

Family 45

St. Joseph (Vancouver), Proto-Cathedral of St. James the Greater (Vancouver), Our Lady of Lourdes (Vancouver)

One of the general themes that emerged across the three parishes was a sense of not having enough information to be able to weigh in on the decision. There was frustration at a lack of details about the decision-making process and a sense that the decision had already been made. "I am disappointed in the Archdiocese with lack of transparency in this process! Tell us what we're doing instead of milking it to the end; change is not easy – my ears are not hearing anything useful."

People shared more specific concerns about parking and access, particularly at St. James. They mentioned the high value of the Knights of Columbus councils in their parishes. Several parishioners were worried about the blend of cultures, including liturgical styles, in this proposed family. They mentioned that they have had experiences of not feeling welcome in other parishes in the family. "Worry about conflict among people in the different current parishes, not be able to please everyone" (St. Joseph). They wondered about priest burnout and hopes that priests would be able to concentrate on sacramental ministry. They want to ensure that the Spanish-speaking and Vietnamese communities are not left behind in a family configuration. People in all the communities recognized the unique historical significance of St. James and the need to preserve it in some way.

All three parishes also recognize positive aspects. "Opportunity to see that the Catholic Church is bigger than any one church. Opportunity to share our gifts collaboratively. That Jesus is in all of us" (St. Joseph).

St. Joseph: Many mentioned that they miss Sausage Fest as an opportunity to build up community. There were a number of concerns about the distance (to Our Lady of Lourdes) and about schools. The Spanish-speaking community expressed frustration about the lack of Hispanic and youth ministry at St. James and Our Lady of Lourdes: "No ay ministerio de jóvenes el Lourdes y St. James, quinás el ministerio hispano." They asked if this will change the way we serve our communities: "Va a cambiar la forma en como atendemos a los católicos, similar a los protestantes? Antes criticaba a los protesantes de como ellos se formaban, y ahora veo que está pasando lo que yo criticaba?"

St. James: People shared concern about losing some of their specific traditional liturgical practices (e.g., the Communion rail). There were questions about whether this is the first of several mergers: "the proposed parish family is small, will more mergers take place as time passes?" If there is too much change, "parishioners will leave the parish to attend in Portland – this was a common concern in the group." People also questioned whether Partners in the Gospel addressed the root cause of the challenges we are facing: vocations.

Our Lady of Lourdes expressed concern about the smaller, family feel in their community. "What will happen to our school? K-4 Lourdes, 5-8 St. Joe's."

Concrete Changes Suggested:

- "St. Joe's should be paired with Holy Redeemer so they have a school too."
- It might make more sense to combine with Sacred Heart, Battleground, for parishioners there whose children go to school at St. Joseph (one person suggested).
- Match St. James with Our Lady of Lourdes.
- Many suggestions from St. James that they should be a standalone parish.