

Five House meetings were held in March and early April, 2023

These included approximately 30 individuals from St. Vincent Parish

What follows is a compilation of comments expressed, organized in categories

Vision

- Many people feel the call of St Vincent, what do I see in the future?
 - We have an opportunity to do it well. Be on fire. Weave together with other people, do it and do it in a way that not just a priest leading, not higher than the rest of us, tap into the gifts of community, will come alive and light that fire. Should be listening to find other people who can be involved.
 - Give you a better idea of what was going on, what was happening, listen to what Jesus said; watch them try to figure this out.
- What do you envision for how the pastorate operates? Lay leaders reaching a consensus for decisions that are made; listening to all people, assisting the pastor to come along with us
 - If we are not getting what we need from the priest, we should let them know, we should be challenging each other. Empower us to think outside the box.
- Want to be leaders; mesh with the pastorate; make us together a very strong group of faith. To be able to lead in a way never in our lifetime. Exciting time to have input in how our church functions. Dream and envision suggestions for structure.
 - As a lay community let us be the strength we have fulfill our goal
 - To serve the poor in the city we need the numbers of concerned and committed persons that only the lay community can provide. What are we waiting for? There are no more priests for this. Put the laity in charge of the ministries !
- We have a lot of thoughts about what the future will be, not everyone is there but how do we include everyone?
 - Listen to people with different views, strength of model of lay leadership. You are welcome, here give people a chance to learn,
 - Don't hate people, love them don't have to follow what they believe,
 - In an odd way, it helps me accept the slowness of the church moving forward. Need to let people catch up. Be patient and help others realize the opportunities.
- We took the "community building" effect of our annual Turkey Fest for granted.
 - Volunteerism builds the community. The community builds our faith. There is joy in volunteering. A "fest" of any kind seems to be a quaint anachronism from post WWII. **BUT WHEN WE JOIN IN A THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION WITH HOMELESS PERSONS, MONEY IS NOT THE OBJECT. COMMUNITY IS THE OBJECT. I NEED**

REGULAR INFUSIONS OF COMMUNITY TO REMIND ME THAT I BELONG TO THE BODY OF CHRIST.

- What do we think that a combined St. Vincent and St Pius would look like?
 - A new mission statement that certainly includes feeding the poor and caring for immigrants but also the vision to excel in another new vision or mix of visions.
 - A new organization structure that learns from the mistakes we probably made at St. Vincent's and have held us back. (Maybe they do not make such mistakes at St. Pius.) More reliance on lay persons to both approve the plan and execute the plan

Areas of Concern / Apprehension / Fears

- Working with the Archdiocese – will the pastorate be less welcoming than St. Vincent's has been?
- All Things New Process was a “hodge podge” and we will lose people
- Will St. Pius parishioners feel that we are “imposing” Vincentian charism
- Still so much unknown until we get to Pentecost
- 20% of the parishioners do 80% of the work This is a blessing and a curse and should not continue. There must be inspired leadership and teaching to avoid the curses. A lay person would do a good job of this.
- Security issues when coming into the city.
 - One attendee, and a few of us there agreed, made a comment that she did not feel safe coming to the church at night for meetings anymore
- Nothing will change
- Who will do the work – whoever does the work needs expectations and accountability

Areas of Hope / Enthusiasm

- Lay Leadership
 - Change to lay leadership. We have to be real and do it for the right reasons.
- Commissions formed
 - Commissions make recommendations, committees make them happen. Figure out the logistics, cost, effectiveness, is it worthwhile for the community.
- Love the idea of all of us being educators and learners and what that means for us St. Pius, we are walking alongside the clergy not behind.
- An opportunity for binding of wounds. Very important in the present climate of the church and wanting to bring back young people who have left because of issues with the church hierarchy. The weaving together relationships to build better community. Not just our all things new, but an opportunity so many wounds that

need to be bound may be bound and healed. Before we reconnect we need Ideas of weaving, something that is woven you see each thread, but together, grow and become strong

- ATN gives me hope that we will be collective church, draw from each other. Need other voices to ensure we are inclusive, that all are welcome
 - I like & appreciate aspirational church, co- creators of the church's future, not just avoiding hell,
 - Thy kingdom come on earth, if not us who, if not now, when. We have been given a gift, in communities like us, the Spirit moves in a similar fashion. Opportunity to be a real model to other communities.
- Learning from each other across the two parishes (mentioned >4 times)
 - Learning about their ministries; who do they serve; hearing stories about the people they serve
- The diversity at St. Pius
- Hearing the gifts St. Pius brings
- Weaving together relationships
- Opening minds and hearts
- More people being in our community
- We have many experienced volunteers.

Needs / Challenges

- To hear more from the Provincial Office
- To pray that the Spirit will move the CM's to make good choices = it's a process
- Transparency
- Liturgy aides – leaflets
- Different languages for the readings
- Turning the administration of the parish to the laity
 - Stage has been set at St. V for shared leadership to happen
 - Need to trust each other
 - Need to welcome all ideas
 - It will be messy but a good will come
 - Need kind words to each other
 - Need to listen to each other
 - Will be challenging for some as the past model (pastor is the boss) will be gone
 - How does this new model affect staff
 - What are the roles for the staff/need job descriptions and staff needs to be held accountable
 - Need to build a team
 - Using the gifts everyone has appropriately

- Parishioners need to be willing to work too
 - People (volunteers) will help if given responsibility – staff needs to let go of some control
- Change is hard: What are we willing to let go
 - Need to let go what does not work
 - Need to let go of “we have always done it this way”
 - We are still used to our way of doing things, letting go of what is “ours”, finding something new and different that are enriching and exciting, help to energize our community.
 - Some behavior may need to be left behind. Keep focused on what is our best understanding of what Jesus wants us to do. Tell others that “we love you, but your behavior is not acceptable.
 - Leave behind negativity, have a fresh start, negativity is such a waste of energy, we have an opportunity for a complete reset. Let’s do it. Make it positive. Fear of being left behind. Challenges in our communities, faith formation, see them as God sees them. We will be better off as a church.
- Evaluate all programs/events – what can stay/what can go – need to look at least 5 years, if not longer, in the future
- Will need to do many things differently – can’t think it will be one way (the St. V way)
- Need to be open to the fact that many organizations do what St. V does
- Need relevant preaching for today’s world
- Need good liturgy/good music
- Need to be more welcoming at church
 - Have had volunteers leaving in tears – need to welcome our volunteers
 - Must be welcoming in all aspects of the church
 - Mass
 - Doughnuts after Mass
 - Meals
 - Some behaviors of the staff need to change
- Looks like we have to get lay people involved.
 - Previously we Haven’t had much input and nothing changed, we didn’t become part of the solution. Now, look at us becoming more involved and we have to find out how to do that. We are learning as we go without much help. Windows open and let in the light.
 - Great point – we want to be more involved and that demands investment in formation, be realistic, leaders are formed, Vincentian spirit and mission. Vital in our future. It can be a mess and then we can fix that. We have to stay focused

- Leadership = someone who is willing to be collaborative, see the larger picture, to be able to lead with humility. Clericalism has to go. Francis said that clericalism is the biggest sin of the church.
 - Anti-priesthood attitude is everywhere, but it is not necessarily about priests. More about the hierarchy. What the early church was without is clericalism. It was about small communities. Need to get back to that.
- Need to remove clericalism. Use the gospel
- Need formation, integrity, humility, leadership. Openness to other ideas.

Questions

- How will the new pastor accept the model we are creating?
- What is a pastorate? What will that experience be like?
- Will we have Masses at both places?
- Where will the priests live?
- Who will have oversight over the parish, the staff, the plant, operations

Ideas for the Future

- Maybe a different parishioner asks for a call to action. Not a homily, but before the recession. Imagine the church that would form from that. Every Sunday, the petitions should include something that happened in our world. Priests must address current events happening.
- There are several things we could be asking those we serve if we really wanted to show solidarity with them. E.g. we could ask them to worship with us; we could ask them, besides food, what else would ease your pain or how can we help to recognize your dignity as a human being?
 - A guest of the clothing window remarked that it was wonderful to find clothes that actually fit. We have a long way to go to demonstrate complete solidarity with impoverished persons.
- We all have leadership capability. We have plenty of potential leaders with vision. We have had plenty of ideas in the past. The laity will make it happen with what little resources we do have. The laity of St. Vincent's has been waiting to be turned loose for a long time.
- Social justice now – lot more we can do, more we can do below the surface. So many people that want to volunteer, donations – important, greet people where there are, maybe not ready to get out of their comfort zone. How do we organize our legislatures to support issues we feel are important?
 - Reach out to other organizations and offer support where we can. Challenges renewed as much as we can.
- Raise a budget to build this community. If we are not a church then we are just a social service community.

- We like to believe that only a few people have the skill to talk to the homeless or know how the Christmas program works. Others who would like to help feel that they could not do some jobs as perfectly as they are already being performed.
- New persons should be welcomed into “important” volunteer tasks. The real goal of all that we do is to form a vibrant community. No volunteer should have status. If we continue to look to expand our ministries in the inner city, we will have lots of important volunteer jobs.
- Need to bring in young people
 - We should observe the commitment of many young people who help us while they are in our schools. They are attracted to “community service” and not simple community. We have lost contact with many of the students who have volunteered with us. Can we have some kind of reason that might keep them in contact with us?
- Regarding security: Could we have a special lay ministry of individual volunteers for any event who might have to act fast and assertively put themselves “in harm’s way” to protect potential volunteers. This is not impossible
- Look at the geography of our Pastorate and think about the diversity of persons, groups and needs represented there. “How might our journeying together allow us, as Church, to proclaim the Gospel more vibrantly in accordance with the mission entrusted to us?”
 - It can change in an instant. If St. Wenceslaus closes. They have a Hispanic community what happens to them if the priests pull out. We need to listen to these other cultures, learning from them can make us more vibrant we can be, let us be exposed to what they can bring to us, what we can bring to them. Wanting the call to be better, we have much to learn, seeing everyone and knowing that everyone has a value.
 - Everyone needs a place that feels welcoming. How can we be better, draw in people in the neighborhood reach out to our neighbors?
- Do the Food Program over again!
 - Imagine the leap of faith, fear, and uncertainty that implemented the original program of feeding the poor. A person has a vision about achieving something but no experience. You are hearing some visions with the house visits. They must be prioritized and then we will face that same uncertainty. Uncertainty is not the issue.