

March 15, 2023

Moving Forward on Welcoming and Inclusion

An Update from the St. Ignatius Parish Pastoral Council

In the spring of 2022, St. Ignatius Parish held two listening sessions as part of the Holy Father's Synod for Synodality. One was held in person and one on zoom. Parishioners who attended were asked a series of specific questions relating to their experience with the Universal Church, the Archdiocese and St. Ignatius Parish. They were also asked questions about the issues they felt our parish should be prioritizing moving out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In June of 2022, a detailed summary of what was heard during the listening sessions was provided to those who participated. In November/December of 2022, a briefer summary of what was heard, entitled *Reflecting on the Feedback of Our Parish Listening Sessions – Where Do We Go from Here?*, was prepared by Parish Council, and provided to parishioners via email. If you did not receive a copy of this document and wish to receive one, please contact the Parish Office.

One of the themes or points of convergence that emerged during the listening sessions was that St. Ignatius Parish should challenge itself to grow as a more welcoming, more inclusive community. The three principal areas participants suggested we focus on were:

- reconciliation/engagement with Indigenous communities;
- engagement and dialogue with the LGBTQ2S+ community; and
- youth outreach and engagement.

Since the fall of 2022, St. Ignatius Parish Pastoral Council has been working with Parish and Archdiocesan staff, and the staff at St. Ignatius School, to engage with these groups.

With respect to reconciliation and engagement with Indigenous communities in Manitoba, the parish has been in preliminary discussions with parishioners at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Aboriginal Church in Winnipeg about starting a new round of information and listening sessions between our parish and theirs, building off of the sessions that took place between our parishes prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With respect to engagement with the LGBTQ2S+ community, on February 15, 2023, the Parish Education Centre had planned to host a presentation by Father James Martin on his book, *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community can*

Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity. Unfortunately, Father Martin's presentation was postponed due scheduling conflict; however, interest in it was broad-based, with over 70 people from across Canada scheduled to attend virtually. The Parish Education Centre planning to reschedule this presentation as soon as possible.

Finally, on the issue of youth outreach and engagement, the Parish Council is currently in the process of examining how to best to engage with our youth, given the financial difficulties the parish is currently facing, which may preclude the hiring of a youth minister. Measures will likely include advertising and encouraging our youth take advantage of Archdiocesan youth events, as well as hosting some of our own, in conjunction with St. Ignatius School.

With the assistance of staff at St. Ignatius School and the Sunday School, Parish Council is also seeking feedback from youth on how best to foster their engagement with our parish community following confirmation. There was a listening session devoted to this topic at the March 11, 2023, retreat for the parish's confirmandi.

The Parish Council is planning to further study issue of youth engagement and how best to promote it at its March 2023 meeting, considering the feedback received from confirmandi.

There will be more information to come regarding the parish's efforts to engage with these three groups during the coming months. The Parish Council welcomes your enthusiasm, support and involvement in moving these matters forward. We also wish to thank parish staff, the staff at St. Ignatius School, and all who have volunteered thus far to work on these important initiatives.

Yours truly,

The St. Ignatius Parish Pastoral Council