

## What concerns does the Cardinal's Directive raise for you?

That we will end up with a rich mega church in Lower Hutt and lose smaller communities.

Parishioners will be isolated and just come to mass and go home within 5 mins of church finishing. A lot of poorer & elderly parishioners will simply not go to church as there is a cost, time to travel and there are hardly any buses on Sunday. Perhaps if the parish does go ahead with the closing of a smaller church, they need to invest in 2 mini vans to take those parishioners who still want to go to church.

I feel that not enough attention has been paid to the earthquake risk of some of the more northern church buildings in our combined parish. This information should be on our website and must be part of the discussion together with the likely costs of strengthening the current church buildings. I understand Taita Church is not too bad but that Naenae needs major strengthening which would be likely to be very expensive.

Closing our church might mean we lose the special culture of our church which is so important to our parishioners - lose that and lose souls!

More factual information is needed.

It does not suggest the adoption of the permanent diaconate for our diocese which will go some way to solving the crisis in the availability of priests. Other dioceses have permanent deacons and they have been a boon for them. Why can't we?

If it has been suggested that we close down some parishes, what corresponding reduction in staff numbers will be made in the Catholic Centre in Hill Street? The sacrifice can't be borne entirely by the parishes. It must be shared. There are some departments/offices in the Catholic Centre which have proved to be a complete waste of space and money - will there be an audit done to see what has been effective and close down what has not? For example, the Office of Marriage and Family does nothing that can be felt in the parishes, we are experiencing an all-time low number of Catholic marriages, there is no natural family planning assistance available from within the diocese, marriage counselling is woefully inadequate...the list goes on. Where is the transparency and accountability?

The sadness for those communities whose churches close and their perception that they will never be happy again as a result.

That people will not have the courage to step outside their comfort zone and think strategically and for the longer term

Naenae church has no atmosphere for me (quite 1970s) and should be rebuilt; Knights Road church & also the presbytery needs redesigning fit for purpose

Directive welcomed - no concerns

my concerns are for the elderly of our church, and for the possible loss of our faith community which has existed for over 50 years in our church. How will they feel going to a new community, some may feel alienated among a larger community and may leave the church altogether.

Not sure how the lack of availability of priest means we have to reduce our communities and assets. Need to make use of lay ministers and train these ministers up with the skills including both academic, theologically, spiritually, and psychologically. In the past a high intellect was required to be a priest. Now it appears we are relying on the good will of those who have time who although mean well is not necessarily qualified.

How many times can I submit this form on different computers so that my voice is heard? I hope there is a mechanism to account for this flaw in methodology.

Do we really need to insure the buildings within the parish? Can we self-insure by putting aside the same funds we currently pay into a group account that earns high rates of interest?

This highlights long standing concerns regarding lack of youth, general decline of active spirituality, state of the physical buildings and financial implications of a declining population for both Parish and schools.

I view it as an inevitable that change has to be made to ensure the health and well-being of our priests. It also seems important not to spend unnecessary money repairing and bringing up to standard buildings that are used on an infrequent basis.

## What questions do you have about the Cardinal's Directive?

What next after 5 years when we have even less priests? Once smaller churches are gone, they will not come back. If there was no lack of priests, you could have house masses. When will Rome address the wider issue of lack of priests which is going to get worse over the next 10 years. Radical thought .... women priests, married priests.

None as present situation obviously can't continue.

How much money must we save in order to meet our expected ongoing operating costs? - Unless you can put numbers on your plans, your thinking is not precise and can lead to poor decision making. Will these numbers be made available?

What are the EQ ratings for each church/hall? How much maintenance is required on each building? Have there been any costs for repairs/upgrading/maintenance obtained? Is there surplus land at any of the church site and if so, what is the value? Is there money in a budget for any upgrades? Why there is no apology for the lack of planning and action over the crisis in priestly numbers which has been forecast for well over 20 years.

His eminence needs to lead by example in cost cutting within the Diocese. There seems to be no willingness to do this. Rather than stating that status quo is not an option, which I agree with, we should be strengthening, growing, building. Where is our zeal for souls? Pope Francis wants us to be missionary disciples - we can't do that if we close local churches. Think globally act locally applies here.

None it's inevitable

None the problems and issues are clear

Avalon property could be sold off. It's always been a "crossroads" Mass Centre, not related to a suburb, an area divided by busy High Street. Has no Catholic school attached. Church building is 1970s in atmosphere.

Are we prepared for greatly increased lay stewardship - voluntary with modest funding on top of the income to cover property, priests, admin and Archdiocese contributions? A separate stewardship budget?

What will happen to the church buildings will they be flogged off like the Anglican churches have been in recent years. Sold off to property developers for a song so they can make millions building housing developments. What will happen to those faithful should they choose not to go to another church.

What is his vision of the future? Are we aiming for a Super Parish City? Much like what Wellington tried to establish when it went for a super city? If so, there are several reasons why this failed to be put through. Why are we holding a parish mass at a council site? Paying hire fees that go to the council rather than church community? There are pertinent issues that need to be discussed and raised as a church community. At this stage we have the freedom to express and discuss our views on abortion, euthanasia and others that are central to the way we live our lives as catholic. We should have the independence to have our own space to celebrate our way of life without relying on the council. We should not take it for granted it will be like this forever. Mass last Sunday at P&P was full, and several people were standing in foyer. It was a regular Sunday how are we to fit in and welcome people back to the faith if there is no room or space for them? It is interesting the question below asks which community to you most associate with? - The current church climate, for various reasons, FORCES us not be affiliated with one church group and may account for why the sense of community

is lacking across all sectors of the physical churches. We cannot stick to the same church as the mass is not offered at regular times due to shortage of priests. For instance, no 10am mass or 5.30pm. There are plenty of shift workers who no longer attend church as it is too much effort to go outside their community.

Are we ever going to be up with the times and allow women to be priests?

Why are we being reactive - this has been coming since the 1960's and even at the 1988 synod priestly numbers were predicted to drop sharply. Where's an apology from the Cardinal and those in positions where decisions could have been made earlier eg priests from other countries, more focus on vocations, looking after the priests we had better etc? Instead the focus was moved to LPL's and the like with no corresponding growth in attendance or vocations.

Questions we have are: # are we a healthy community, what would be our average age, ( we are just concerned that how can we think of extending outreach etc if we are not, now and in the future, a viable community to provide such services # none of the existing churches are actually fit for outreach... In terms of their structure # we are not sure that people, especially in the school community, are aware of the financial pressures the churches are under # the connection between schools and churches seems, in some cases, to have become quite weakened. We have had feedback that 5 out of 30 children in one class identify as attending church regularly. # we are concerned that the active participation in the church community is not on par with the numbers in the school community. It would be useful to have this fact uppermost in the mind in terms of the go forward. (As per the printed survey) the options we would like to be considered are: # that we want to ensure that in the structure going forward that there are adequate options for outreach, i.e. the physical structure has to support that ( good kitchen in size and attached hall options) # that future structure adequately included youth , the future of the church. It would be good if we could offer the type of facility as offered by Arise and similar type churches # options need to be on a public transport route # options to include more responsibility from school principals in the church /school relationship as people appear to have the mindset that to partake Catholic schooling alone is adequate

Would there be consideration for lessening the number of Parish Schools, 3 down to 2, so that all children have access to a Church, which currently features as a focal point in their Catholic Education, of course this will depend how the change is managed How will the final decision be made as to which Churches are decommissioned or sold? What support will be available for parishioners (who may have attended their current church) for many years and will inevitably feel a sense of loss when things change?

## What suggestions / ideas do you have for responding to the Cardinal's Directive?

I think that St Peters and Pauls should close so that the land is sold, and the church is where the poorer communities are. Central Hutt Parishioners can travel to Waiwhetu or Petone or Avalon, Taita or Naenae. A lot of parishioners come from outside the area e.g. Wainui, Eastbourne. Majority of parishioners in St Peters and Pauls travel by car. When making the decision the church needs to look at the whole area including Upper Hutt.

Suggest closing St Martin de Porres as the Mass Count is the lowest and they do not have a school. Sell the church and presbytery and use proceeds to upgrade other remaining churches and facilities. Pull down St Bernadette's Church as it is probably a serious earthquake risk. but keep their upgraded Church Hall for Masses and school use. Keep remaining buildings at Naenae and improve maintenance. Donate spare school land at Taita for State Housing and improve Church and Presbytery there. Taita and Naenae Churches should be prioritized for spending as they are lower income areas. Our Parish Priests could live in these two Presbyteries if it is decided to replace SS Peter and Paul Presbytery in future. In the meantime, keep the Parish office in Lower Hutt Presbytery but once we can afford to pull down the present underutilised SS Peter and Paul's building replace it with a general-purpose building alongside present Lower Hutt church. (Knox Presbyterian is a good model to follow.) If two storied and integrated with the present church building alongside, we could have better office facilities and meeting rooms, perhaps even a Hall which SS Peter and Paul's school can use. Of course, this depends on finance being available as I agree we need to spend more on outreach into the community. and on Northern churches.

Most importantly we must ensure we bring the people with us and get as close to 100% acceptance. The church is about community so we must preserve what works well for us at the moment and look for ways to enhance this principle. The world is all about technology - science for the benefit of mankind - so we must ask how technology can help with this decision-making process and the solutions. Children are immersed in technology today and if we want to bring them with us, they will look for tech solutions - perhaps their adoption of tech is the key reason why so few youth remain as practicing Catholics. We must adapt or become like the dinosaurs! We need to focus on the key goals the Cardinal has set - a clear, desirable, objective. Where is it? Else we will get lost in this important task in a myriad of side issues.

Establish the permanent diaconate in our diocese and disestablish the costly LPL programme which has been entirely unpopular, fruitless and counter-productive.

Build-up, not close down! Get some decent programmes going in the parishes for youth. Spend some money on formation instead of bureaucracy at the Catholic Centre. Look after the poor - they are the heart of the church. Accept diversity e.g. movements within the church who want to do outreach within the Diocese e.g. ICPE, Focolare, Lifeteen, Hearts Aflame. This is not a 'cookie cutter' church, one size doesn't fit all - but all should be welcome.

We were asked to amalgamate four parishes into one. We have not achieved that at all we have stayed in our church communities except where the preferred mass time has gone as in 6pm Avalon. This forces us to do that. Staying in separate communities is never going to bring us together. We need to reduce to one church with more mass times, so our parishes are visible to us all. A welcoming diverse community with the Samoan and Tokelauan Philippino masses held as Sunday masses on particular Sunday's too. The only way to bring us together appreciating everyone and help address the shortage of priests. We need to face this reality now as we will otherwise have to go through this painful process all over again in a very short time.

We need to think realistically about what the ongoing decline in priestly availability and declining income means for the future. How many priests will there be for the whole Hutt Valley in 10 years, in

twenty years? If we don't step up and be brave, then narrow minded patch protection will result in a poor-quality response which will be disregarded. Don't forget it is the Cardinal who in the end will make the final decision. To my mind the response is clear we need to have one upgraded fit for purpose facility big enough for the whole parish, supported by say two halls suitable for smaller gatherings. Priests could/should live off site, together. The main facility should be in Lower Hutt and the halls in Taita and Naenae. There is a onetime chance to sell off surplus assets, develop fit for purpose assets going forward and have some funds on hand for the future. If we don't step up and if we end up with a half pie parochial compromise, we will be back grappling with this in less than 10 years having blown our big chance and probably our cash as well.

Retain Naenae church hall; has a nice homely feel as a community space; it provides a sense of continuity as it opened when Naenae started as a suburb. It's right by a Catholic school. A new church could be built beside it.

Liaise with the neighbouring parishes north as well as south. Factor in cars (parking) and possible impact of climate change. What are the options to convert property into cash? Halve number of churches. One presbytery. Consider future of each school. Make sure various parish communities are consulted and on board. Retirement homes will house more and more (vulnerable) parishioners. Fully cost favoured options and table to ensure a viable workable outcome.

Rather than sell off the church's buildings look at leasing them out to other organisations. Our presbytery for example would make a nice home for the Women's refuge organisation. It would also be in keeping with our patron saint's philosophy of helping the needy. May be worth investigating? As for the shortage of priests like other industries where there is a shortage of skilled workers why not advertise overseas. There maybe countries who have priest wanting a chance to come to the antipodes.

The smaller communities are often the most vibrant and strong in faith, they are often the most vulnerable. Need accessibility, affordability, availability, and appropriate services. Bring in more international priests and invest in lay ministers. Operation: Missonise the Hutt Valley! If we have more masses at the current sites it will inspire more people to sustain the vocation. If we move to bigger churches, the leaders are more removed, the people lose touch, and no longer inspired to sustain our faith in future generations. Already experiencing this now with the decreased masses and closed churches during the day. This has failed our church community and now we are in a critical situation rather than a shortage! Sell the big church and provide more land to the school as it clearly needs it. If reviewing buildings make sure have a hall with a stage for concerts to raise money and show off talent. If reviewing and innovating how we use our buildings think about spaces for health clinics. The DHB and private health business hire out the local Marae sites and pay money for these facilities. Our churches are placed in the heart of communities and serve Maori, Pacific, elderly and other high-risk vulnerable populations. We could earn some hire fees and also run our own clinics congruent with our catholic values - i.e. a place where people do not feel pressured into abortion or euthanasia. Make sure the roof does not have low hanging lights and windows that are easily smashed so youth can play team building games with balls! The community NOT the Cardinal has maintained the buildings for several years fundraising their own hard-earned money for maintenance. Feels a bit like trying to turn the Hutt Valley parishes into one Super City for financial gains! There are good reasons why Hutt Valley remained independent from Wellington. There is more to life as we know than a good business model and sometimes what "should" work in theory does not work in practice. Communities bring the "human" element, and this is unpredictable. We need to nourish and keep our human element as this is our spirit and essence of LOVE. Love works in mysterious ways and Love is God.

Ignore them and build up the church. The laity work very hard, some with big families and both parents working - the priest can work hard too - and even on Mondays.

We see that going forward the Parish should be able to provide: # social connections for elderly # catering capabilities for those in need # a structure that supports activities for the youth and families # we need to remind people that spiritual health is a huge issue for our youth (with our high mental health /suicide rates) # we should remind people that we can't provide outreach and other activities if we don't have the people and the finance to back this support up # would it be possible to make people aware how many volunteers are required for a standard mass within our Parish, how much time is involved, how much money it costs and the pool of volunteers is declining

I see it as important that transport/funding is looked at and provided for parishioners who (need it, be on a monetary basis or who have health issues) and may have to travel from their local area for Mass. If SS Peter and Paul's remains a main church and continues to be used for church functions, improvements need to be made to the kitchen and hall area. The vast cultural diversity of our whole Parish needs to be protected if the number of Parishes decreases. These are just a few personal thoughts that i have and have thought about after talking with friends.

### Which Church Community to you most associate with?

St Martin de Porres - Avalon 10

St Bernadette - Naenae 3

St Michael - Taita 5

Ss Peter & Paul - Lower Hutt 45

### Are you responding on behalf of yourself or a group? 63 responses

Myself - 56

A Group of Parishioners - 7