

## **ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF A GROWING**

### **TAURANGA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

- Looking ahead for the next 25 years.

“ Thank You “ for the opportunity to ‘ put some ideas and suggestions ‘ on paper for consideration.

Before I commence, I note that there is a growing ground swell of concern amongst some parishioners that the decision of the future of The Church and The Parish has already been made – and that this current process is only being followed to ensure that the parishioners are appeased.

I would like to formally and publically go on record to confirm that such negative comments are NOT correct. I have been categorically assured in this matter by Fr. Mark. Such people making negative comments are not helpful to either the process or the project ! ! Please refrain. Thank You.

To begin, I will put my cards on the table now – I do not support in any way the possible move of the church from the current site in Elizabeth Street to Pyes Pa. My support is for a full church in the city – not a chapel on the Elizabeth Street site.

I trust that you will continue to read on to try to understand my position / logic / etc.

Before we can look to the future, I think it's important that we look to the past and realise where we have come from, how far we have moved, and how the world has changed in the last 25 years. Some examples are as follows ;

- 25 years ago . . . . . ,
- People were laughed at for having a mobile phone – now, the opposite applies
- Words such as *Google* and *Facebook* and *Twitter* were not even in our vocabulary, yet they are now used daily
- Camera's had film in them
- Mobile phones are today used for photography
- Regular communications to us from our Parish Office are now received through an app on our phones
- If we are unable to attend a Funeral and / or a Wedding, it can now live streamed to a mobile phone / T V / iPad / etc

I think it is also very important to now look beyond the present !

Existing ‘ problems and issues ‘ will probably not be ‘ problems and issues’ in the years ahead. We need to ;

- Think outside the square !
- Change our habits !
- View current ‘ problems and issues ‘ from a completely different perspective !

## **Parking**

Whilst this issue continues to be raised, I believe it is a non issue and is in fact a red herring.

Where Saint Mary's Immaculate Church is currently located, we are blessed with having 2 large City Council owned car park buildings within a five minute walk from the church, so this negates the need for parking right outside the front door of our church.

Tauranga City Council has already signalled changes in this area – with a building soon to be constructed in Durham Street which has no parking requirements ; clearly a signal to the future.

In addition to this we have a growing bus service for commuters in the city and for people living in certain areas in the city, the use of the Bay Hopper Bus on Sunday to attend Mass is a strong possibility ( if we really want to ! ).

The bus service is going to be enhanced over the next twelve to eighteen months with the frequency of buses passing the church going to increase significantly.

As to the future, the use of cars by the public ( including our parishioners) will not be as we have today. With the introduction of a more enhanced commuter service being provided by the City / Bay Hopper system, as well as the use and introduction of electric vehicles and self-driving vehicles, the necessity to have parking for parishioners will just about to become nonexistent.

There is currently a sub-division in Auckland whereby none of the homes are being constructed with garages for motor vehicles.

Our need for our own private car will be Nil.

In my view, the need to include a car parking facility for the future development is not a requirement and is a waste of funds and valuable land resource.

For now ; Immediately outside the church on First Avenue, there are currently 2 parks available for mobility card holders. I am of the opinion the other 6 general car parks should also be changed to be for mobility card holders too. I believe we should engage the City Council, and persuade them / get them to buy-in to change this parking allocation on First Avenue to be solely for mobility card holders. This would assist parishioners immensely. My further thoughts in this matter are that if the mobility card holders are driven to Mass by an able bodied person, then these parks should only be used as a drop off point only ; the driver is then able to safely park in the City Council parking building a few metres down First Avenue.

## The Buildings

There is no question that the current church is in need of urgent repair – and at quite a financial cost.

My quick analysis into the finances involved etc, and I am firmly of the opinion that it is not cost effective to repair etc, neither is it cost effective to move to Pyes Pa.

My thoughts as follows ;

- Rebuild and redevelop the church the Elizabeth Street site
- Demolish the rotten sections of the existing church
- Retain everything that can possibly be retained from the existing church, for these to be included in the new building
- Remove and sell the exiting Administration Centre / Presbytery ( the buildings are old and outdated, costly to maintain, expensive to operate, poorly ventilated, very cold in winter, etc. )
- Remove and sell the garages nearby the Administration Centre / Presbytery
- Rebuild using the entire existing site
- With the rebuild, turn the church around ; so that the altar and beautiful plate glass window behind the altar will be located at the northern / Elizabeth Street end
- This will allow the rays from the sun to be aligned to the sunrays in the window
- It will also mean that during Mass / prayers, we are looking up and looking North to Our Lord ( rather than looking down South, and with no direct sunlight on the window ! )
- Commence to rebuild from street level upwards – not on the present elevation
- At ground level, we have retail shops facing Cameron Road. These will be leased out to business owners, and for us to receive an on-going income ( which will compensate to some degree for the capital outlay of the rebuild )
- The church would occupy the level above the shops, and encompass close to the entire area available
- Within the new church / building, we would have an enlarged worship centre, chapel, kitchen, etc, crying room ( double glazed and soundproofed ), Administration Centre ( at the main entrance way – to meet / greet / be security ), accommodation for visiting Priest etc, meeting rooms, conference rooms ( to be rented for commercial use and income )
- We will be able to retain our Liturgical presence, and also have a commercial approach to generating income to off-set costs etc
- The altar would be constructed at a different elevation to the main church floor area, so as to allow all parishioners from within the entire church to clearly see the Priest / Deacon / Altar during Mass ( the slope does not need to be as significant as the slope within the church at present )
- None of the rooms within the building ( worship areas included ) would have light switches ; lights would automatically be turned on when people are inside the building,

- and when the level of inside / outside light got down to a defined level ( the lights turn themselves off when the inside of the building is vacant )
- The roof on the new building would be covered in solar panels, thereby using natural energy to power / run the church and building, with surplus power to be sold back to the national grid
- The building would not only include steps / walkway for entry, but also a lift from street level for those that need / require ( i.e. mobility card holders )

### **Outlying Areas.**

I believe Saint Patrick's Catholic Church Te Puke should be re-developed – to cater for the population growth in the area of the greater and expanding Papamoa / Te Puke environs.

This would also assist any overflow / growth issues with Saint Thomas More Mount Maunganui.

The accommodation etc for Priests / Visitors etc should be domiciled at Te Puna – and should be enhanced if necessary to bring up to modern accommodation standards. The present accommodation area at Te Puna is beautiful, peaceful, relaxing and tranquil and allows our Priests to have time away from the noise / interruptions / demands on them and their time if they were to be located within the City and / or attached to the church.

### **Aquinas Site.**

With respect to the Aquinas site ;

- Congratulations for the vision and foresight to purchase additional land near the college
- I believe this should be retained, and land banked for the future use / growth of the college / community
- Green areas are invaluable now ; they will be even more so in the years ahead
- As much green area at Aquinas should be maintained as possible. Any future growth / expansion of the buildings on site should be upwards ; NOT outwards
- If the church etc were to be moved to Aquinas / Pyes Pa, the visual impact will be not environmentally friendly ( expansive areas of tarseal ☹ ☹, and using valuable green areas )
- Just because the school does not have a church on site ( like a number of other Catholic schools apparently ) is certainly not a good reason to move our church to this site. The fact they do not have a church associated nearby, means that our Catholic college is even more special

## **SUMMARY**

For reasons outlined, I am firmly of the view that we should remain on our current site – and that we utilise this wonderful opportunity to make a statement to the City of Tauranga that the Catholic Church is here ; and in the City to stay !

Undoubtedly, the City has grown tremendously in the past 30 years – and will certainly continue to do so. With our superb central city location, we have a marvellous opportunity to put our footprint down for many many many years ahead. We should also look at other major and growing cities – not only in New Zealand, but overseas too. One thing we will find – there is a significant presence of The Church either in or nearby the central city area.

Despite the growth and expansion of Tauranga, the CBD / central city area remains – and the City Council have retained this position for the future too. It is imperative that we remain a part of the central city area.

The potential financial carrot to sell our site ‘ for a considerable sum of money ‘ may be tempting, but I think that it should be avoided at ALL costs ! !

Our new and modern building on the Elizabeth Street site does not need to have an extremely large worship area within – but it does need a worship area more enlarged than what we have at present. I believe we should not be looking to cater for ‘ peak times ‘ ( i.e. Christmas, Easter, First Holy Communion ceremony ) ; but an adequate size to suit the majority of Mass times.

Whatever we decide upon will come at a financial cost, and I do not know the extent of our financial resources. However, history within the Catholic Church suggests that finding money / funds / finance is always achieved – and I see no reason as to why this project and the associated tasks would be any different.

No matter where our church is located, some people will be disappointed / annoyed / aggrieved / etc – but if the decision is made with the best interests of parishioners’ and stakeholders, as well as for the betterment of Tauranga City, then we can all be at peace.

I have been questioning some matters / had thoughts re design etc etc etc for much longer than March 2017 when we were given ‘ the green paper ‘, and I believe that I have taken matters pertaining to Liturgy / Commerce / The Environment / The Future / etc into due consideration.

Our Lord will guide us all in our decision making. However, we sometimes need to talk to him and let him know what we are thinking – before he can help us. As a number of my thoughts and suggestions have come to me from when I am within the worship area, I am happy and comfortable to submit this paper for consideration.

*Peter Brown.    October 2017.*