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Town Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 25, 2018
6:00 PM
St. Mary's Church

Comment: Participant thanked “everyone who worked on this.” Commented that it was a “disheartening plan” and said that she had gone to a Mass at Christmas and there weren’t many in attendance. Asked if a regional Mass for Thanksgiving or Christmas had been considered.

Response: No, and that was something that we need to think about.

Comment: Participant was “very disappointed.” Said that “the end result will see closure.” We should be spending time on encouraging people to return to church. He was disappointed that St. Hyacinth and St. Francis won’t have a Sunday Mass. Said “I know there are alternatives – there is an abundance of priests in other countries.” Felt that the Eucharist is most important and that time should be spent on trying to get people to church. Asked, “How do we get people back to church before we lose these churches?”

Response: The Bishop is not looking to close parishes or churches (worship sites). The change is being driven by the number of priests. The diocese has explored getting priests from other countries. The reality is that in the US we have more priests per parishioner than any other area in the world.

Comment: Participant thanked the planning team. The problem that she saw was that with both options, St. Mary/Martha was losing the 8 AM Mass. Taking away the Sunday 8:00 AM mass at St. Francis/St. Hyacinth will leave one church closed on Sunday for 6 months and the following 6 months the other church will be closed. There will be many unhappy parishioners since their “home church” will not have a Mass on a Sunday. Possible solution: Maybe St. Mary’s can give up one of their 3 Sunday Masses (the early one). The cluster will still have an early Mass for all to attend. And there won’t be any closed churches on a Sunday. The participant felt that St. Francis/St. Hyacinth have already been through a consolidation and a couple of years ago they lost a Mass. With another major change they would not survive as a parish since their attendance has decreased since the changes.

Response: Thank you.

Question: Who decides what priest comes to this community?

Response: The Bishop

Question: Why are we always struggling in Cayuga County? Are they even in Rochester?

Response: Yes, even in Rochester.

Comment: Participant stated that “We (St. Francis and St. Hyacinth) were clustered/merged and the only ones.” Commented that the Polish and the Italians “carry on” and that they try to show it in their music. At one time they had a large choir but not so much anymore indicating that members had died. States, “We both have a church filled with beautiful people and they do the best they can. I don’t care about numbers – numbers are low everywhere. We’re missing reaching people. We’re not only missing priests. I think we’re being short changed. It’s on everybody’s mind – we got the short end and it’s going to continue.”

Response: There is a tendency to look down the road and imagine and sometimes imagine the worst. There is no intention of closing any churches. After this piece is settled we want to look at things like that.

Comment: Participant states that she has a “slightly different take.” States, “I am Italian....and when we went to the cluster I was uneasy about going to St. Hyacinth’s. I did eventually and I go to St. Mary’s too. I resent change but that hasn’t gotten me anywhere. Change comes, we are a Catholic community.” Indicated that we could work through the change.

Response: Thank you.

Comment: Participant was a member of St. Hyacinth’s. States that in 2005 they clustered with St. Francis. In 2012 they became a single parish. “We’ve gone through a lot. We’ve sacrificed a lot. I’m disappointed we are losing a Mass but grateful that doors are open.” Asked question: St. John’s in Port Byron – since it has no Mass will the church be closed?

Response: No, St. Johns will not be closed. It will be up to the priests about daily Mass. It will be open for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Comment: Regarding St. John’s in Port Byron: How do you support the building if they are not going to have a Mass there?

Response: Our Lady of the Snow is one parish with 3 worship sites so as a parish they will be responsible for St. John’s.

Comment: Participant was a member of Sacred Heart and that St. Ann’s and Sacred Heart were one parish with two worship sites. States that she had a negative feeling about having St. Ann’s closed for part of the year. Said that the core people that go to St. Ann’s all the time – “this change will give them a negative impression like you’re a parish during the summer when your attendance is up.”

Response: Thank you.

Comment: Participant states, “I’m thinking we’re all missing the overall picture. We’re all concerned about what we want and what our parish will lose instead of being grateful. I realize the importance of this. A few weeks ago there was a mix up and no priest showed up for the 10 AM Mass.” She went on to say while she was waiting for the priest to arrive she thought what is happening and wondered if this is what it would be like if we have no priests. “Instead of being upset about all this planning and changing we should be grateful that we still have some priests and Mass to go to.”

Response: Spontaneous applause from many there.

Comment: Participant states, “When do we draw the line in the sand? My faith is extremely important to me. I think we have to worry about what may be coming – if we have to give up too much.”

Question: Before all the changes take place and the planning committee makes their decision will the people that attend those Masses have a vote as to what their preference is?

Response: No, but the feedback we receive will be honestly considered.