

VICAR GENERAL
MODERATOR OF THE CURIA

ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON
66 BROOKS DRIVE
BRAINTREE, MASSACHUSETTS 02184-3839

May 24, 2023

Dear Parishioners of Saint Brendan Church within Saint Martin de Porres Parish,

Peace be with you.

Please allow me to thank you all for your kind reception of me at the parish meeting on April 29th. At that meeting I believe I clearly answered some of your questions and also made an observation.

- The proposal as outlined in the executive summary that came out of the committee meetings with the parish leaders and the members of the Archdiocese was acceptable to the Cardinal. After the meeting, some had asked more details about the agreement and wondered if it were different than what they thought. To be clear, there were various proposals as to what the agreement should be, but the one the Cardinal approved was the final executive summary document from the committee. Due to the passage of time, the dates would be updated to reflect the new start date for implementation of the proposal. That executive summary agreement is as is submitted with this memo.
- The parishioners would have to meet the goals of the agreement fully as a last chance, which is what is desired by all, but that should it fail, we would ensure that Saint Brendan School would remain the priority as we moved to close the Church.
- I urged that the parish look to new ways to fundraise, and that the Archdiocese would be available to assist in the fundraising.
- I observed that the current state of the hall has limitations. There is no functioning kitchen facilities or food refrigeration. The open meeting space will be usable.

Thank you to you all. I know how much a parish church building means to a community, and I truly hope your proposal will be successful. I am so pleased to hear of the plans that have already begun, and I pledge the help of the staff of the Pastoral Center to work with you in your efforts.

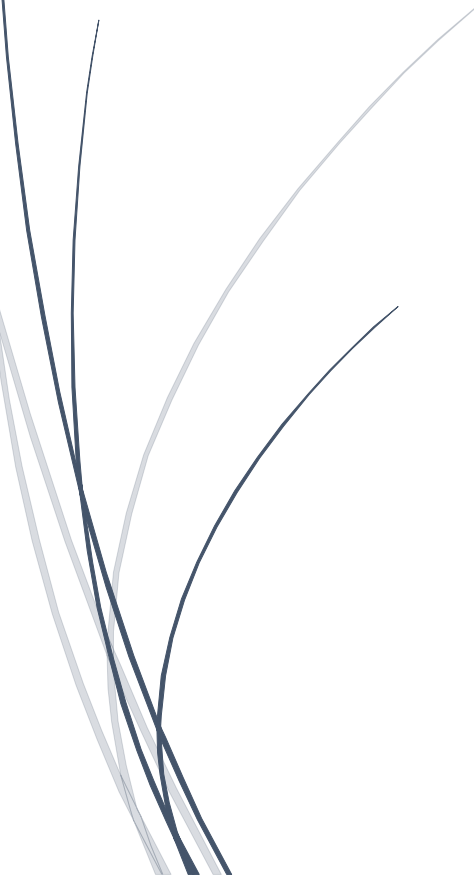
Yours in Christ,

Bishop Mark O'Connell
Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia



Accepted 4/29/2023

St. Brendan Church Proposal



Prepared by: St. Brendan Church Committee

St. Brendan Church Committee Proposal

OBJECTIVE: In July, a St. Brendan Church Committee was formed and charged with developing a Proposal to keep St. Brendan Church open for worship and was the Committee's sole focus. The following is a summary of recommendations that are more fully described in the Proposal. This proposal will be implemented within the constructs of St Martin de Porres Parish since St Brendan Parish no longer exists. The Committee believes the Proposal is a strong, reasonable, and executable solution. We request a one-year period, the start date to be determined, to attain both attendance and offertory goals specifically. If it at the end of the period goals are achieved St. Brendan's remains open, if not process to close St Brendan Church can begin, however the school will remain open.

Vitality – Increase Mass Attendance and Faith Community Engagement

- Utilize Themed Masses, visiting priests/lecturers, weekly family Masses, and Evening Prayer Services to encourage interest and increase attendance.
- Partner with the Irish Pastoral Center to designate St. Brendan's its church of choice.
- Create programs to support youth engagement, faith formation and senior outreach.

In the past, we have seen these approaches significantly address attendance and engagement improvement. They are proven strategies. However, we will require consistent pastoral leadership to ensure success.

Viability - Support St. Brendan's Church via governance and fundraising

- Establish oversight of the implementation within the existing Pastoral and Finance Council of St Martin de Porres Parish designed to support the recommendations with Archdiocesan support.
- Institute faith formation groups for both adults and our youth within existing program structures of St Martin de Porres.
- Resurrect prior, successful fundraising efforts and create new opportunities for Church financial support.

Sustainability – Addressing the necessary renovations to the Church Building

Continued measurement of these goals of Mass attendance, offertory and fundraising are crucial for sustainability. If it at the end of the first three fiscal years, the goals are not maintained, the process to close St Brendan Church will begin. If after three years St. Brendan has continued success, an assessment will commence to determine whether St. Brendan can undergo standard review procedures currently employed by the Archdiocese.

Going forward, the Finance Council, Pastoral Council and the pastor of Saint Martin de Porre Parish must monitor the performance against the goals on a fiscal year basis (July to June), commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and thereafter.

After the one-year trial period, revenue must increase in proportion to the increase in total operating costs for maintaining the church and staff to ensure operational sustainability. If that increase is not met, the process to close St Brendan Church will begin.

An illustrative timeline for the above periods is as follows:

Example of Description Not actual	Example of dates Not Actual
Commencement of one-year initial measurement period	July 1, 2023
End of one-year initial measurement period – date by which sustainability efforts will be measured and continued viability of St. Brendan Church will be determined	June 30, 2024
First full fiscal year after one-year initial measurement and fiscal year transition	July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025

Archdiocesan estimates to repair the Church are calculated at \$2m. While the Committee is of the opinion those numbers are highly inflated, the recommendation below will easily cover costs.

Any repairs of the Church building, beyond those applied for in the Community Preservation Grant, and the sale of the rectory will be addressed after the one-year period has expired and the goals set out for vitality and viability have been achieved. Emergency repairs to the Church building and regular maintenance type repairs are permitted.

After the initial one-year trial period, funds must be raised to address the deferred maintenance noted in the facility assessment report from the Archdiocese (dated 2019).

Community Preservation Act currently earmarked.	\$400,000
Sale of the Rectory	\$1,500,000
Potential remaining proceeds from the sale of the two family	Estimate: TBD

Sale of the Rectory:

The Community Preservations Act specifies if the building receiving the grant is sold in a fifteen-year period, the grants monies will be returned: Therefor a portion of the after-tax proceeds from the sale of rectory equal to the amount of the Community Preservation Act Grant will be held in escrow.

- After a successful three-year period, an assessment of releasing the fund in escrow to St. Martin de Porres Parish. This allows funds to be allocated at a 65/35 percentage to St. Brendan and St. Ann respectively.
- If the Building is sold prior to the 15-year period, revenue from the escrow funds, and/or sale of the church building will be used to repay the Community Preservation Act Organization.

The St. Brendan Church Committee emphatically believes this Proposal is extremely viable and strongly expects its recommendations to be successful. The Committee hopes the Archdiocese appreciates the

extensive effort that went into the development of the Proposal, seriously reviews the recommendations, and approves its implementation.

St. Brendan Church is beloved institution who enjoys a rich parish history. We believe we can restore her once again to a thriving inner-city place of worship and a neighborhood mecca for Catholic faith formation and spiritual outreach. St. Brendan has been in this neighborhood for 90 years; we believe we deserve a chance to prove we can be here for many more years to come.

St. Brendan Church Committee Proposal

ATTENDANCE/OFFERTORY

ATTENDANCE TARGETS

- Current Average Combined Mass Attendance 120 (this is based on 2 Masses per week)
- Target for June 2024: 244 combined Masses
- Targets below were suggested by representatives of the Archdiocese.

Fiscal Year 2024	Q1 (July 2023 – Sept 2023)	Q2 (Oct 2023 – Dec 2023)	Q3 (Jan 2024 – Mar 2024)	Q4 (Apr 2024 – Jun 2024)
Attendance	150	188	204	244
Increase %	25%	25%	9%	20%

Critical Success Factors:

- Attendance will be measured as cumulative average each week.
- Themed and family masses will be the draw and have proven to be successful in increasing attendance.
- Partnership with the Irish Pastoral Center to have St. Brendan's their Church of choice.
- Advertise Masses through social media, street flyers and communication from the school.
- Broad and regular publishing of Mass attendance to inform the parishioners and as a result increase engagement.
- Growth in attendance will slow down in third quarter, as turnout is typically lower during the summer months.

INCREASE OFFERING

- Pre-COVID 2019 Data was used to determine benchmark.
- Offertory will be measured as a cumulative average each week.
- Targets below were suggested by representatives of the Archdiocese 10% increase by end of Q4 2024

Offertory	2019	Fiscal Year 2024
Weekly	\$1,733	\$1,924
Yearly	\$90,117	\$100,000

Critical Success Factors

- We understand the annual total operating costs for maintaining the church and staff are \$220k. Funding to support the total operating costs will be achieved through offertory and fundraising efforts described in this report.
- Promote On-Line Giving through social media, street flyers and School Communication.
- Increased attendance will result in increased offertory. Initiate an aggressive on-line giving campaign.
- A separate set of books and records for St. Brendan Church will not be maintained. Instead, with assistance from the Archdiocese and members of the St. Martin de Porres Parish Finance Committee, a mechanism to report the revenue generated and expenses incurred by St. Brendan Church will be instituted.

Offertory will be reported as follows:

Envelopes	The envelopes and cash received at a Mass will be credited as revenue for the church in which the Mass was held. We will research to determine a way to capture those individuals who live outside the geographic area of St. Brendan
Cash	To the church where the mass was held:
On-line	Designation functionality exists within the Online Giving Application. To accurately capture the offertory, the designation option should be uploaded and the drop-down selection for be created.

OTHER REVENUE SOURCES

Outside the Parish Hall Use

- This responsibility rests with the Facilities Department of the Archdiocese. Those interested would need to purchase building insurance. The Pastor sets prices, and he negotiates clean up responsibilities etc. There is a need to distinguish between a donation and a rental revenue.

Fundraising Efforts - (Note Sacramental Fees have been established)

- Restart assertive fundraising efforts. Volunteers have been recruited.

St. Brendan Church Committee Proposal

BUILDING OPERATIONS

CHURCH OPERATING EXPENSES:

Financial Strategy

There needs to be working conversations with both Parish Finance Council and the Archdiocese, regarding the financial expectations the Archdiocese has as it relates to St. Brendan's obligations. In particular:

Exterior Scope: If approved, the Community Preservation Grant will cover the costs of the following exterior work.

Area of Repair	Work Description	Approximate Cost
Roof Work	➤ Rubber rood improvements and patching ➤ Slate Roof, miscellaneous replacement shingles ➤ Copper standing seam, upgrade termination areas ➤ Copper gutters, misc. repairs, and replacement	\$105,000
Hardscape / Drainage	➤ Install hoods to not allow window walls to receive rain/water. ➤ Reconnect storm water drainage with down spouts and storm drainage	\$120,000
Front Stair	➤ Repair and Restoration	\$115,000
Masonry	➤ Repair of damaged brick and mortar from water Damage	\$60,000

Interior Scope

- A maintenance assessment of the interior needs to be completed to determine necessary work effort.
- Work on the interior and lower church hall, other than normal maintenance and emergency repairs, will not commence until the exterior issues have been completed.
- The Church Facility Assessment stated: "Overall the Church is in good condition...A good portion of the items listed above can be done by a capable handyman."

GENERAL CONTINGENCIES:

- St. Brendan's deserves strong enthusiastic and consistent pastoral support of the above plan to achieve success. Use of the Church Hall is critical to the success of St. Brendan Fundraising efforts.
- We require transparency and support from of the Archdiocese. A clear understanding of the Archdiocese definition of success needs be established.

- A clear understanding between St. Brendan's committee, St Martin de Porres Parish councils and the Archdiocese on financial expectations and building requirements. It is essential there are no surprises or new expectations during this trial period.
- Require ability to distinguish St. Brendan's offertory from St. Ann's. It was indicated such a method exists.
- Ability to calculate cash receipts in the offertory from St. Brendan's Masses

St. Brendan Church Committee Proposal

SUPPORTING ACTIONS TASK LIST

The following is supporting activities required to achieve the goals set forth in the Parish Committee Plans. Once approved due dates can be established.

Task Description	Owner	Due
➤ Establish a start date for the one-year probation period related only to attendance, offertory and fundraising	Committee	1 st Quarter
➤ Clean reasonable and achievable financial objectives for St. Brendan's	St Martin de Porres Parish Finance Council/Archdiocese	
➤ Implement method for reporting offertory of St. Brendan's and St. Ann's separately and for the Parish as a whole.	Archdiocese, Parish	
➤ Provide operational outlines for Youth Ministry to include personnel and budget considerations	Parish	
➤ Establish a formal agreement with the Irish Pastoral Committee to include financial arrangements for Church use	Parish (Pastor, Councils, RCAB)	
➤ Regroup with fundraising committee to hold events and establish targets for net revenue from fundraising events for the rest of the year	Parish	
➤ Reach out to the Evangelical Volunteer team to schedule themed Masses	Parish	
➤ Assess remaining ideas. Review for viability and eliminate those not required. Prioritize and schedule remaining activities.	Parish	

Conclusion:

Regarding the proposal: the plan is simple, straight forward, proven and executable. The chances for success are high if given to opportunity to implement.

St. Brendan's is a strong, young, and vibrant community of people who have grown up in the Catholic faith. It is a neighborhood brimming with young couples who choose to send their children to our Catholic school. It is also a tremendous opportunity for the Archdiocese to stabilize, grow and strengthen a lasting faith-based community. The Archdiocese should not abandon this chance and her people but let St. Brendan's be her success story.

We pray for your understanding and approval of this Proposal.