

Following discussions on the future direction and needs of our Parish, and reviewing the various proposals and other submitted suggestions, I believe that we must maintain a presence in the central city location of St. Mary Immaculate Church. I also have believed since the building of Aquinas College, that we need to have a church near or adjacent to the college, and I consider that the recent purchase of the land adjoining the college is an opportune and timely acquisition, because our city's growth can only be to the south and the west - namely, Oropi, Pyes Pa and westward toward the Kaimai. Te Puna serves its own community, and any further growth in that area will not be as great, and can be addressed in the medium term.

There has been an architectural sketch plan provided for the redevelopment of the existing site, which involves the demolition of the existing presbytery/office building, and demolishing the original part of the church building, repairing the more recent extension which forms the main body of the church plus additional building works. The report from the parish dated October 2017, provides rough estimates of cost for the redevelopment including costing of underground car parking etc. This cost came out at around \$8 - 9 million, a figure that I consider to be prohibitive, and we would be handicapping the future with a large debt. Furthermore, it appears counter-intuitive to demolish the original church built in the 1950's - which seems to have no problems with regard to structural, leaking, rotting or earthquake issues - and repairing the newer 1990 extension which has all these problems, and is very expensive to rectify; and to demolish a well appointed and functioning presbytery/office building seems wasteful to say the least.

Many have remarked on the growth of the city of Tauranga and the attendant increase in the Catholic population. Whilst there are statistics available for the growth of the area generally, we do not have any demographics on the growth of our Catholic community. However, there is much evidence throughout the western world that the Church is in decline - in some countries, serious decline to the point of near collapse. The Bishop of Auckland, Bp. Pat Dunne recently commented that if it was not for Catholic immigrants, his congregations would be shrinking. Recently, our Bishop Steve Lowe provided some figures on the decline in the Catholic population of our diocese. Whilst I am confident that over time there will be an increase in our Catholic population due to the growth of our region, I am equally confident that we will not experience the growth of our parish at the same rate as the population generally. Attendant with this is the availability of priests; some have remarked that we will have a reducing number. I am rather more optimistic than that view - our seminary has been full for the past few years, and there is much growth in priestly vocations in other parts of the world - notably Africa, India, Asia and the Philippines, and it is incumbent on our bishops to recruit and give proper induction to foreign priests in the areas of culture, language and our Catholic praxis, to make up our own shortfall. Furthermore, many of these younger priests - our own and foreign - are not afflicted with the 'Kumbaya' Catholicism of the '70's and '80's, and are holy, humble and well formed men.

Firstly I wish to consider the development of the Aquinas College site; the suggested seating size of the new church to be about 700. Whilst I think that in the long term (20 - 30 years) a church this size would be needed, a church could be designed to be built in two stages - first stage seating , say, up to 400. This could be achieved within 3 years of a decision on the forward direction of the parish. The church would arguably be of a more traditional design, being more rectangular than circular, and this would keep costs down and would facilitate an easily 'extendable' church later, to accommodate around 700 seating.(I say Traditional design, because many of the so called post Vatican II church designs, most of which are quite

ugly - including the present one here - have been criticised by many bishops and cardinals worldwide as not appropriate for God centred Liturgy).

I understand that a presbytery would need to be built, but other parish facilities that are needed could utilise the college facilities in the medium term. My guesstimate for the completion of these works would \$3million.

Once the new church building is completed on the new site adjacent to Aquinas College, the existing church, which will continue to be used 'as is' until the new facility is built, can then be addressed. This redevelopment would be based on the original church building, which as mentioned previously, as I understand it, has no structural or other defects. The 1991 construction, which is defective, would be demolished up to the line of the cupola over the church entrance, and in line approximately with the first two columns within the church. This would then provide an extension to the original building, and would increase the seating capacity to around 300 plus. The existing entry would be used, and whilst retaining an area as a foyer, the balance would be raised to the existing wooden floor level, providing a ramp and/or small lift for the elderly and infirm. The toilet area would need to be relocated along the side facing the presbytery adjacent to the current vestry, to enable the re-establishment of a sanctuary, which would have the tabernacle permanently in place. The kitchen would be turned to face into the existing chapel, which would become the meeting room/ social area. The remaining concrete area where the 'auditorium' was, would be remodelled to form car parking, probably taking up to 20 cars. My estimate for this work is \$1.5 - \$2 million.

This would alleviate some of the car-parking issues, which are a problem mainly during the week and funerals. This proposal would give us the best of both worlds, and at considerably less cost - around half - than the estimates given for a redevelopment of the existing site only as proposed. I am happy to present further detailed suggestions to any development planning team once a firm direction has been decided.

By way of personal disclosure, I have worked in the Building and Construction Industry all my life in production management in large companies, and in other businesses allied to the industry. For the last 35 years prior to my retirement in 2009, I have worked physically within the housing industry, and more recently owned my own construction business in home improvements and alterations, and specialising in design and build housing developments, together with a small amount of light commercial construction. In 1985 whilst building in Australia, I built a large extension (meeting room, kitchen facility and toilet block) to the parish church of The Immaculate Conception Parish in Unanderra, Wollongong, NSW - a beautiful Italian traditional style church.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission.

Dc. Don Beckett. 16.10.2017