

Am-Pol Eagle

Thursday June 12, 2008

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

Bishop Kmiec's words about the Journey in Faith & Grace have included "a time to build, a time to weep, a time to embrace" and certainly many others, but he seems to have forgotten what has happened in this round of announced restructuring plans, "a time to change course."

I read the [final round of] announcements first on the Diocese of Buffalo website and then the following day in the Buffalo News and what stunned me most was not the closings, but the "keeping opens," linking and merging with two sites remaining open! While certainly that is not a bad thing for the parishioners of those parishes, it is a bit of a slap to those targeted in the first round.

I had heard on more than one occasion at the time of the first announcement, absolutely "no linking" and not many keeping two sites open. Queen of Peace could have very easily linked with Holy Name or Most Holy Redeemer. St. Gerard could very well have linked with St. James, but those were not afforded that luxury. Their doors were closed, their articles sold at an estate sale with pics of the articles for sale on the internet, and their priests displaced. No linking, no merging, no talking, places just closed!

This round also brings up another issue for me. I feel that St. Bernard and St. Adalbert were in a very similar situation in their parishes. St. Bernard funded its mission, its parochial school. Unfortunately, it closed and left the parish with a huge school debt. St. Adalbert funded its parish mission too, the Response to Love Center. That funding, for over 20 years, drained a lot of the resources that now they could have had in the parish account, but both churches felt that the missions they supported were worthwhile and necessary to parish life. That is truly an accurate statement - a parochial school and a neighborhood mission are truly commendable, but as the diocese has shown us, it proved to be their

downfall.

The only difference in this scenario, however, is that St. Bernard is being afforded the chance to prove themselves. They are being given two years to reverse their financial situation and to prove they can maintain a vibrant parish life. St. Adalbert was not offered that chance.

Most of the new announcements, except for a few, allow for links and remaining independent. They allow for using both church sites. They allow for a pastor and even a parochial vicar. They allow for collaborative efforts and discussion. They are now saying "might" be linked or merged. They are almost allowing the parishes to come up with their own plans. Things and terms allowed have certainly changed since last July when they made those first announcements. I believe that this change of direction is not fair to those that were absolutely closed without a chance of any other plan being explored. You had to whisper the word "link" back then, and even when whispered you were not supposed to even explore that thought.

My wish is that St. Adalbert could, be given the same chance as St. Bernard. They are being given two years to try and reverse their debt. St. Adalbert parish family spent a sizeable amount of money to get the RTLC started and continued to fund it until it became an independent not for profit agency. That debt could very easily be compared to the school debt that St. Bernard had. And now that the parish is free of having to support the mission, this is the time to raise money just for supporting the parish and not the mission too! The two years seems like a fair arrangement to show you can improve that financial situation. St. Adalbert should be given the same opportunity! And now would be such a great time to allow the parish to prove themselves!

**Barb Brader,
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