



This week I will continue with the discussion on the work of the Church Exploratory Committee. As I mentioned in my last column, the committee wanted to keep the community feel of the present church, with a much more traditional look and style. The committee was also charged to look ahead to the future and plan responsibly for it. The following are some elements the committee came to

agreement upon which they hoped to include in either a renovated/expanded church or a new church.

Adequate Seating- Our church currently seats 850 people. At least four Masses a weekend are standing room only. In the near future, there will be a need to reduce Masses due to reduced number of clergy. This will exacerbate the seating difficulties in church. Given our growing demographics and the reduction of priests, the committee agreed that our church should seat at least 1,200 people. However, we agreed that this increased seating should not take away from the community feel of our church and does not need to be as expansive as some neighboring churches. There are no plans on the part of the Archdiocese to found any new parishes from our territory.

Adequate Narthex- The current narthex (vestibule) is very small and not placed where the majority of parishioners enter church. There is no place for our parishioners to gather before or after Mass. This makes it very difficult for a spirit of prayer and quiet in church. It also lends to disrespect, though not intentional, for the Blessed Sacrament. The committee recommended that the narthex be placed closer to the area from which most parishioners enter church, i.e. facing the parking lot between church and our education center.

Daily Mass Chapel- After much discussion, the committee recommended a daily Mass chapel for the church. The chapel would be used for daily Masses which would cut heating/air-conditioning costs for the church. Given our excellent daily Mass attendance, the chapel would need to seat between 150-200 people.

Adequate Sacristy and Storage Space- There is not adequate space for vestments, altar linens, sanctuary articles and all the sacred articles that are used for the celebration of Mass and the sacraments. There is no quiet space for the priests to properly prepare spiritually to celebrate Mass. All the ministers for Mass, i.e. lectors, extraordinary ministers, altar servers all prepare in a very small room behind our altar. The committee recommended a priests' sacristy and a working sacristy.

Additional Rooms and Facilities- The committee recommended a small room off the narthex in which various parish groups could advertise specific programs or sales, such as Manna, tickets, crab cakes, etc. The committee recommends a larger room where programs such as Children's Liturgy of the Word could be held.

Next week, I will discuss the recommendations regarding the interior of the Church. This is the fourth column during the past five weeks that I have written about the work of the Church committee. If you have missed any of these they are available on our parish website.

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God Bless you All!

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