

Open Forum on Merging St. Paul's and CTK Parishes

All the feedback we received was very supportive of the merge of the parishes. Below we list several topics which essentially summarize all the feedback.

-Parish Activities and Operations including mass times, activities, worship, locations, committees, ministries, missions, *etc.*, except for obvious merging of duplicated items, are expected to continue with little change. We believe any future changes would be independent of merging or not.

-Benefits of Merging The most important new benefit will be an even deeper unity within our Catholic community. Other benefits include greatly simplified administration and accounting. Reducing such administrative burdens will allow us to cope better with the current trends in future availability of priests in the Diocese of Steubenville, which has 54 parishes and only 41 active priests, only 14 of whom are under the age of 60.

-Finances: *What will happen to the two parishes' accounts, especially reserve funds—will the reserves remain separate?* We should limit discussions on this topic, since merging parishes actually would likely have little influence on questions of this sort. Future financing is ultimately subject to the bishop, with or without a merge, since he must approve any expenditure over \$5000. Details of use and structuring of funds including reserves, to the extent the bishop allows, could be decided by the new joint Finance Council, which will have ample representation from all parts of the community. For the reserves, no particular outcome could be ensured, as it is an issue the bishop will likely decide, with or without a merge.

-Future of Church Buildings: *Will this influence options for keeping either the CTK or SP church buildings functioning into the future?* Although there could possibly be big questions of optimizing the current or future new church buildings in the medium-term future, we believe merging now will not influence eventual outcomes for this either, for similar reasons as for finances above. In particular, we believe all possibilities of keeping either current church building, or both, functioning as they currently are, will still remain possible after the merge.

-Naming of the New Parish Discussion on this topic is not necessary now. If the bishop accepts the recommendation to merge, he may choose to name the parish himself. Both church names will not change! After approval to the extent the bishop allows, we would initiate a process to collect and validate naming suggestions from, and subsequently hold a vote by, CTK/SP parishioners.

-Continued Commitment to the University Community As with all other aspects of the parish ministries, the commitment to pastoral service to the University community will always remain the same with or without a merge. Providing masses within walking distance to campus will always be prioritized, as will be providing space and resources for students/University members. The majority of the population of Athens is part of the University community in some way, so any parish in Athens would (and already does even in the case of St. Paul) include this as part of its core mission.