



Church of the Holy Family Feasibility Study Executive Summary of the Findings & Recommendations

Introduction & Methodology

This is an exciting time in the Diocese of Lansing and for the Church of the Holy Family. For the first time in its 79 year history the diocese is undertaking a diocesan wide capital campaign, “Witness to Hope.” The parish would also like to make some capital improvements and sees the diocesan campaign as an opportunity to do a combined capital campaign.

Greater Mission, LLC conducted a Feasibility Study for such a possibility. A Gift Analysis/Constituent Study was conducted in conjunction with *DonorSearch*. A case statement, study questionnaire and interview list was produced with the assistance of parish clergy and lay leaders. The study consisted of input from parishioners through individual interviews, two (2) Town Hall meetings and an In-Pew survey. A total of 23 individual interviews of 42 parishioners were conducted. Parishioners were selected for the interviews to represent various constituencies of the parish. One hundred and fifty (150) parishioners attended two Town Hall meetings on May 17th and May 25th and over 700 parishioners responded to the In-Pew and online survey. *The case tested was to raise \$4 million or more to: expand the Church - including a larger Gathering space, make improvements to upper parking lots, construct a new Outreach facility, construct a new small parish hall connected to the Church and support for the wider Church through Witness to Hope.*

II. Key Findings:

A. Appreciation of Parish and Challenges Facing the Parish:

Parishioners most often mentioned the friendliness and welcoming culture of the parish community. There was very strong support for Msgr. Vincke and Fr. Gary. The school and the traditional Catholic values at the parish and the energy of the community were also cited. The most frequently cited challenges were: the aging of the parish, the lack of fuller financial participation by all parishioners and a

perceived lack of generosity, the need for young families to participate in the life of the parish and some bad feelings towards the Bishop and diocese.

B. Case for Support:

Over 65% of the parishioners who responded were in favor of the case and moving forward with the campaign. This is a combined total from all study sources. While support for the overall case is strong some parishioners commented on specific aspects of the case like: we really need the gathering space, we have needed this campaign for a long-time, the diocesan case is forward thinking and we can do this if we all pitch in.

C. Can the Parish Raise \$4 Million or More?

The combined responses of all of the participants indicated that 43% felt the parish could raise \$4 million or more. As is typical in most parish feasibility studies, most parishioners were unsure if this amount could be raised.

D. Would you support the campaign financially?

Over 67% of those responded indicated that they would make a gift. Only 6% parishioners said they would not give and the remainder were unsure based on a variety of reasons, the most common being from people who were older and on fixed incomes.

E. Level of Giving

Six hundred and forty (640) parishioners indicated they would make a gift to the campaign in ranges as high as \$100,000 to below \$1,500. The total gifts that were indicated were over \$2,330,000 from 37% of the total parish community. This is an average gift of \$4,200 and indicates strong financial support.

F. Would you be willing to volunteer to assist with a campaign?

The combined responses of participating parishioners indicated that 16% (152) would volunteer to

assist with a campaign. Many were willing to open their homes for receptions and serve in other volunteer roles. These figures indicate very strong volunteer support.

G. Do you have any advice to give to parish leaders to assist with their decision making process?

Parishioners had many comments and a great deal of advice to share. Over 310 comments were noted. They expressed consistent enthusiasm for Msgr. Vincke and Fr. Gary. Many indicated that Msgr. must take the lead in making the case and that there must be a clear communication effort to explain the campaign. In general, there was support for the diocesan case, and some elements: Catholic Charities, Priest Retirement, Seminary Support and Evangelization received the most support. There was concern noted at the Town Hall meetings about the parish share and working with the diocese. Some parishioners also wanted to revisit the “old blueprints” from a previous project or simply leave things as they are. These comments were not held by the majority of people. In addition, the following were the most frequently cited responses:

- Father must take the lead and explain why this is needed.
- This must be well communicated.
- Go for it.
- Everyone must participate, not just the regulars.
- Transparency and teamwork will be the keys to success.
- We need new kneelers.
- Serve the poor not bricks and mortar.
- This will be a stretch but can be done through prayer and hard work.
- “Don’t shoot too small”.

III. Conclusions to the Findings

The following is a synopsis of more detailed findings addressed in the full study report.

- The Church of the Holy Family is a warm and deeply spiritual community.
- Msgr. Vincke and Fr. Gary are widely respected and have the support of the parish.
- The level of volunteerism for a campaign is sufficient which is a key factor for a successful campaign.
- A significant number of parishioners are willing to contribute financially to the campaign.

- The gift levels indicated by parishioners are broad with some evidence of significant lead gifts.
- There is broad general support for both the parish and diocesan case.
- There is strong support for the vast majority of the parish projects.

IV. Recommendations

1. The findings of the study indicate that there is strong support for both the parish and diocesan case. A sufficient number of people are willing to volunteer for the campaign and there is a large enough pool of potential donors to raise \$4 million. The Greater Mission Counsel recommends setting the goal at \$4 million.
2. The Counsel recommends building an aggressive gift table for the campaign that will stimulate broad based sacrificial support. This gift chart must challenge the entire community to support the campaign at levels that will stimulate sufficient generosity at all gift levels.
3. We recommend that the parish begin a communication effort to inform current parishioners of the results of the feasibility study and that their concerns and input have been taken into consideration.
4. Counsel recommends that the parish work closely with counsel to begin an education and communication process that will provide them with information about the parish project and the importance of the Witness to Hope campaign.
5. Counsel believes that there are many parishioners who would consider a Legacy Gift to the campaign and to the parish and that the Legacy Gift component of the campaign should be pursued vigorously during the campaign.

V. Final Thoughts

There are many optimal factors pointing to the potential success of a campaign. Great leadership, a well-defined and understood case, sufficient volunteers and the capacity to make significant sacrificial gifts are all needed to conduct a successful campaign effort. Church of the Holy Family has all of these elements present. We look forward to working with the parish community of the Church of the Holy Family.