where people can come to pray, day or night
- to be clear about our identity as St. André's Parish
- to be welcoming (and not only when we're in church)
- to get to know one another better
- to form and support Catholic family life
- to inspire our youth
- to provide catechesis in the faith for the whole family
- to show our care for those who have fallen away
- to keep our priests accessible and available (rather than doing administrative work)
- to increase parishioner involvement and contribution to the parish
- to be a force for wider renewal in our community
- to help meet the basic human needs of our neighbors
- to show others that life has value, purpose, and meaning

Step 2 of the process was to consider programs and projects that could help us to meet these needs. Among the proposals put forward are:

- to implement *Discovery* and other faith studies from Catholic Christian Outreach as a means of evangelization and the start of small faith sharing groups
- to implement the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* for the faith formation of our children
- to continue to develop the Frassati House apostolate
- to develop an annual calendar of devotional and spiritual activities, along with more regular parish missions and retreats
- to foster a culture of vocations in line with the diocesan *We Are Called* plan
- to work toward instituting perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
- to develop a hospitality committee, which will coordinate greeters at Mass, organize receptions and social events, and welcome new parishioners
- to foster better stewardship of our resources by hiring a parish business manager, forming a Buildings and Grounds Committee, and considering ways to better coordinate parish volunteers
- to expand our community outreach by growing our current food pantry and thrift store, as well as exploring new offerings (such as a soup kitchen, a grief support group, and the Gabriel Project, which assists mothers in crisis pregnancies)

Step 3 of our planning process was to consider our resources—finances, buildings, and (most importantly) people—and how we might best utilize these to reach our goals. The facts are that we have:

- a shrinking and aging congregation (in line with regional and national trends)

- a bare bones parish staff
- a decreasing number of priests
- decreasing collections and deficit spending of our savings
- deferred maintenance on our buildings (repairs we cannot afford)
- not only more buildings than we need for the size of our congregation, but with space mostly designated for the same purpose: the celebration of Mass (realizing the life of a parish is much more than Mass on Sunday)

In looking over our many parish properties, the following factors were considered:

- the current condition of each structure
- the costs of operation, maintenance, and needed updates or repairs
- the seating capacity and available parking
- the location and visibility in the community
- the distances people must travel to attend Mass (whether within St. André's Parish or in neighboring parishes)
- the availability of room for possible growth
- the potential for different uses or sale of the property
- the need for auxiliary facilities (offices, hall/kitchen, classrooms, recreational space)
- the desirability of "centralizing" parish activities in order to forge a shared identity and create unity (we are one parish that often still thinks and acts like four parishes)

Taking all of these factors into account, and in light of the needs expressed and the possible programs and projects to meet them, the following proposals were put forward:

- to reduce the number of the parish's worship sites from the current four to two, keeping Notre Dame Church and St. Helen's Church open (the number and times of Masses would not change)
- to permanently close St. Joseph's Church and sell the property
- to repurpose St. John Bosco Church as a community center, allowing us to expand our current food pantry and thrift store as well as potentially add other outreach programs (such as a soup kitchen, Gabriel Project, and/or parish nursing program); a small chapel would be maintained in the building
- to explore the construction of a new parish center near Notre Dame Church, to include offices, a parish kitchen and hall, classrooms, recreational space, a daily Mass chapel, and a chapel for perpetual Eucharistic adoration

No timeline has been established for these proposed changes, and any such changes are subject to the regulations of Canon Law and the approval of Bishop LaValley.

Step 4 of this process is to present these proposals to the entire parish, gathering wider input and feedback. To that end, this document has been prepared for you and a parish-wide listening session has been scheduled for Monday, November 14, at 6:30pm in Notre Dame Church. All parishioners are welcome and encouraged to attend. Those parishioners who are unable to attend should express any questions, comments, or concerns they have about this proposed plan to members of the Pastoral Council as soon as possible.



❖ ❖ ❖ **LISTENING SESSION** ❖ ❖ ❖
on the Proposed Pastoral Plan for St. André's Parish

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 6:30-8:00PM
NOTRE DAME CHURCH

❖ ❖ ❖ **Program for the Listening Session** ❖ ❖ ❖

6:30PM **Opening Prayer and Introductory Remarks**

6:40PM **Parishioner Input on the Plan** [60 minutes]

During this time, parishioners are invited to respond to the following four questions:

- Are there needs in our parish or community that are not expressed in the proposed Pastoral Plan but which you believe St. André's ought to meet?
- Are there things that you have seen or heard about in other parishes that you would like to see here at St. André's?
- What are you looking for from our parish life besides Sunday Mass and the Sacraments?
- What are your greatest concerns about the proposed Pastoral Plan for St. André's Parish?

7:40PM **Parishioner Questions about the Plan** [20 minutes]

During this time, parishioners are invited to ask any questions they may have about the proposed Pastoral Plan

8:00PM **Closing Prayer**

Those who participate in the Listening Session are kindly asked:

- *to be respectful of others, whether while speaking or listening*
- *to stay focused on the topic at hand*
- *to limit their comments or questions to two minutes*
- *to speak only when acknowledged by the moderator and given the microphone*

