

## Re-thinking Our Lady of the Rosary Church

The Cardinal has asked the parish to re-explore options to make use of the property assets at Our Lady of the Rosary church in Waiwhetu, instead of closing it. The Cardinal has also asked us to be mindful of the needs of our parish, our schools, our wider community and the overall church mission. He has reiterated that our approach should be “visionary”.

Below are selected excerpts from a letter from the Cardinal to our Parish on 9 June 2021. The full letter is available on the parish website, [www.holyspirit.nz](http://www.holyspirit.nz).

*“I would like you and the Pastoral Council to look again at the possibilities the Waiwhetu site or another site in the same area offers for Te Wairua Tapu Parish...”*

*“A visionary approach is needed, not just a narrow focus on strengthening the existing church. Te Wairua Tapu does not have a large church which can be used for big feasts and celebrations involving the whole parish, and this should be able to happen at times. Could a renovated or new church on the Waiwhetu site be this bigger church? Could the existing church be strengthened, and a parish centre developed where the presbytery is? Could the presbytery become low cost housing for struggling families? I believe these and other possibilities should be explored.”*

*“What happens to Our Lady of the Rosary church is a matter for the whole parish, not just for the parishioners who normally worship there...”*

### What are we going to do?

The “Vision Group” has been set up to address the Cardinal’s request. It is important to note that this is not a repeat of the previous process around the closure of the church. Rather it is an opportunity for the parish to come together to look at the possibilities for the Waiwhetu site.

The end goal of this group is to present to the Cardinal a small number of viable options for the Our Lady of the Rosary church, including one recommended option. These options should reflect the wider communities’ ideas, opinions, and feedback.

### How will this be done and when will be my opportunities for feedback?

The first step is recapping where we’ve been including the feedback already received from the past processes. The next step is gathering additional thoughts from parishioners and other interested groups (you!), now that the request from the Cardinal has been further clarified. That step will occur in February. This will probably be via workshops or surveys.

The Vision Group will then turn that feedback into several high level plans. These plans will go out to parishioners for another round of feedback. The plans will then be shortlisted and made more detailed, for example including some sketch designs and high level cost estimates. Finally, the shortlisted plans will be presented to the Cardinal. One of the plans will be recommended based on the feedback received in the last round. The aim is to complete all of this by August 2022.

## What has already happened?

The Cardinal asked the parish to look at its property assets in 2019 and the Parish Futures team did a lot of work to gather feedback and create a detailed proposal. A copy of this feedback and proposal was printed and provided to each church, please ask in your local community if you would like to read it.

## What are the current attributes of Our Lady of the Rosary?

Our Lady of the Rosary Church Presbytery and office and meeting room was built of rusticated weatherboard and timber framing in 1947 on a 1380sq m section. The foyer was added in 1990 for community social gathering and other occasions. Children's liturgy utilises the meeting room and adjacent storage rooms.

The church permanently seats 218 people with 60 chairs for spillover when the annex is opened. The two storey Presbytery situated behind the Church has two single bedrooms on the ground floor level and three double bedrooms on the top level. The average attendance before lockdown was Sunday Mass 8am 50-90 people; 10 am 190-210 people; weekdays 30-40 people.

Aerial photos and a floor plan are being sourced and will be published on the website and circulated to Stewardship teams.

## What are the next steps?

Parishioners and interested groups will be invited to provide their preliminary thoughts in February, probably via a survey or workshop. Invitations will be via the parish bulletin and website.

## What can you do now?

Over the summer break, please start imagining what Our Lady of the Rosary could look like. How it could be tweaked or radically changed to meet the goals set out by the Cardinal.

You are invited and encouraged to form a group to provide feedback collectively. Providing feedback that has already been discussed by a few people and is known to represent a group will really help the process.

## Who is the Vision Group?

The Vision Group is a small group formed at the request of the Parish Pastoral Council. It is made up of people from within our Parish and will plan and facilitate the process. The job of this group is to engage parishioners and other groups, collate their thoughts and turn those thoughts into potential plans. The Vision Group's role is not to determine the options in isolation but to take ideas the community suggests and formulate them further to inform their suitability and practicality.

If you have any questions, you can email us at [olrvisiongroup@gmail.com](mailto:olrvisiongroup@gmail.com).