

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why can't we just add Masses/go back to the old Mass schedule?**

The combined Mass schedule was designed to be in the best interest of both the parishioners and the priests that serve them as well as to serve the aims of Disciples in Mission. With only one full time priest and one retired priest in residence on staff, the old schedule would require them to preside over five or six Masses in a weekend all while driving back and forth between the two parishes. This would effectively mean that the priest would have to exit the Church at the immediate conclusion of Mass to travel to the other site; no saying "Hello" to the people, no reaching out to those in need, and no counseling. In short, it would mean that the priests would have no time to minister to the needs of the people.

### **Couldn't we just get another priest to help with the load and then go back to the old Mass schedule?**

The Holy Mothers Collaborative has been on the list for a new parochial vicar since it was established in 2014. There are only 379 active priests in the Archdiocese of Boston covering 289 parishes. Due to the fact that priests are retiring much faster than they are being ordained, the Archdiocese projects that there may be as few as 200 active priests by the mid to late 2020's. As a result, it seems unlikely that we will be able to secure another priest for our collaborative. At this point, it seems more likely that our ordained staff will be reduced to one rather than increased.

### **Can't we just leave everything alone?**

This is a possibility, however, this means that the overcrowding and lack of parking will continue to worsen as we continue to grow, or, worse, could stifle our growth altogether. To allow this to happen would be, at best, a dereliction of our duties as baptized Catholics. At worst, it would amount to willful interference in the mission of the Church as promulgated by Christ himself when he told us to "make disciples of all nations." (Matt 28:19)

### **Where did all this talk of a combined worship site come from?**

The idea of one worship site came from the Steering Committee, a group which was intergenerational and split between parishioners of Saint Helen's and Saint Mary's. Their decision that a combined worship site would be advantageous was based upon the goals of both parishes as outlined in Disciples in Mission.

### **Why couldn't we just expand Saint Helen's or Saint Mary's?**

According to the feasibility study conducted by Holmes and Edwards Architects, a combined worship space would need at least 16 acres of land in order to accommodate both parishes and have acceptable parking. Saint Helen's currently sits on approximately 10 acres of land, with as much as two of those acres being unusable due to wetlands. Saint Mary's currently sits on 13.5 acres, five of which are undevelopable due to an aquifer protection zone. Even without any restrictions on the use of land at either site, there would not be enough space.

### **Couldn't we just expand both sites and remain separate?**

The current site plans of both locations would require massive renovations which could result in movement of buildings in order to alleviate the current crowding. Such substantial work on two sites would cost as much, if not more than building one new structure that could house both. There would also be increased cost to maintenance. Two separate facilities would mean two separate sets of bills, and two separate maintenance schedules. Even if this were financially desirable, it would not address the issues presented by a lack of priests, nor would it address our goals under Disciples in Mission. Furthermore, one large Church would more effectively service the communities on heavy volume days such as Christmas, Easter, Confirmations, and First Communion than two smaller Churches could. Finally, renovating both Churches would require phased construction which would close one of the Churches for as long as 18 months. This would leave just one of the current Churches to service both parishes while the first renovation was done. In short, it would exacerbate the overcrowding problem for at least three years.

### **Have we completed a market analysis to determine the values of all the properties in question?**

Unfortunately, due to a number of unknown factors with the Cushing Center, a comprehensive market value analysis could not be completed. Among the unknowns are: how much land Cardinal Cushing is willing to sell, infrastructure, and permitting and usage. A study was completed on the Saint Helen's and Saint Mary's properties and it found that the value of the combined properties is in the \$9-11 million range, well over what we expect the Cardinal Cushing site to cost.

### **What will happen to Saint Mary's and Saint Helen's?**

It is our expectation that both properties would be sold to developers. Those monies would then be put toward the new Church. It is our sincere desire, as well as that of the Archdiocese, that the neighborhoods be minimally impacted, and we would do all in our power to assure that. The parishes would be merged into a new parish with a new name.