Davenport, St.Alphonsus Church

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PARISH/ENTITY CONVERSATION

1. What did you hear?

The delegates heard and discussed many things; the impact of demographic changes, the necessity of accompaniment, sharing our story, missionary work, importance of relationships, making a personal connection, a sense of belonging, importance of relationship especially with Jesus, it’s a big problem, feeling uncomfortable, making the first step, planting seeds and watering them.

 We discussed the importance of reaching out to those within our faith community as well as those outside in the neighborhood to make people feel welcome. We are to accompany people and to share with them our story. One must go outside our comfort zone to be missionaries. It all starts with relationships within the community by finding the personal connection. Getting to know people and to know the love of God. We have a big problem and it can be overwhelming. However, we need to make the first steps by planting seeds and nurturing growth by watering.

1. What does it mean for our parish/entity?

It means if we don’t address these issues or implement change within our parish church, churches may no longer be viable. Certain churches may be forced to close their doors. It means that we need to examine the question from a different way by examining what we do well and what we are lacking. Since we are a cluster of parishes we should help examine one another strengths without taking away from the other. Holy Family excels with their Bible study and has gotten a large core group. However, there is a desire to expand evolvement. It was suggested that when groups become large they should split. This is a healthy progression of growth. Holy Family has a lack of space for social interactions, but is attempting greater social interaction by updating basement environment. St. Peters has a very welcoming atmosphere and popular functions such as Hot Dog Roasts and Fat Tuesday. St Peter’s is a small community which allows them the ability to recognize a visitor and make them feel welcome. We examined the success of other Christian non-denominations that use a successful business plan. There is space for greeting worshipers which the cluster churches lack. The designs of our parishes do not promote the connection needed to foster relationship building at the moment.

1. What help do we need?

We need help to reconstruct our environment to make it into a welcoming atmosphere. Help is needed on how to interact with others and how to get out of our comfort zone. Many suggestions were offered such as better greeters, offering English classes, and social aid assistance, handing out flyers to neighbors, and missions.