



## Questions and Answers *Updated February 19, 2020*

### **Q. Has the Bishop weighed in on what the plan is for Our Lady of Lourdes and St John Vianney Parishes?**

**A.** First, there has been no directive from the Bishop for any specific alternative. However, after reviewing the Bettendorf Catholic Study, the Bishop has asked that we:

“...study the needs of the Catholic Church in Bettendorf for the best growth and development for the well-being of the Church.” (Bishop Zinkula, letter Aug. 21, 2017).

Specifically, Bishop Zinkula asked that the parishes jointly study and review with wider community input the following two possible scenarios:

- Relocate Our Lady of Lourdes Parish & Lourdes Catholic School
- Combine and relocate Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Lourdes Catholic School and St John Vianney Parish

Growth is clearly happening to the north and land is premium. The parishes are asked to take a serious look at acquiring land, although land has not been purchased. This process will most likely need to move in steps and phases.

For clarification, the next step does not assume we must choose between these two scenarios, but rather investigate if either are viable options.

### **Q. Why does Our Lady of Lourdes Parish need to move?**

- A.**
1. Location and the impact of the new bridge. There has been logistic issues during the construction of the new bridge (getting onto and out of the church and school property). It is expected that these challenges will continue even when the bridge is completed. Additionally, the bridge project is expected to provide constraints on using the property to its fullest and further limit any ability to grow the current property footprint.
  2. Population growth trend for Bettendorf. According to studies done by the City of Bettendorf (available on the website), the growth in Bettendorf has been and will continue to be in the Northeast area of the city. Opposite of where OLOL is currently located.
  3. Condition of the existing facilities.

A detailed report from Bush Construction dated February 7, 2018 (available on the website) summarizes the facilities assessment for Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and Lourdes Catholic School. The cost is substantial. Even if the choice were made to stay and renovate, it doesn't solve the challenges in items 1 and 2 above. The report concluded:

Maintain current facilities: \$3-\$5 million. In addition, purchase of land.

Renovate current facilities: Depending on level of renovation basic \$6-\$8 million, heavy \$8-10 million. In addition, purchase of land.

The site is generally landlocked on only 3.5 acres and not in a good location to serve the future growth of Bettendorf or attract more school enrollment.

### **Q. What are the demographics underlying the need for the Catholic church to plan for the future in Bettendorf?**

- A.**
- In a moderate growth scenario, the Bettendorf population will increase just short of 8,000 or 25% by 2035. Bettendorf's growth is primarily expected to the north, reaching toward and beyond Interstate 80. In all of the Quad Cities Bettendorf has the highest growth rate. We live in a proactive and growing community with people who care about the future.
  - Our Lady of Lourdes Parish reports 1,142 families with church seating capacity of 550. The number of families registered has decreased 20 percent since 1999.
  - St. John Vianney Parish reports 1,956 families with church seating capacity of 1,000. The number of families registered has grown 49 percent since 1999. It is currently the largest parish in the Diocese of Davenport.
  - Enrollment at Lourdes Catholic School has decreased 40 percent since 2000. During the 2017-18 academic year, the school served 230 K-8 students, of which 179 (78 percent) were members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish; 32 students (14 percent) were members of St. John Vianney Parish and 19 students (8 percent) were members of other parishes or not members of any parish. During 2017-18, Assumption High School enrollment from Our Lady of Lourdes and St. John Vianney was 47 and 15, respectively.

- Between 1999 and 2017, St. John Vianney Parish saw a 36.5 percent increase in the number of baptisms celebrated per year. For that same period, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish saw a 42 percent decrease. The data shows that on average, 68 new Catholics are baptized each year at St. John Vianney while roughly 50 are baptized at Our Lady of Lourdes.
- The number of Catholics receiving first Communion has declined at both parishes: down 56 percent at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and 6 percent at St. John Vianney Parish. The number of marriages celebrated has also declined slightly at each parish. An average of 16-17 couples marries each year at Our Lady of Lourdes and at St. John Vianney.

**Q. What other considerations are there for relocating Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and building new?**

<p><b>A. Land limitations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited parking</li> <li>• No playground for middle school children</li> <li>• No green space</li> <li>• No athletic fields</li> <li>• Will need to purchase surrounding property</li> <li>• If surrounding land/homes are purchased expect higher costs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Facilities limitations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of space for meetings and parish activity center</li> <li>• Conflicts between school and parish for space</li> <li>• Some classrooms are not designed for purpose they are used</li> <li>• School/technology is dated</li> <li>• ADA compliance issues</li> <li>• Continued facility deterioration and maintenance costs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Safety &amp; Security Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and noise of the interstate</li> <li>• Asbestos issues associated with construction or renovation</li> <li>• Antiquated fire control systems</li> <li>• New bridge approaching property</li> </ul>	<p><b>Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old building higher maintenance costs</li> <li>• Cost overruns by renovating old facility</li> <li>• Maintaining an old facility could cost more long term than investing in a new facility</li> </ul>

**Q. Has land been purchased?**

**A.** Land has not been purchased so no specific site has been established for a new parish or relocating a parish. But there have been talks about the cost of land in northeast Bettendorf and what might be available.

**Q. Has the decision been made to build a new Catholic School in Bettendorf?**

**A.** No, at this point, no final decision has been made. The facilities of Lourdes Catholic School have been studied and found to be deficient on many levels. The cost of rebuilding/renovating at the current site is high enough to justify considering a new building and a new site. Newer facilities will have educational advantages for students by providing a quality Catholic faith-based education that is able to deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> century vision of education. Parents need a Catholic school option that is competitive with strong school districts.

**Q. Will I have an opportunity to voice my opinion prior to a final decision?**

**A.** Yes, there will be several ways you can participate, learn more about the possibilities, and voice your opinion. Meitler Consultants has been engaged by the parishes to facilitate various opportunities for you to give input: large and small group meetings, a detailed survey, leadership retreat, interviews, and conversations with parish councils and committees.

The goal of the process is to develop a broad consensus around one plan that can succeed with a high level of participation including conducting a full-scale capital feasibility study.

**Q. Will the decline in priests in our diocese have an impact on this process with St. John Vianney and Our Lady of Lourdes?**

**A.** Based on current projections, it probably needs to be one of the criteria as we plan for the future. The Diocese currently has 63 priests and in 5 years it is anticipated to have 47 priests with only 37 priests in 15 years. These numbers include anticipated retirements, no premature deaths or health issues and 1 ordination per year. The Diocese currently has 77 parishes-active/open; 48 have resident pastors; 29 have NON-resident pastors or are part of a cluster parish.

**Q. How will the committee keep us informed of the status of this process?**

**A.** All updated documents on the parish websites. In addition, we will use various social media outlets, bulletins and possible mailings.