

Opportunities & Challenges Synthesis

Parish Family 27 – St. Louise & St. Madeleine Sophie

Partners in the Gospel – 2026

Introduction

As part of the *Partners in the Gospel* journey, parishioners across our Parish Family were invited to reflect on the opportunities and challenges facing our wider community and our parish family.

This synthesis brings together input from in-person sessions, post it note feedback, surveys, and written responses across our English-, Spanish-, and Korean-speaking communities. It is offered as a discernment tool for our shared journey toward becoming one canonical parish in the coming years. The Archdiocese's stated vision for this process is to help parish families encounter Jesus, accompany others, and live the joy of the Gospel as they adapt to current realities, including fewer priests, declining engagement, and the need for sustainable parish models.

This is not a list of raw comments. It is a synthesis of the major themes, common concerns, and hopeful opportunities that emerged across the parish family.

Q1: What challenges do you see in the wider community?

Themes

1. Cost of Living and Housing Pressure

Many parishioners named the high cost of housing, rent, childcare, groceries, and daily living as one of the biggest pressures on families, seniors, and young adults trying to remain in the area.

2. Economic Stress and Instability

Layoffs, job uncertainty, and financial strain are affecting households across the parish family and reducing people's capacity to engage in parish life.

3. Social Isolation and Weakening Community Bonds

Many described loneliness, disconnection, and the loss of neighborhood relationships. A number of responses pointed to a weakening sense of community in everyday life. Transportation issues especially for seniors between two campuses.

4. Immigration-Related Fear and Vulnerability

Especially in the Spanish-speaking community, fear related to immigration realities is affecting people's sense of safety and willingness to participate openly in parish life.

5. Cultural and Language Barriers

The diversity of the Eastside is a gift, but parishioners also named the difficulty of crossing language and cultural divides, both in the wider community and in parish life.

6. Declining Religious Engagement and Secularization

Many respondents described a broader culture in which faith is less central, church attendance is lower, and younger generations are harder to engage.

7. Mental Health, Family Stress, and Social Need

Mental health challenges, family instability, homelessness, and other forms of hardship were named repeatedly. The CCS context report confirms that housing instability, behavioral health needs, senior support, and services for people with disabilities are all significant realities within Parish Family 27's boundaries.

Alike and Different

Alike:	Different:
Across all three communities, parishioners consistently named the rising cost of living, social isolation, and declining engagement in faith and community life as major concerns.	• English-speaking responses often emphasized economic pressure, loneliness, polarization, and the broader weakening of community life. • Spanish-speaking responses more strongly emphasized fear, language access, inclusion, immigration realities, and the need for culturally responsive support. • Korean-speaking responses more often emphasized transience, instability, high housing costs, secularization, and the difficulty of building lasting community when many residents do not stay long term.

Key Quotes

- “The high cost of living is making it hard for families to stay.” (Eng)
- “People are afraid to come to Mass because of immigration concerns.” (Sp)
- “We don’t know our neighbors anymore.” (Eng)
- “We need people who understand our language and culture.” (Sp)
- “Many people in our community are here only temporarily, so it is hard to build lasting relationships.” (Kor)
- “As society becomes more secular, it is harder for younger generations to stay connected to their faith.” (Kor)
- “Mental health struggles are increasing.” (Eng)

Q2: What challenges do you see in our parish?

Themes

1. Desire for Clear Vision and Direction

Many parishioners’ answers were about where the parish family is headed and what becoming one parish will actually mean in practice.

2. Limited Connection Across Campuses and Communities

A recurring concern is that the two campuses and multiple language communities still function more as parallel communities than as one parish family. Although some acknowledge this is a work in progress.

3. Youth and Young Adult Engagement

Across all groups, respondents named the difficulty of engaging and retaining youth, young adults, and families with children. Competing activities, busy family schedules, and generational shifts make sustained participation difficult.

4. Volunteer Shortage and Limited Participation

Many expressed concern that parish life depends on a shrinking pool of volunteers, while busy family schedules and weaker engagement make it harder to sustain ministries.

5. Facilities, Finances, and Long-Term Sustainability

Parishioners are increasingly aware of the realities facing the parish family: about 8,100 worship seats across both campuses, recent Mass attendance at about 35% of capacity, 18 buildings across two campuses, several buildings marked for evaluation or review, debt of about \$1.28 million, and a slight operating deficit. These realities led many respondents to ask whether the current model is sustainable over the long term.

6. Cultural and Language Inclusion

Especially in Spanish-speaking and Korean-speaking feedback, there was a desire for deeper inclusion, language accessibility, and confidence that cultural communities will have a meaningful place in the future parish.

7. Communication Gaps

Many noted that parish information, opportunities, and planning updates are not reaching people clearly enough across the whole parish family.

Alike and Different

Alike:	Different:
Across communities, there is shared concern about unity, youth engagement, participation, and the need for better communication and stronger belonging.	• English-speaking responses more often focused on vision, governance, financial sustainability, facilities, and the practical implications of becoming one parish. • Spanish-speaking responses more often emphasized access, dignity, inclusion, language, participation in ministries, and liturgical life in Spanish. • Korean-speaking responses placed particular emphasis on continuity of Korean Mass, long-term viability of the Korean community, generational faith formation, communication, and whether newcomers and younger households can truly belong in the future structure.

Key Quotes

- “We don’t have a clear picture of where we are going.” (Eng)
- “We want to feel included and heard.” (Sp)
- “Our youth are not engaged.” (Eng)
- “We need more Masses in Spanish.” (Sp)
- “It is difficult to build continuity when many people do not stay long-term.” (Kor)

Q3: What opportunities do you see for our parish family?

Themes

1. Building One Unified Parish Family

Many see this moment as an opportunity to build stronger relationships across campuses, cultures, and ministries.

2. Expanding Evangelization and Faith Formation

There is a strong desire for deeper formation of children, youth, young adults, and adults, as well as renewed outreach to those who are drifting away from active parish life.

3. Strengthening Cultural Inclusion

Respondents see an opportunity not just to coexist, but to become a parish family that intentionally honors and integrates its cultural diversity.

4. Serving Those in Need More Intentionally

The CCS report shows that Parish Family 27 already has meaningful connections to housing support, behavioral health, family services, PREPARES, immigration services, and disability-related support. Parishioners see an opportunity to align parish life more intentionally with the needs of the surrounding community.

5. Stewardship of Resources

Many see an opportunity to ask hard but hopeful questions about buildings, staffing, ministries, and finances so that resources are aligned more closely with mission.

6. Stronger Communication and Participation

Respondents commented that more communication on opportunities to serve, and more intentional ways to draw people into parish life.

Alike and Different

Alike:	Different:
Across all communities, there is a desire for stronger belonging, more intentional faith formation, and a parish family that serves both its members and the wider community with greater unity and purpose.	• English-speaking responses often emphasized strategic alignment, stewardship, and practical next steps. • Spanish-speaking responses often emphasized evangelization, inclusion, family life, and greater participation in ministries. • Korean-speaking responses often emphasized accessibility, continuity, stability, better communication, outreach to inactive members, and stronger support for intergenerational faith formation.

Key Quotes

- “How do we align our resources with our mission?” (Eng)
- “We need more evangelization in Spanish.” (Sp)
- “Invite people to use their gifts.” (Sp)
- “We have an opportunity to become one community.” (Eng)
- “We want unity across cultures.” (Sp)
- “If we can build stronger relationships, people may stay longer and grow in faith together.” (Kor)

Q4: Additional Thoughts / Comments - From in-person sessions and online survey responses (English-speaking input)

Themes

1. Strong Desire for Specificity and Clarity

A repeated concern was process fatigue. Parishioners want more than general reassurance; they want clearer answers about what is actually being considered, what decisions may be coming, and what the long-term plan is.

2. Sustainability Questions Are Becoming More Concrete

Some online responses moved beyond general concern and asked direct stewardship questions: whether maintaining two underused, aging campuses is the best use of parish resources; whether long-term capital needs have been modeled; and whether reserves are sufficient to sustain both campuses without compromising ministry. These comments were grounded in the parish family data on worship capacity, buildings, debt, savings, and slight operating deficit.

3. Desire to Preserve What Is Distinctive in Each Parish Community

Several parishioners expressed gratitude for both parishes and concern that the future should not flatten out the distinct strengths, cultures, and identities that each community currently brings.

4. Need for Greater Unity Across Ministries and Communities

A number of comments named indifference, or limited awareness across groups and ministries, and called for stronger efforts to foster one parish-family mindset.

5. Schools Matter Deeply in the Discernment

Some comments specifically raised concern about the future of the two schools and noted that school culture, parish culture, and family expectations are not interchangeable.

6. Gratitude and Hope Are Still Present

Alongside questions and concerns, many respondents expressed gratitude for current leadership and for the opportunity that *Partners in the Gospel* presents to step back and discern the bigger picture.

Key Quotes

- “Will St. Louise or St. Madeleine shut down?” (Eng)
- “The consolidation process should find a means to preserve the uniqueness without losing them to generalization.” (Eng)
- “Partners in the Gospel feels like a once in a generation opportunity.” (Eng)
- “Have we clearly modeled the 10-to-15-year capital outlook for both campuses?” (Eng)
- “I’m very grateful for the extraordinary leadership at both St. Madeleine and St. Louise during this transition.” (Eng)
- “Foster greater unity among all groups and ministries.” (Eng)

Closing Reflection

Our parish family is rich in faith, diversity, generosity, and a sincere desire to follow Christ. At the same time, the feedback makes clear that we are living in a moment that calls for honesty, courage, and deeper discernment.

The path forward is not simply about preserving what has been. It is about listening to the Holy Spirit, caring for one another across cultures and communities, and discerning how we can best encounter Jesus, accompany others, and live the joy of the Gospel as one parish family.