

DIOCESE OF JOLIET TARGETED RESTRUCTURING PROCESS PHASE 3

SUMMARY OF PARISH SESSION FEEDBACK / RESUMEN DE LA SESIÓN PARROQUIAL 1 COMENTARIOS

ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE PARISH, VILLA PARK

October 3, 2024

What are the small group's key takeaways from the data and current reality?

¿Cuáles son las principales conclusiones del pequeño grupo a partir de los datos y la realidad actual?

- We understand that the Diocese finds restructuring necessary due to changes in demographics, level of religious commitment by individuals, available priests and religious, willing volunteers, and overall finances.
- We understand that the overall goal is to better enable the mission of evangelization of Catholicism for a thriving future, however, it is difficult to see the loving community of St. John the Apostle was not considered to play a support role, instead of a parish to be potentially merged or amalgamated.
- One parish community would be easier for one priest to serve and manage. Administration could be centralized which would mean more consistency and possibly some cost savings. Mass times could be reduced to increase the feeling of community to enliven Mass participation.

Are there other data points or information that you feel are necessary to consider in this process?

¿Hay otros puntos de datos o información que considere necesario tener en cuenta en este proceso?

- Although our parish is by far the smallest in terms of registered parishioners, it leads the grouping in terms of parish engagement – Mass attendance! It has the largest offertory increase in our grouping. We are a generous community.
- Respondents requested a detailed breakdown of the potential capital expenses for our facilities to help us to understand the long-term viability of our buildings.
- Other data that could be helpful: what percentage of parishioners are volunteers, catechists, and/or group leaders? Data on Adult Sacraments: OCIA, Adult Confirmation. Religious education program enrollment data.
- Location of parish building in relation to parishioners as many people need to walk to church and religious education. Our parish is the only one located north of the tracks in our grouping. Not on a busy street – safe access.
- To maintain a Catholic presence in Villa Park, consideration could be given to a merger with the possibility of building a new church on one of the properties already owned. That could eliminate the capital expenses of maintaining more than one church building over more than a few years.
- The growing size of the Hispanic community in our parish and their importance to the future of our parish.

In what ways does your parish serve the community? ¿De qué manera su parroquia sirve a la comunidad?

- Exemplifies traditional Catholic values through the Mass, sacraments, and action. Daily Mass is offered.
- Genuinely responsive to those in need – families, individuals in crisis, those in need of guidance / spiritual counseling to help every single person to get through the challenges in their life.
- Our parish welcomed and has provided a rental space for Seton Academy, a Catholic Montessori school, for over 30 years. Concerned about their future.
- Outreach in the local community and beyond: hosts blood drives, collects monthly food donations for local pantries, sponsors food bank trips, provides emergency assistance, supports initiatives of Catholic Charities such as Back to School Fair, Undy Sunday, Holiday Outreach.

What are the gifts of your parish? ¿Cuáles son los dones de su parroquia?

- First and foremost, an atmosphere described as down-to-earth, genuine, making everyone feel at home. All are welcome!
- Our pastor and deacon who show humbleness and the importance of the Mass and worship as a community.
- This parish has nurtured the gift of faith in many, and they want to share with others.
- Our parish works hard to be pastoral and meet people where they are. This is vital to help people of all ages reengage with their sacramental life.
- Not all about money!
- Ethnically diverse. The community of Hispanic Catholics has grown steadily over the last 5 years. The pastor and deacon celebrate sacraments in Spanish (or bilingual) and support cultural traditions such as Quinceañeras, presentations, etc.
- The building has easy accessibility and ample on-site parking on our large property.
- Beautiful outdoor grotto which provides opportunity for prayer and reflection.
- Parish hall available for parishioners to rent for special events which provides income to the parish.
- Active groups such as CCW, SSJW, Hispanic Ministry, Legion of Mary, Rosary Group, Bible Study, etc.
- Parishioner of 50 years said, “The interior of St. John’s is rather modest, but it is the spirituality of the parish that makes our church beautiful to us!”