

Dear Friends in Christ,

I would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on what was shared at the two Parish Feedback Sessions held last weekend. We had a turnout of approximately 150 parishioners—which is a sign of your love for Christ the King Parish and your concern for its future.

I started the meetings by explaining how we got here. Two years ago, when I received the phone call informing me that I had been appointed pastor of Christ the King, I was surprised, excited, and, of course, a little nervous all at once. The head of Personnel for the Archdiocese of Boston, as well as the Vicar General, simply told me to come to Reading and give my best for the people of this community. I came with nothing other than a desire to love you and serve you, knowing that my mission as a priest is to help you get to heaven.

After several months of visiting homes for blessings, sharing meals, and getting to know as many of you as possible, I began to learn more about the parish's finances through Finance Committee meetings. As the committee presented our five-year capital needs and the financial losses we had been sustaining for several years, I became deeply concerned about the long-term sustainability of the parish.

Last January, just over a year ago, I was grateful to have the opportunity to meet with our new bishop, Archbishop Richard Henning, during his meetings with first-time pastors. During our conversation, I shared everything I had learned about the parish: our history of collaboration, the merger, our two campuses and six buildings, and our financial records. The Archbishop listened carefully, and having already learned a great deal about Christ the King Parish, instructed me to form a Pastoral Planning Committee to work with parishioners in analyzing the state of the parish—to look carefully at everything so that Christ the King would be sustainable and prepared for growth now and into the future.

I immediately brought this request to prayer, and through discernment with the Lord, selected the six members of the Pastoral Planning Committee. These are some of the finest people I know, and I am deeply grateful for their dedication and generosity over the past nine months. They care deeply about Christ the King Parish and about all of you, their brothers and sisters in the Lord.

It is difficult to put into words the amount of time, energy, and sacrifice the committee has given to this important and challenging work. As a result of their efforts, we now have a vision for the future of Christ the King Parish, an analysis of our financial situation, a clearer understanding of the realities we face, and a recommendation that will be presented to Archbishop Henning. It is not possible to include all of this information in a single bulletin letter, which is why we have provided an insert into the bulletin to help answer many of your questions. There is also a link to the PowerPoint presentation used during the Feedback Sessions.

After much prayer and careful discernment, and in light of our financial challenges, our desire to move from maintenance to mission, the reality that we may become a one-priest parish in the future, and our hope to realize the vision for Christ the King Parish, the committee and I are in agreement that we must recommend moving to a one-campus model. At this time, however, we have not yet discerned which campus we will recommend. I emphasize that this is a recommendation, as the final decision rests with Archbishop Henning.

In the coming weeks, the Pastoral Planning Committee and I sincerely ask for your feedback—especially your hopes and vision for what would make Christ the King Parish an ideal parish community. I encourage you to prayerfully review the materials provided. Your voice matters, and we want to hear from you. If you'd like to reach out to the PPC, please use the email [ppc@christthekingreading.org](mailto:ppc@christthekingreading.org).

As a first-time pastor, I never expected to have to share news like this with my parish family. It pains me deeply because I love all of you, and I know this news may be difficult to hear. I know that there is pain from the collaboration process and the merger. At the same time, I see tremendous faith, vibrancy, and hope within this community. I truly believe Christ the King Parish is poised for growth—but we must also face the realities before us with honesty and faith.

God is so good, and we are truly blessed to be united here at Christ the King Parish as members of His Body. As you have heard me say before, Pope Leo's motto is *In Illo uno Unum*—"In the One Christ, we are one." Through our baptism, we are united in a profound and beautiful way. While challenges lie ahead, I invite you to embrace them together as one parish family. What matters most is that we remain united in Christ.

Please be assured of my prayers for you, and I humbly ask for your prayers as well.

Your brother in Christ,  
Fr. Bobby