



The Parish of the Holy Spirit-Te Wairua Tapu
Parish Futures Team

Proposal
Cardinal John Dew
October 2019

I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation ...Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way”.

Pope Francis: Evangelii Gaudium #27, 33

Introduction:

As the Parish Futures team of Te Wairua Tapu parish completes the task entrusted to us by making this proposal during the Church’s Extraordinary Month of Mission, we recall the missionary impulse that has driven the Archdiocesan 2017 Synod recommendations, and this pastoral review of church property.

Cardinal John asked us to review our property considering the situation we are faced with as an Archdiocese:

- We have too many churches and presbyteries for our Mass count and for the number and age of our priests.
- Some of the churches require large sums of money to maintain earthquake resilience and general maintenance
- Pope Francis and the Synod have challenged us to be more outward looking, and to serve those who are marginalised or disadvantaged.

In this process we are also mindful of Catholic Social Teaching principles, in particular:

- Solidarity and the Common Good – church communities and parishes will be working not for themselves, but for one another – the “Common Good”
- Preferential Option for the Poor – poorer communities will be supported by the more well-off communities
- Subsidiarity – Small communities of faith will be encouraged and will be given equal voice.

We remember that the real church is the people and how we organise ourselves; it is not in the end about the buildings. Although we acknowledge that people feel a connection with buildings associated with our faith very hard choices have to be made. We have struggled with this and sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in whose name our parish exists, as we have discerned the path forward.

The members of the Parish Futures team come from a variety of backgrounds and from across the geographic area of our parish. Through the process of prayer, listening, learning and reflecting, we have discerned together what we believe is the best way forward.

The new direction we propose requires change from ALL of us. However, we recognise that some members of our community are affected more than others by this proposal. We hope we as a community can weather all these changes and still love, respect and support one another.

High Level Summary of Fact

Te Wairua Tapu Information summary	Mass count	Earthquake rating/repair costs	Insurance value (material damage)	Insurance costs**	Maintenance costs	Total operating costs***
Sacred Heart, Petone (Church, presbytery and hall)	269	Mix of 70%-80% NBS*	\$4,140,913	\$10,354	\$9,000	
St Patrick's, Wainuiomata (Church, presbytery, hall and house)	216	Mix – church 100% NBS*, Hall 12% NBS*	\$3,633,846	\$9086	\$4,000	
Our Lady of the Rosary, Waiwhetu (Church and presbytery)	325	35-38% NBS*, \$150k to repair to 67% NBS*	\$2,464,088	\$6,161	\$5,000	
San Antonio, Eastbourne: (Church)	58	80-85% NBS*	\$1,494,675	\$3,737	\$2,500	
PARISH TOTAL	868		11,733,522	\$29,338	\$20,500	\$158,000
<p>*NBS – New Building Standards</p> <p>**insurance costs allocated on the basis of insurance value</p> <p>***Total operating costs cannot be accurately allocated</p>						

Vision

The Archdiocesan 2017 Synod set a new direction for us as a community. Following the call of Pope Francis to go forth, the Synod recommendations invited us to review everything we do, and everything we are in the light of reaching out to others, especially those on the margins and peripheries of society.

We engaged with our parish communities about this broader vision, not just the narrower question of our physical assets. We found the vision to “go forth” represented in the wide range of contributions made.

Our parishes want to reach out to better **connect with children and families in Catholic schools**, recognising that for many, school is now the major place they connect with their faith. We want to better **engage with young people** both within our parishes and beyond. We want to **celebrate the cultural diversity** of our parish communities and of the Hutt Valley in which we are based, recognising tangata whenua, supporting heritage languages and cultures, and being a welcoming place for all newcomers. We want to **reach out to and support the vulnerable** including people experiencing homelessness, families, isolated elderly people, housebound people, people living in poverty, youth at risk and disenfranchised people. We want to think beyond our parish and denomination to connect with interfaith initiatives, including linking to neighbouring faith communities

We also want to ensure that people already within our parish communities, and those welcomed into it, continue to have **equitable access to participation in the sacramental life** of the church including reconciliation, and sacramental preparation for children and RCIA for adults. There is a huge desire for **social connection** as a parish, including social opportunities, support groups including those for seniors, Mums and bubs, men’s groups, families, cultural groups, prayer groups and Bible study groups.

We see that there is the opportunity to transform our infrastructure into **multipurpose buildings**, available during the week for a range of activities, with “hubs” for outreach, youth and interfaith activities. We saw the opportunity for our **priests to live communally** rather than alone enabling them to mutually support each other and the communities.

The Parish Futures team recognises that achieving our vision, while being faced with property, clergy, people and asset challenges, requires change. We are unable to set in new directions while our resources are tied up in maintaining a number of buildings in relatively close proximity to each other, and while our clergy are stretched meeting the sacramental needs of four communities. We are unable to reach out to the communities in need around us, and to grab opportunities available to us, while we are focused on maintaining the status quo.

Process

The Parish Futures Team was established by Father Marlon in March. The team was made up of the following people:

Sue Jury - Chair, Lisa Beech, John Burrell, Liz Heatley, Helen Greaney, Sean Mahony, Vaioleti Lui, Gerard McKee, Martin de Jong and Father Marlon.

The first meeting was held in March and the process below was determined:

Establishment Process: Name of the group, develop agreed values: openness, integrity and respect.

Review Process: Review demographics of church localities, identify earthquake issues with each building, identify capacity, expansion options, identify current accommodation for priests, identify yearly operating costs, Prepare 10-year maintenance plan

Engagement Process: Identify communities to engage, identify method of engagement, prepare engagement documentation, schedule engagement hui, undertake engagement across and within communities, engage with neighbouring parish, collate and discern the desires of the communities.

The team used the *World Cafe* model to engage with the communities. This process allowed us to create a living network of collaborative dialogue around questions that we believe matter in the process of reviewing our parish.

Three questions were posed:

- 1) What aspects of our Parish are important to you and those who are vulnerable in our community, now and in the future?
- 2) What changes would you like to see that would make you feel excited about our future?
- 3) How can we, as a Parish, use our assets wisely, now and in the future?

The Parish Futures team along with members of the Parish Pastoral Council and Stewardship Teams facilitated 18 cafes across the following groups in the Parish community- (Seniors, Tokelauan, Samoan, Maori, School Staff, Boards of Trustees and each parish community including the youth).

Discernment Process: Conversations from each cafe collected and collated, generate themes, share themes with communities (8/9 September.)

Proposal Development: To be developed based on the cafe themes and discernment of the Parish Futures Team. Final proposal to be shared with the Parish weekend of Parish wide mass 20 October 2019

The Parish Futures Team met regularly from March - October

Proposal/Recommendation

This proposal is the result of discerning the feedback provided at the café sessions, the factual information, especially regarding the current state of buildings, and an estimation of what is achievable. The focus of this work has been on the requirements to meet the services and operational needs of the Lower Hutt Valley Catholic community for the future.

The core of this proposal is combining the two parishes of the Hutt Valley Pastoral Area, i.e. Te Wairua Tapu and Te Awakairangi. This is to create a Catholic presence in the Lower Hutt Valley with a core hub and “satellite” buildings and facilities to provide additional community services, maintaining a presence throughout the Hutt Valley.

The Parish Futures Team of Te Wairua Tapu parish met with our equivalent counterparts in Te Awakairangi parish. The aspects of this proposal relating to the communities presently in their jurisdiction are based on that conversation.

We support their proposal for a core hub in Taita on the current land of St Michael’s. We add to that a proposal for a southern parish base in Petone. Our recommendation is that the amalgamated parish retain a presence in Wainuiomata, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt and Naenae and reduce the number of churches on the valley floor in close proximity to each other.

Below is

- a high-level summary of what this would involve,
- an explanation of the Lower Hutt context
- the reasons for the suggested changes at each Pastoral Area site
- the implications for Te Wairua Tapu specific to the purposes of this review.

High level summary

This would involve:

- A major Catholic community and church hub based at the current site of St Michael’s in Taita incorporating a central presbytery and parish administration office.
- The St Patrick’s church and hall remaining in Wainuiomata. The presbytery and rented property sold.
- The Sacred Heart church and hall remain in Petone (and maybe the presbytery).
- The San Antonio’s community at Eastbourne having an ecumenical arrangement with the local Presbyterian community (and maybe with the Anglican community also), thereby offsetting the cost of running the church with income from the other communities. The flat in Eastbourne to be sold
- The Our Lady of the Rosary church and presbytery at Waiwhetu being sold.
- The Sts Peter and Paul church and buildings in central Lower Hutt being a central location for youth and community with a chapel.
- The site in Naenae remaining as part of the Parish and being developed as an outreach centre, and for the use of St Bernadette’s Primary School.
- The St Martin de Porres church and presbytery at Avalon also being sold.

This is a longer-term view that would involve significant coordination between the existing two parishes and the sale of existing premises to fund the building of the new hub in Taita.

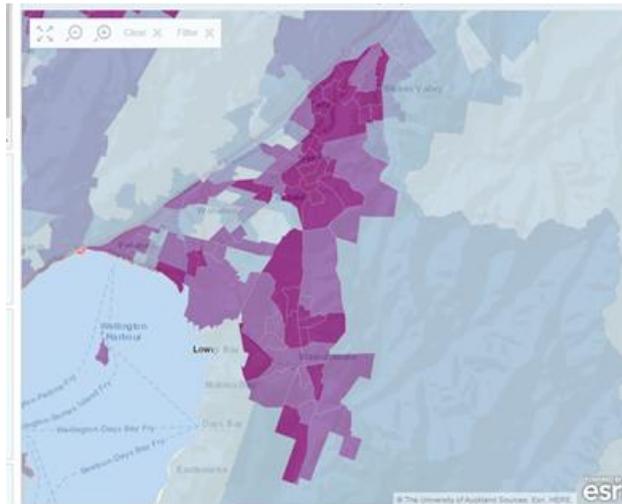
Lower Hutt Context

Lower Hutt contains some of the most and least affluent suburbs in the Wellington region. For example, in the health deprivation measurement the suburbs of Woburn, Waterloo, Boulcott and Eastbourne are in the highest quintile (20%) and Taita, Naenae, and parts of Wainuiomata are in the lowest quintile (20%). This is also reflected in the (soon-to-be phased out) school deciles, with Catholic primary school rankings in Eastbourne (10), Lower Hutt (9) and Petone (7) in the higher socio-economic areas, Waiwhetu is mid range (5) and Wainuiomata (3), Naenae (3) and Taita (2) are in the lower socio-economic areas.

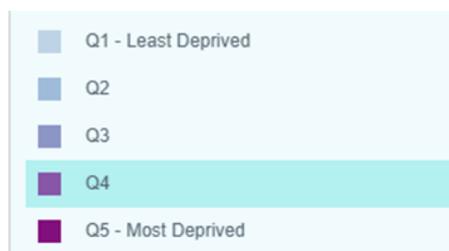
Six of the Catholic churches of the two parishes are spread across the valley floor, in relatively close geographic proximity to each other, with Wainuiomata and Eastbourne being outliers separated by geographic features. However, although there may be geographic proximity, accessibility is also limited because of the inequalities across the city. What is a 10 minute journey by car can become a 30-60 minute journey by public transport.

Additionally for individuals and families on low-incomes, the cost of travel to participate in faith, cultural and recreational opportunities is recognised as a barrier to participation. Low-income households regularly face impossible choices between costs they regard as essential; so additional costs to participate in church activities may come out of a limited food budget, or families may end up prioritising the power bill over travel to church.

In recent decades, the communities of Wainuiomata, Naenae and Taita have seen the withdrawal of services and businesses, ranging from banks and post offices to government offices.



New Zealand Index of Multiple Deprivation



We believe a church committed to the “preferential option for the peripheries” needs to take seriously our continued presence in the peripheries of our parishes. (**Synod Recommendation 1e**) Given our desire as a church community to reach out to the

margins and peripheries, there is a compelling case to retain a presence in the margins and peripheries of our Lower Hutt parishes.

We recognise that all of the Catholic church communities of Te Awakairangi and Te Wairua Tapu parishes have strong communities, with people loyal to the locality and history of their particular community.

However, the parish boundaries that were established in 2015 don't recognise the actual connection of communities to each other. For example, parishioners in Petone and Waiwhetu unable to attend Mass in their own suburb are unlikely to attend Mass in Eastbourne or Wainuiomata despite being part of the same parish, but are more likely to attend one of the Masses on the valley floor, such as in Lower Hutt.

We recognise that although Eastbourne is a higher socio-economic suburb, it also serves an ageing population which have additional transport challenges. With other Christian denominations in Eastbourne facing similar asset reviews, there is a possibility that individual decisions by different Christian denominations made independently of each other could result in all local churches closing. We see a strong potential for an ecumenical conversation to retain a combined presence in Eastbourne, possibly on one location.

It is in this context that we recommend one united Lower Hutt parish, with a Northern (Taita) and a Southern (Petone) hub, retaining a presence in the peripheries of the pastoral area (Wainuiomata, Eastbourne, Naenae) and in the central Lower Hutt location which is accessible in particular to many youth. Prioritising these areas would mean reducing the number of churches on the valley floor which are in close proximity to each other and closing Waiwhetu and Avalon.

Reasons for the suggested changes at each Pastoral Area site

We note that our engagement on this property review was directly with the communities of Te Wairua Tapu of Petone, Waiwhetu, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata, and indirectly with Te Awa Kairangi through their property review team. Our recommendations should be read in that context.

St Michael's in Taita

St Michael's is the best site for a northern hub for a combined parish. It has the land capacity, is close to public transport and is easily accessible by road being close to Harcourt Werry Drive that runs along the east side of the Hutt River. Taita is also in a growth area of the Hutt valley and already has a "hub atmosphere" having the Walter Nash Stadium and Avalon sports grounds close by.

Sacred Heart in Petone

Sacred Heart in the southern part of the Hutt Valley, and well situated for a southern presence. The church building is relatively young and has a good earthquake rating. Within a few metres of the Church is the substantial presbytery building that has been recently earthquake strengthened and is proposed to accommodate the current priests of Te Wairua Tapu. It is suggested that the Board of Trustees at Sacred Heart Primary School form part of the discussion in regards to the "gifting" of the Hall."

St Patrick's in Wainuiomata

Wainuiomata is separated from the Hutt Valley by the Wainui hill. There is a risk of losing an active Catholic community in Wainuiomata if the church is closed. In addition, Wainuiomata is experiencing population growth that is likely to continue.

With the proposal of a central presbytery, the Wainuiomata presbytery can be sold and this will not directly impact the church building. In addition, the church owns a rented property in Wainuiomata that could be sold.

San Antonio in Eastbourne

San Antonio is also geographically separated from the main Hutt valley, but unlike Wainuiomata, has a relatively small community and is not an area of population growth. Other faith communities in Eastbourne have indicated an interest in sharing the San Antonio church building for services. This interest has been mainly from the Presbyterian community and also some interest from the Anglican community. We propose to form an ecumenical community with other faith communities in Eastbourne to share the church buildings and costs so there are no additional costs to the archdiocese.

The flat in Eastbourne owned by the Parish and could be sold.

Our Lady of the Rosary in Waiwhetu

As discussed above, we believe achieving our long term vision and a sustainable future means losing some churches in close proximity to each other on the valley floor.

Unfortunately, the Waiwhetu church and adjoining presbytery buildings of Our Lady of the Rosary do not meet earthquake standards and require maintenance to meet the required rating. If the works cannot be completed, these buildings will need to be closed.

With the loss of the church, the hall at the school would be available to support the Waiwhetu community.

Sts Peter and Paul in central Lower Hutt

The location of Sts Peter and Paul is ideal for a central city youth and community hub. These would be facilities that include rooms for the youth and community to gather for events on a regular or casual basis, and a chapel. It is close to the two Lower Hutt Catholic colleges, Sacred Heart and St Bernard's.

St Bernadette's in Naenae

St Bernadette's is also situated in a population growth area and has current buildings that could be used for the purposes of an outreach hub so serve the local community which is of a lower socio-economic standing compared to other areas of the Lower Hutt Valley. The Hall would be retained for the use of the school.

St Martin de Porres in Avalon

The St Martin de Porres church buildings at Avalon do not meet earthquake standards

Implications for Te Wairua Tapu specific to the purposes of this review

From the current review and, limited to Te Wairua Tapu, if we were to close church and related buildings, we recommend this happen in the following order:

- **Our Lady of the Rosary, Waiwhetu**
- **San Antonio, Eastbourne**
- **Sacred Heart, Petone**
- **St Patrick's, Wainuiomata**

Our Lady of the Rosary, Waiwhetu: Of the 2 Te Wairua Tapu churches in close proximity, Our Lady of the Rosary requires the most significant earthquake strengthening work. The presbytery is attached to the church and is also requires earthquake strengthening. If the church and presbytery were closed and sold, the congregation could attend mass at other neighbouring churches, i.e. Eastbourne, Wainuiomata, Taita or Petone along with the use of the school hall.

San Antonio, Eastbourne: The church building is earthquake safe. If the church building was sold, the flat owned by the church would also be sold. The community would need to travel approximately 30 minutes by car to Sacred Heart church in Petone which is the closest, or make use of either the Presbyterian or Anglican churches in Eastbourne on an ecumenical basis.

Sacred Heart, Petone: The church and the presbytery have had earthquake strengthening work done and are earthquake safe, and as such, we are not proposing to sell or close them in the near future. This church is proposed to be the southern hub for the Hutt Valley Pastoral Area, and the presbytery is also recommended to be retained as accommodation for priests of the Pastoral Area.

St Patrick's, Wainuiomata is situated in a growth area of the Hutt Valley and is separated from the rest of the Hutt Valley by the Wainui hill. The community in Wainuiomata would be the most affected in the parish with having the church there closed. The church building has recently been strengthened to meet earthquake standards, and is ideally placed to accommodate the needs of this community. The presbytery could be closed or sold as the Petone presbytery could readily provide the priestly accommodation required.

Schools

We believe a sacred space in each parish school is a priority, especially in the schools which will not be on the same site as a Church. This would ensure that students and families are able to actively participate in the sacraments and continue to develop an encounter with Christ. This will also ensure we meet the desire of our community to connect with schools and provide an opportunity to develop the faith lives of our young people.

Conclusion

Although this was a challenging process, we believe it was one the Catholic parishes of Lower Hutt Valley needed to go through. It addressed issues that had previously been avoided but we knew needed to be resolved.

Implementing this recommendation won't be easy and some people will get upset. It will not happen quickly. However, we do not consider the status quo as an option and that has been the message we have communicated consistently throughout this process. The Catholic Church needs to adapt to be in a better position to address new and emerging challenges whilst it continues to develop process for serving the wider community.

Some elements of the final proposal were the same as in the beginning of the process, however most of this recommendation evolved through the gathering and discerning the voices from the wider communities and the discussion from within the group.

We now hand this over to Cardinal John for his discernment and decision.

Responses to this proposal can be emailed to parishfuturesteam@gmail.com by 5pm Wednesday 23 October