Update to Holy Family regarding our meeting on 11-13-18

Dear Holy Family Parishioners,

Happy Thanksgiving!

I wanted to update you on how things are going at the parish. We had our monthly meeting on Tuesday Nov. 13th (our next parish meeting is Dec. 11th at 5:30 PM). Prior to the parish meeting I met with the 4 trustees from Holy Family and Our Lady of Fatima to discuss the merger process. That meeting was mostly updating the OLF trustees on the discussions and process we have already been working on since July.

At the parish meeting we reviewed the Quilt Bingo and Parish Party events. I asked how people felt they went. People seemed to feel they went well. There was pretty good attendance at both and I especially appreciated the chance to meet parishioners that I haven’t had the chance to talk to before.   
We also talked about Ron Peterson’s funeral, many of you where probably there last Saturday. Please keep Gerry and her family in your prayers.

In the discussions with Ecclesia Domestica (ED) they continue to be interested in moving forward. Their hope is to run a retreat center on the Holy Family parish sight. We are still working out what kind of deal would be done to change ownership of the property. Probably it would be given to ED with some restrictions or some things written into the agreement about future use. They don’t have a lot of money to purchase the property, but in my mind, this would be a continuation of the mission of the Church in a new way. ED is looking at a target date of June 1st for the transfer of property. This is a very tentative date. It is hard to know whether it can be done or not by then, but we are going to be looking into doing inspections and other compliance tests as well as reaching out to lawyers to see what kind of contract or paperwork is necessary for the exchange of property.

Whatever kind of deal we work out would need to be approved by the Diocese. It was asked at the meeting whether they would be okay with such a proposal. I said I had talked to them and I felt they were open under the right circumstances. This conversation will continue to evolve as we clarify with ED about their interest and capability to take on this project.

The question was brought up regarding the possibility of having a regular Mass even after ED began running the property as a retreat center. Here it gets a little tricky to answer. ED has said they would be happy to have parishioners come to Mass when they have a Mass for their retreats. However, it will not be operating like a parish with regular Masses. Since they are having Mass they would need to get permission from the Bishop which I don’t think would be a problem as long as its for their retreats. We need to be clear that Holy Family would no longer be a parish. We have to make sure we aren’t expecting more than what they are offering.

A parishioner who has been coming regularly to Our Lady of Fatima asked about the giving envelopes and wondered if her money was being counted for OLF or HF. She noted that it isn’t always reflected in the weekly contribution for Holy Family. I said I will check into it. After looking into it I think the process is working, but the sequencing is sometimes a little confused because each week the counters in Garrison send us the envelopes from other parishes that aren’t OLF and we then count them the next week and deposit them so it takes longer for them to show up. This is true for parishioners from St. Joseph as well as Holy Family.

The question of the Fishing Derby was brought up again, parishioners expressed some desire for doing the Derby. My response was that I didn’t want to do it this year, but that ED has shown interest in doing those sorts of events with the community once they are running the place. My reasoning is that we are changing, things will be different, and so we need to make those adjustments. I want to help people let go if they want, but I also want people to feel free to be part of the transition as well. It is hard to see these changes, and I can understand the desire to keep things going “like normal”. The reality is, things are changing so we shouldn’t pretend that they aren’t. It is very possible that ED would welcome these opportunities to reach out to the locals. This year I feel we need to take a step towards recognizing that no matter what happens next, they won’t be quite the same. This is one way of clarifying this and making it a reality.

Finally I wanted to update you on the fact that the Holy See did get back to the parishioners regarding the petition. (See Attached) The petition was rejected because the Bishop has not yet issued a decree of merger yet. He has said we need to work towards merging which we are, but until he sends a formal decree of merger we can’t petition. So, the good news (for those who petitioned) is that when the time comes, they can petition again, and now they know the process a bit more.

I hope you have a wonderful thanksgiving and that you enjoy the time with family and friends.

In Christ,

-Fr. Eli