

Dear Parishioners,

We are writing to update you on the status of the Renew My Church process as it relates to the four parishes and three schools in the Palmeadow grouping (St. Colette, Misión San Juan Diego, St. Theresa and St. Thomas of Villanova).

The grouping has been hit hard by the recent situation involving Fr. Diego Berrio, the former pastor at Misión San Juan Diego. Fr. Matt Foley, pastor at St. James in Arlington Heights, has been named administrator at Misión San Juan Diego while retaining his current duties at St. James. In addition, St. Colette's pastor, Fr. Michal Lewon, left in the Spring to go on a medical leave, and Fr. Brian Simpson was named administrator there until Fr. Lewon's future is determined when he finishes his leave in November.

As you will recall, our grouping had settled on a recommendation to the Cardinal that all the grouping parishes remain canonically independent. This parish recommendation was reached after eight grouping meetings, two parish meetings and a great deal of collective prayer/discernment. However, we were not able to reach agreement for the future of our three schools. In fact, a school scenario was put forward at the end of the process advocating for a multi-site school, but without any detail. This school scenario has caused a great deal of concern in some corners of our community.

Given the many developments in our grouping, we met with two representatives from the Archdiocese this week to collectively determine how we proceed through the Renew My Church process. The decision was made to let the grouping's parish recommendation (all four parishes remain independent) proceed to the Cardinal for decision in November 2018 in recognition of the hard work done by the grouping team and our respective parish communities. This is the scenario that will be recommended from our grouping:

All four parishes would remain as canonically independent parishes at their current sites.

- To strengthen ministry, St. Thomas of Villanova, St. Theresa, and Misión San Juan Diego would explore establishing a deeper partnership to use shared ministry facilities at the St. Thomas of Villanova and St. Theresa campuses. Misión San Juan Diego would continue to hold Mass at its current site.
- Misión San Juan Diego would become the Hispanic ministry hub for the area. This would serve as a seed for Vicariate wide assessment of Hispanic ministries needs.
- The PalMeadow Heights team would actively uphold a strong commitment to work in partnership in the various ministries surrounding each parish's unique locations and situation in the following areas: sacramental, pastoral, evangelical, financial, educational, and formational.

With regards to schools, it was determined that the three schools would be given a period of two years – subject to hitting certain minimum benchmarks - to pursue independent plans for growth and vitality after which the three schools will come together again (in October 2020) to discuss the best way forward. In two years, the new process to determine a way forward for schools would allow ample time for the communities of all four parishes to provide input. As always, the goal of any future discussions of our schools is to make sure we provide a strong and sustainable Catholic education option for our collective communities.

Given the decision to give each of our schools a chance to pursue independent plans for vitality and growth, **the parish town hall meetings planned for the next two weeks are now CANCELLED.**

Please pray for the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Renew My Church process and for healing in our community.

Fr. Brian Simpson
Administrator
St. Colette

Fr. Matt Foley
Administrator
Misión San Juan Diego

Fr. Tim Fairman
Pastor
St. Theresa

Fr. Tom Rzepiela
Pastor
St. Thomas of Villanova