

One In Faith ACC Communication

Greetings,

The All Things New planning team met on Tuesday, July 22, to review responses from the parish listening sessions. These sessions aim to foster transparency and trust with parishioners about the diocesan restructuring process, ensuring the best ideas and concerns are presented before any plan is proposed to the Diocese.



Approximately 4-5% of registered parishioners attended the listening sessions, where many good questions and concerns were addressed. One response stood out. In response to the question, ‘What do I see as a positive about this process?’, at least one person responded: “Nothing.” It is an understandable and relatable response. Some may see this process only as a time of potential loss (e.g., closing of a parish, loss of local identity), while others see it as an opportunity for something new. The truth is that it is both, however, not everyone may see it this way. For some, the sense of loss may even be so strong that it overshadows any hope of what could be.

This brings to mind a story from the life of the Biblical Patriarch, Abraham. Genesis 12:1-4 reads: “The LORD said to Abram: Go forth from your land, your relatives, and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will find blessing in you. Abram went as the LORD directed him.”

Abraham was asked to leave much behind (relatives, house, land) in pursuit of something God wanted him to receive. Abraham's prevailing sentiment of hope and trust allowed him to leave behind what he already had to receive something God wanted him to receive: a new land and a new people which, through Abraham, would become a great nation.

Ask yourself this question: Do I feel hopeful about this process? Many probably do, and some do not, but when I read this response of seeing no positive about this process it concerns me. I am concerned for those who see this process only as an occasion of loss and not also a path with the potential for something new and good, albeit in a different way.

I would guess that none of us Catholics really wants to be in this situation. Would that our problems be too few churches to accommodate so many Catholics; so many priests to serve so many Catholics! Restructuring is seldom an easy process, but fostering a spirit of hope for the good God can do through it will certainly help.

Our team will continue to try to foster trust across the parishes through transparency, good planning and prayer. Your input is good and necessary, and we are doing our best to keep you informed. With God’s help, I hope we will foster a spirit of hope for what this process can be: a time not only of loss, but of acquiring something new which God wants us to receive.

Abram went as the LORD directed him. I pray that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we shall do the same.

May God bless you.

Father Mitchell

