

ST. THOMAS À BECKET PARISH VISITATION FEEDBACK SESSION

May 16, 2015



GOALS OF THIS SESSION

- **Education**: To review together what it means to be a parish.
- **Observation**: To reflect back to the parish community what Bishop Dowd observed during his visit (common vision of reality)
- **Action**: Based on these results, to offer some basic pastoral planning goals

PART 1: THE VISIT ITSELF

What happened during the visitation?

RECAP OF THE VISITATION

- **Dates: January 24 – February 1, 2014**
 - **The goal was to get to know the life of the parish in the context of the broader community**
 - **Distribution of explanatory letter**

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- **January 24**
 - **Mass**
 - **Couples for Christ**
- **January 25**
 - **Masses (including Spanish mass)**

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- **January 27**
 - **Pantry + Christmas baskets**
 - **Meetings with the staff**
 - **Knights of Columbus**
- **January 28**
 - **Helping Others**
 - **Social club**
 - **Catechism gathering**
 - **Wardens**

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- **January 30**
 - **Adult faith formation**
 - **CWL**
- **January 31**
 - **Liturgical ministers**
 - **Parish pastoral council**
 - **Evening mass**

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

- **February 1**
 - **Masses**
 - **Encounter with Spanish mass community**
- **Ad hoc elements**
 - **Meetings with parishioners**
 - **Statistical research**

PART 2: EDUCATION

What is a parish, anyway?

DEFINITION OF A PARISH

- **A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*parochus*) as its proper pastor (*pastor*) under the authority of the diocesan bishop. (c. 515)**
- **Three main elements:**
 - **A community of Christian faithful**
 - **A pastor the parish can call its own**
 - **Link with the diocesan bishop**

OTHER PRIMARY ELEMENTS

- **Centrality of the Eucharist**
 - **Corollary: importance of Sunday homily**
- **A place of Christian initiation, weddings, anointings and funerals**
- **Finance council**
 - **Corollary: financial autonomy**
- **Parish house**
 - **Corollary: parish church**
- **Parish archive**
 - **Corollary: parish secretariat**

PARISH ACTIVITY (1)

- **Catechetical instruction**
 - **General, for all populations**
 - **Special, for sacramental preparation**
- **Works of charity and social justice**
- **Education of children and youth**
- **Outreach to inactive Catholics**
- **Outreach to non-Catholics**
- **Communion with the broader Church**

PARISH ACTIVITY (2)

- **Regular communion + confession**
- **Availability of other elements of liturgical life**
- **Importance of encouraging prayer**
- **Family ministry**
 - **Special mention of family prayer + growth of Christian life in the family**
 - **Visits to families**
 - **Support to spouses and parents**

PARISH ACTIVITY (3)

- **Special care for the sick and dying**
- **Assistance to the poor, afflicted, lonely, those far from home, special difficulties**
- **Active participation of the laity**
 - **Fostering of associations of the faithful**

PART 3: OBSERVATIONS

What is the state of our parish?

OUR “CERTAIN COMMUNITY”

- **Saint Thomas à Becket is a personal parish, formally composed of all English-speaking Latin-rite Catholics living in:**
 - **Pierrefonds and DDO west of Saint John's boulevard**
 - **Kirkland north of the 40**
 - **Sainte-Geneviève and Île-Bizard**
- **The territory covers 15 census tracts**

OUR “CERTAIN COMMUNITY”

- **Total population:**
 - **2006: 66020 (49.5% English-only)**
 - **2011: 69305 (47.7% English-only)**
- **Those who speak English at home:**
 - 2006: 32660 English-only, 35925 English+**
 - 2011: 33050 English-only, 37130 English+**
 - Increase: 1.2% English-only, 3.4% English+**

POPULATION STATS

- **Other languages (at least 1%):**
 - **Arabic: 1710**
 - **Chinese: 1175**
 - **Spanish: 955**
 - **Romanian: 655**
- **A high level of multilingualism:**
 - **English and French: 1505**
 - **En, Fr, + another lang: 740**

OUR “PROPER PASTOR”

- **Fr. Marco Guzman is the parochial administrator since for the past couple of years.**
 - **He belongs to a diocese in Mexico.**
- **Fr. Tijo George is the assistant priest.**
 - **He is part of the MCBS community.**
- **Marco Argentino is the deacon assigned to the parish.**
- **Giancarlo Qualizza is currently studying at the seminary.**

PARISH FINANCES

Year	Collections	Donations	Savings
2009	356,744	16,755	40,000
2010	427,915	9,352	100,000
2011	379,286	19,378	0
2012	388,798	10,008	0
2013	409,307	7,936	0
2014	384,244	12,952	0

PASTORAL STATS (2013)

- **Regular mass attendance: 1000**
- **Children in catechism: 528**
- **Baptisms: 76**
- **First communions: 94**
- **Confirmations: 88**
- **Marriages: 9**
- **Funerals: 14**

PASTORAL ACTIVITY

- **Catechetical activity:**
 - Active programs for children and adults
 - Post-confirmation years remain a challenge
- **Communications:**
 - There is a parish bulletin and website
- **Educational activity**
 - There is no connection to nearby schools
 - No student support services

PASTORAL ACTIVITY

- **Weekend liturgical ministry**
 - **Active music ministry**
 - **Complaints about the screen**
 - **Presence of lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, children's liturgy**
 - **Confessions are regularly available**
 - **Strengthening of hospitality ministry**
 - **Parking lot is bad in winter**
 - **Clutter and traffic jams in entrance**

PASTORAL ACTIVITY

- **Works of charity and social justice**
 - **Different works present: Helping others, Becket pantry, Knitpickers, Angels of Mercy, etc.**
 - **Some controversy regarding the pantry from last year**
- **Outreach to inactive / non-Catholics**
 - **RCIA**
 - **Alpha (needs a boost)**

PASTORAL ACTIVITY

- **Prayer and study groups are present, if relatively small**
- **Family ministries are present:**
 - **Marriage jubilee**
 - **The Marriage Course**
- **Different parish groups are present**
 - **CWL, Knights of Columbus, Couples for Christ**

PART 4: ACTION

What next?

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- **Saint Thomas à Becket is a viable and vibrant parish, expressing the Kingdom of God in its part of the diocese.**
- **There is a genuine community in this area.**
- **Key pastoral services are being offered.**
- **There is potential for growth.**
- **But...is it really the best parish in the diocese?**

THE CHALLENGE

- **While the parish has many activities, many are quite small and (in the words of some) have grown a bit stale.**
- **At the same time, the parish is in an excellent situation to enthusiastically embrace parish vitality initiatives.**
- **Pastoral planning and stability will be key.**

YOU HAVE MY SUPPORT

- **I am convinced that the Holy Spirit wants each parish to be a vibrant expression of the Kingdom of God.**
- **It has been a pleasure to discover how Saint Thomas à Becket parish is living the Kingdom.**
- **What is our dream for the next 5 years?**