

From Fr. Costa:

This past Monday, during two parish meetings, I shared information concerning pastoral planning to grow the Catholic Faith in the Somerset and Swansea community. The parishioners who attended were most generous with their attention, support, enthusiasm, and encouragement. There were many good questions and comments at both meetings and very good energy as we look to the future.

While it is not the same as experiencing the original in person, I offer a few basic bullet points from my presentation and encourage you to view the video we will be posting on our websites concerning our pastoral plan to get a fuller and more detailed explanation.

Here are a few of the major points raised:

Statistics presented a few weeks ago (the Sacramental Index and clergy stats from the Diocese) make it very clear that our community is changing. Something needs to be done now before we are forced into changes and decisions. Bishop da Cunha and the Diocese are giving us a wonderful opportunity to shape our own future and to have a say in that future.

Three options were presented to the working committee: (1) everything remains status quo

(this was rejected from the beginning); (2) close two parishes, merge them into one existing

parish and close two church buildings, selling the property (3) merge the three parishes into

one, create a new community while keeping our three church buildings open as worship

sites for the new parish. There was honest and open discussion on the last two options. We

looked at pros and cons for both ideas.

In the end, after prayer and thought,, we opted to merge our three parishes into one, new parish,

keeping our three church properties (churches) open and using them for the needs of

the new parish. Any change is difficult and we wanted to minimize the disruption this

change could cause. We felt that our priority needs to be forming and strengthening the

Catholic community and community is people. It was noted that each of our properties has

unique qualities/purposes that we currently use and can take advantage of as we grow into

this new parish community.

As we merge, we have a great opportunity to be renewed in our Faith, our energy and our participation.

I envision stronger existing parish organizations, new ministries and outreach,
and as one participant noted: presenting a united, exciting, strong, public
presence that is
welcoming and inviting to present and former parishioners, lapsed Catholics, and
new
members. There is lots of potential and many possibilities! Think of all the faith,
talents,
and abilities we will have in one, united community! This can and will be a very
positive
experience, if we approach it as such.

Given all of the details that need to be taken care of, I assume the merger of the
parishes would
take place sometime in early September 2022.

Again, I strongly recommend viewing the video presentation that will be posted
this week on our
websites. Thank you for the support and encouragement you give. I'm sure there
will be questions
as we moved forward, so please do not hesitate to reach out and ask. I will do my
best to
keep you informed of the next steps we need to take and the progress we are
making. I rely on
your prayers and the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit at work among
us. God bless!

Watch the Our Pastoral Plan

<https://youtu.be/1d7Oc0Jpw68>

Click on the above blue Link

thank you for your patience

JUNE 19 2022

