

Parish Strategic Planning Survey Summary

This summary reflects the results of the parish strategic planning survey conducted in February 2026 across St. John Vianney, Our Lady of Lourdes, and St. Joan of Arc School families. More than 1,300 parishioners participated, providing a strong and representative snapshot of our Catholic community.

The survey was not intended to be an exhaustive study of every parish issue. It was the next step in a listening process that began with parish focus groups. In those sessions, nearly 200 parishioners shared their experiences, concerns, and hopes for the future. Several common themes emerged. The survey expanded those themes to the wider parish community to determine whether they were broadly shared. The results show that they were.

A clear message throughout the survey is that parishioners understand the financial realities facing our parishes. The financial burden on parishioners emerged as the most significant concern, while improved stewardship and debt reduction were seen as the greatest potential benefit of working more closely together. This concern is paired with a strong desire for transparency in financial decision-making. Parishioners are not resisting change; they are asking for honesty, clarity, and trust.

Respondents also demonstrate an awareness of broader Church realities. Many believe the coming priest shortage will significantly affect parish life. This awareness helps explain why a majority support moving toward one canonical parish within the next two years, with a significant portion favoring action as soon as possible. While some prefer maintaining separate parishes, the overall direction favors proactive planning rather than waiting for circumstances to force decisions.

Most parishioners indicate they would accept temporary inconvenience if it leads to long-term strength and stability. Many expressed support for worshiping in temporary spaces during a transition if it results in better long-term outcomes. The issue is less about comfort and more about trust in the purpose and outcome of the transition.

At the same time, respondents emphasize the importance of unity and fairness. Ensuring that no one feels like “winners or losers” and preserving traditions from both parishes were identified as important priorities. These responses make clear that how change is experienced pastorally will matter as much as the decisions themselves.

While the two parish communities share many concerns, some differences are evident. St. John Vianney respondents tend to emphasize financial burden as their primary concern. Our Lady of Lourdes respondents express stronger emotional concern about losing their church building and memories connected to it, and they show greater concern about building maintenance. Lourdes respondents are slightly more inclined to move quickly toward becoming one parish and place somewhat stronger emphasis on maintaining a close connection between church and school.

The written comments reinforce what the data shows. Parishioners frequently mention debt, affordability, and long-term sustainability. Many call for clearer communication and transparency. Emotional attachment to parish identity, especially at Lourdes, is strong and should not be underestimated. At the same time, many voices acknowledge that change is necessary and express hope that unity could strengthen the Catholic community. Concerns about priest availability and pastoral care appear frequently.

Taken together, the survey results describe a community that understands the realities we face, is open to becoming one parish, is willing to endure transition discomfort, and hopes to build a stronger future together. The greatest risks identified are not structural but relational: trust, communication, fairness, and pastoral sensitivity. If those are handled well, the data suggests our community is prepared to move forward together.