

## Executive Summary

Lorraine Klemz Consulting, Inc. (LKC) was retained by Holy Ghost Parish in June 2016 to begin work on the Campaign Readiness Assessment. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the thoughts and feelings of parishioners regarding a capital campaign to pay for Holy Ghost Parish to make campus repairs and improvements as well as finish paying off the loan from the Diocese of Joliet.

This report presents findings based on participant feedback and offers recommendations from that input for moving forward. As a result of this comprehensive process, Lorraine Klemz Consulting, Inc. is recommending that Holy Ghost Parish move forward with preparations for a capital campaign with a funding goal of \$421,500.

The following **findings** from the readiness assessment process have provided the foundation for recommendations being made for moving forward:

- **Interview and vision group participants strongly feel that the greatest strength of Holy Ghost Parish is its people.** Conversations, both individual and in a group setting, highlighted the close-knit community, genuine sense of concern for each other and friendliness of those who come to mass. There were also a number of requests to have more social functions at the parish in hopes of strengthening existing relationships and building new ones.
- **Communication was viewed positively by more than 90% of respondents to the survey.** When posed the question, “How well do we communicate with you?”, 41% said they feel very well informed and 50% said that they felt fairly well informed. The parish bulletin is still viewed as the number one method of communicating information, however, there was a strong request to use email for parish communications. In addition, there were several comments asking for announcements to be done at the beginning of mass.
- **Reducing and ultimately eliminating the parish loan from the Diocese of Joliet is the number one priority based on the feedback received during the Campaign Readiness Assessment.** There were a number of comments from participants citing the good work of Fr. John Hornicak in making an appeal to reduce the parish loan last fall. While this gave a feeling of accomplishment and success, many felt it remains “unfinished business” and that the loan should be satisfied before any more spending occurs.
- **There was a clear voice from all participants that the “needs” of the parish should be addressed before the “wants” of the parish.** Following the desire to eliminate the parish loan, the next category of projects that received support covered the parish grounds. The resurfacing of the parking lots, concrete work and attending to the roof and HVAC needs as needed were seen as the top priority. Projects to benefit the school were also seen as important. The items that received the least amount of support were those replacing liturgical elements such as the tabernacle and stations of the cross, which were just done in the most recent church renovation fifteen years ago.
- **Holy Ghost Parish is ready to undertake a capital campaign.** The best affirmation for this recommendation was the response to the survey where 70% of respondents offered to personally support a capital campaign with a financial gift and/or pledge over a five-year time period. Almost 60% of those who answered that he/she could make a multiple-year pledge indicated it would be up to \$1,000.
- **The vast majority of respondents who said, “no” to supporting a capital campaign shared personal stories of limited resources and/or hardship where they are no longer able to support at the higher levels they once gave.** Holy Ghost parish is fortunate to have a number of long-time parishioners who have been generous and loyal for many years. That said, some are now

retired, have lost a spouse or have other circumstances that limit the amount of money they have to contribute to support the church.

- **The parish offertory is currently budgeted for \$14,000 a week but is realizing on average a weekly total between \$7,000 - \$9,000.** Based on responses received during personal interviews and from the survey, it seems the majority of parishioners have a fixed set of resources to draw from to share with the church. Efforts were made during the Campaign Readiness Assessment to highlight the difference between a gift to the offertory and a gift to a capital campaign. These efforts should be continued moving forward to help close the gap in the amount needed and realized to support the daily operations of the parish.
- **Holy Ghost School is seen as a valuable resource for keeping youth in the parish.** Aggressive efforts are currently being made to help increase enrollment at Holy Ghost School. The addition of new leadership and marketing strategies are key components for plans to grow the school. Many people who participated in the Campaign Readiness Assessment said they would like to see more young families active in the parish and in attendance at mass on the weekends as it brings vitality and energy to Holy Ghost. It should also be noted that some participants feel the school should be closed or merged with other local Catholic schools that are currently struggling with enrollment. These respondents added that the money currently allocated from the parish budget to support the school could be used to help meet the operating budget costs and further, applied toward some of the maintenance projects that need to be addressed.

**Recommendations** for moving forward include:

- **Create an email communication plan for the parish.** A great number of respondents said that email was a valuable tool for communication regarding parish happenings, events and simply general information. Holy Ghost has a number of email addresses on file and could implement a weekly blast that includes highlights and a copy of the bulletin. Email could also be used to communicate any urgent messages or special events. A provider such as Constant Contact may be helpful.
- **Clarify the slate of projects with greater detail and offer a timeline to accomplish them now that there is an order of priority.** Respondents appreciate the open communication of Fr. John Hornicak and ask for that same transparency as the parish moves forward in eliminating the parish loan and taking on capital improvement projects.
- **Continue efforts to educate parishioners regarding the parish offertory and planned giving.** Many respondents said that if and when there are needs in the parish, people join together to get them done. The needs of the regular operating budget can be further highlighted and communicated to realize a sustained increase in support for daily operations. In addition, information on planned giving and estate planning should be offered to promote legacy gifts for the long-term financial health of the parish.
- **Move forward with a capital campaign that has a preliminary funding goal of \$421,500 and simultaneously ask for an increase in the parish offertory.** Successfully completing the capital campaign would afford the parish the opportunity to eliminate the parish loan, fix the north and south parking lots and repair concrete work. Exceeding the preliminary goal would allow other projects on the list to be accomplished as the funds become available. Out of respect for the many respondents who said they have a limited amount to share with the parish, all needs of the parish – both capital and daily operations – will be offered so that they can discern how he/she would like to support. Making a comprehensive request also limits the number of times that parishioners are asked for money so that they do not feel they are being asked to give all the time, resulting in donor fatigue.

- **Additional efforts will be made to engage new investors in the parish.** Clear communication of the campaign and its goals along with the needs of the parish offertory will be essential to engaging current and new investors in the parish. As projects are accomplished, the parish should celebrate what has been done. A sense of accomplishment will help motivate people to “be a part of the winning team”.
- **Quiet time before mass was requested by some respondents for personal prayer and reflection prior to the celebration of the Eucharist as a community.** There is a desire for an environment of silence or soft music to accompany personal prayer prior to the beginning of mass.
- **Identify and recruit a leadership team representative of the many constituencies of the parish.** There are several layers of leadership that should be constructed as follows:
  - **Steering Committee**  
The Steering Committee should consist of 5 - 8 members and serve as the working group of the funding effort.
  - **Campaign Committee**  
This group usually consists of 20 – 30 members who will work with LKC, Inc. and the Steering Committee to assist in communication, public relations and volunteer recruitment. Specifically, these individuals will lend credibility to the campaign and will serve in a volunteer capacity for both Packet Pick-up and Home Delivery efforts.
  - **Honorary Chairs**  
Usually two-to-four couples or individuals who do not have time to be actively involved but lend credibility and are supportive of the campaign.
- **Developing marketing materials that effectively communicate the financial needs and priorities in significant detail with a compelling case for support.** The parish will contract with a graphic designer to give the campaign a clear image all its own. It is important that constituents see that this is a project above and beyond all other things happening at the parish. The content of the materials will be authored by Lorraine Klemz and reviewed by parish leadership for approval.
- **Utilizing a number of solicitation methods to reach the entire parish in a manner where "church" is truly built.** To clarify, this means everyone is treated with dignity and respect and is approached for an investment in the campaign in a spiritually centered manner. Methods of solicitation include, but are not limited to: personal visits with Fr. John Homicak and Lorraine Klemz Consulting, Inc., small group events, a presentation following weekend masses, letters, phone calls and emails. The end result will be a successful fundraising effort that includes a large number of people working toward a common goal that benefits not only the parish, but the entire community.