

30 March 2017

Personal Submission by A G Stewart

“Addressing the Needs of a Growing Tauranga Catholic Community”

The key word here is “community.” To remodel or rebuild is the easy part. The submissions I have read so far do not address the issue on how any building is going to accomplish the needs of the growing Catholic community in Tauranga Moana. The use of the reo, Tauranga Moana, emphasises the wider parish of many cultures.

I am sure that a few years ago when the expert architects convinced all to build the present church facility all thought it would last for many years to come. How wrong they all were. Thus, beware of the so called experts and those who disposed the land at Greerton. Big mistake. Beware also of those trying so secularise the Church by renaming it an “auditorium.” (Mind you, with the unnecessarily large gap between the altar and first pews, going to Mass is sort of like a concert hall). Whatever, “the Church” is not bricks and mortar, or a clerical institution, but a community of believers in Apostolic tradition. Thankfully, Mons Murray has taken the plans to task on many theological and liturgical considerations which he rightly insists must take precedence over all other planning within *“the relationship between God and God’s people.”* To me he is right on first base.

But, however, I certainly do not think we need to re-construct a “beautiful” and architectural masterpiece that *“speaks of the majesty of relationship.”* It is the faithful that are the *“building blocks.”*

Let us focus on evangelizing our community. How will the re-build enhance our faith in years to come with the changing multicultural face of our common future? I am not sure of the answer and I have not seen any suggestions in the submissions so far. So at the moment the question is more important than the answer. Certainly having an active presence in the city centre makes sense. City planners have informed us that the population of Tauranga will double in the not so distant future.

And if all and sundry are presently moaning about traffic congestion how are we all going to get into town and where, oh where, are we all going to park (Peg Cummins)? One submission says *"it can quite easily be resolved"* (Hylton Rhodes) and another suggests we construct *"an underground car park"* (Patricia Brooks). Not a bad idea.

On paper the draft plans have some long needed inclusions that are seen in other nearby popular congregations, such as with Holy Trinity and St James, where parking is also very limited.

A very useful feature is an added drive around pathway, but still very limited parking. In most submissions this problem was raised. I personally know of a number of elderly folks who can no longer attend join us at Mass because they cannot find suitable parking and then manage the trot up the long pathway. Yes, they and families with little kiddies, could park further along Cameron Road, but crossing the busy First Ave does not thrill them. Making the main entrance facing Elizabeth Street is a great idea but makes the main entry even steeper to navigate. Having a lift into the church is one option (Patricia Brooks), otherwise I can see the side entrance on Cameron Road will remain the de facto main entry.

So what I reckon? Bowl the whole lot down and start from scratch by turning the plan 108 degrees making the main entry off First Ave. Obviously a lot more kōrero is needed.

Back we go to running housie and raffles.

Blessings,

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