

# **St. Mary Catholic Church**

**Potsdam, NY**

## ***Feasibility Study Final Report***

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## **PREFACE**

Guidance In Giving, Inc. (GIG) wishes to express its gratitude for the assistance provided by the staff and parish leaders of the St. Mary's Parish during this Feasibility Study. Father Stephen Rocker and the parish staff were an invaluable source of assistance throughout the study process. Thank you.

Our thanks are also extended to all the parishioners who shared their thoughts and opinions during this Feasibility Study to discuss the development and future of the St. Mary's Parish. These participants took time from their busy schedules to be personally interviewed or to complete a survey questionnaire. The openness, honesty and sincerity of their answers demonstrated that the members of the St. Mary's Parish truly care about the future of their parish and want to be actively involved in the planning and implementation process.

The gracious participation of these people made the following report possible, and we at Guidance In Giving, Inc., are truly grateful.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Guidance In Giving, Inc. was retained by the St. Mary's Parish to conduct a Feasibility Study to assist the parish in gathering information regarding the thoughts and opinions of the parishioners about the proposed renovation, restoration and expansion of the parish facilities.

The Feasibility Study was conducted during the months of January and February of 2017. Stephen Babcock, Executive Vice President of Guidance In Giving, Inc. performed all of the preliminary work to prepare for the study; converting the parish database, generating the initial list of potential interviewees, creating the project summary, writing the interview and survey questionnaires as well as setting up the website for the online survey. Charles Recznik of Guidance In Giving provided the on-site service; conducting all personal interviews, managing the data entry, findings tabulation, report production and day-to-day activities of the Feasibility Study.

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## **OBJECTIVES OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

- To educate parishioners about the capital needs of the parish and how the proposed projects will address these perceived needs;
- To determine whether parishioners feel there are other elements, needs or projects that should be considered by the parish to be included in a campaign;
- To identify potential Leadership Gift prospects within the parish and/or local community;
- To determine collective financial support from parishioners/families;
- To identify possible campaign volunteers, including leadership committee members;
- To identify any potential issues, points of concern, or conflicts within the community.

## **FEASIBILITY STUDY PREPARATION**

During the preparatory stages of on-site service, Counsel worked closely with Father Stephen Rucker and Patty McGinnis to prepare and complete the following:

- Questions for personal interviews and the direct mail/online Study Survey
- An interview request letter and a cover letter for the Study Survey
- A Project Summary was created with information received from the parish to give an overview of the proposed project
- Identification of sixty-two (62) potential personal interview prospects
- Identification of potential survey recipients, *~620 households*
- Weekly pulpit announcements and bulletin newsletters

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## FEASIBILITY STUDY METHODOLOGY

Two methods were utilized to obtain information during the Feasibility Study:

**1. Personal Interviews:** A Personal Interview invitation letter was sent to 62 parish households to participate in the interview portion of our Study.

The families selected for interviews represent a cross-section of parishioners who have a history of generous participation with their time, talent and treasure to the parish. They include top parish donors, ministry leaders and participants, as well as regular Mass attendees. The invited families were asked to contact the parish office to set an appointment to be personally and confidentially interviewed by a representative from Guidance In Giving, Inc. **A total of 39 personal interviews were conducted.** The names of all those who participated in an interview are provided as an Addendum to this report.

**2. Direct-Mail/Online Study Survey:** A Study Survey was distributed to 620 registered parishioners via mail. Those receiving the survey were asked to complete and return it to the parish office by February 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> – *Survey Weekend*. All surveys received by Monday, February 13, 2017 are included in this report.

This report includes a total of 45 Study Survey responses via mail response and 18 Study Survey responses via online survey. These 63 responses represent 10% of the 620 parish households invited to participate in the Study Survey. The names of those who responded to the survey are provided as an Addendum to this report.

**In summary, a total of 102 households (15% of all registered families) of St. Mary's Parish participated in the Feasibility Study.** Typically Guidance In Giving sees a response rate of 20% or more for a parish of this size. The lower level of participation is at least partially due to the parish decision to omit the in-pew survey on Survey Weekend.

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## REPORT FORMAT

In an effort to provide a comprehensive report of findings and suggested actions, this report is presented in the following format:

- I. **RESULTS*** from both the Personal Interviews and the Study Survey are presented statistically and include commentary.
- II. **REVIEW OF KEY POINTS*** of the results of the Study.
- III. **ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS*** as to how St. Mary's should consider proceeding based on the results and analysis of the Study findings.
- IV. **ADDENDUM*** to be provided to Father Stephen Rocker separate from the Findings Report, include the following:
  - A. **Personal Interview Participants***
  - B. **Study Survey Respondents***
  - C. **Potential Campaign Volunteers***
  - D. **Potential Campaign Committee Members***
  - E. **Potential Reception Hosts***
  - F. **Potential Leadership Gift Prospects***

## RESULTS

### - FROM THE PERSONAL INTERVIEWS & MAIL/ONLINE SURVEYS -

(Please note that not every question was answered by every respondent.)

#### Demographic Information:

Each interview and survey began with a series of demographics questions, asking parishioners about their involvement in and opinions of the St. Mary's Parish.

#### 1. How long have you been a member of the St. Mary's Parish? (Interview question #1 / Survey question #1)

<i>Membership Ranges</i>	<i>Responses</i>
> 30 years	<b>53%</b>
25 – 29 years	6%
20 – 24 years	4%
15 – 19 years	9%
10 – 14 years	3%
5 – 9 years	11%
1 – 4 years	10%
< 1 year	2%
No Response	2%

#### 2. What ministries, programs and/or activities are you involved with? (Interview question #2 / Survey question #2)

Of the 102 households who participated in the Study, 77 (75%) indicated their involvement in a wide array of parish ministries, programs and activities.

The responses from Study respondents provided us with an excellent cross-section of the parish. The ministries, programs and activities that were mentioned include:

<i>Altar Server</i>	<i>Lazarus Ministry</i>	<i>Parish Trustee</i>
<i>Altar &amp; Rosary Society</i>	<i>Lectors</i>	<i>Pro-Life Committee</i>
<i>Campus Ministry</i>	<i>Little Flowers</i>	<i>Religious Education</i>
<i>Cemetery Committee</i>	<i>Liturgy</i>	<i>Rummage Sale</i>
<i>Choir</i>	<i>Maintenance Committee</i>	<i>Sacristan Assistant</i>
<i>Eucharistic Minister</i>	<i>Marriage Prep</i>	<i>Social Committee</i>
<i>Finance Council</i>	<i>Meals for Students</i>	<i>Summer Program</i>
<i>Food Baskets/Pantry</i>	<i>Money Counter</i>	<i>Ushers</i>
<i>Gabriel Project</i>	<i>Music Ministry</i>	<i>Volunteer</i>
<i>Homebound Visitor</i>	<i>Parish Council</i>	<i>Women of Grace</i>
<i>Hospital Ministry</i>	<i>Parish Outreach</i>	
<i>Knights of Columbus</i>	<i>Pastoral Care</i>	

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### 3. In your opinion, what does the parish do well? (Interview question #3 / Survey question #3)

The most common responses to this question overwhelmingly referred to:

- Dedicated pastors/priests over the years
- Strong campus ministry program
- Beautiful and well maintained Church
- Excellent liturgies and music ministry
- Quality religious education
- Caring community outreach
- Welcoming atmosphere
- Improved communication

Representative Commentary:

- *They do everything very well.*
- *Extends a very friendly atmosphere - welcomes new members - includes everyone in decisions.*
- *We are fortunate that Crane is nearby. Father is an asset.*
- *Presently, we have better communication. There's input from parishioners. It's more transparent.*
- *Having the Latin Mass is huge for us. No other parish in the diocese has one.*
- *The Campus Ministry Program is great. There are more college students now at Mass and Adoration.*
- *We have a beautiful church inside and out. Over the years parishioners have kept St. Mary's in good condition.*
- *The music right now is fantastic.*
- *Father Rucker's Masses and homilies are excellent.*
- *The Gabriel Project is very positive.*
- *We are happy the way things are going. Our priests have always been there for us. We're very pleased.*
- *We've been blessed with very good pastors.*
- *I like the music, the choir and the way Mass is celebrated.*
- *We're very good at welcoming people.*
- *It keeps us well informed about things that are happening. There are quite a few activities that can help you deepen your faith.*
- *The music is very good. The pipe organ is wonderful. The bulletins are very good.*
- *It's remarkable that we have daily Mass here. We should be very thankful.*
- *We do well given the resources we have. We've done a wonderful job maintaining the church.*
- *I think we do a really good job of making people feel welcome. We have wonderful services, particularly the special occasion Masses.*
- *We're involved in the community.*
- *Our church building is wonderful. Its construction is renowned. I love the Mass.*
- *We have had great priests. It's a very welcoming environment. Mass is really nice.*
- *The Religious Ed Program is changing for the better.*
- *There is a reliable core of people. People are our greatest strength.*
- *Excellent liturgies. Our ministry to hospital patients and homebound is very good.*
- *The Mass times are good and allow for choice. The RCIA Program has been strong in the past.*

- *We've done a great job renovating the interior of the church. It's a beautiful historical building.*
- *There's a pretty strong Newman Club. Patrick has done a great job!*
- *Also, there seems to be very active visiting of the sick and shut-ins.*
- *The Lazarus group does a really good job. Our annual Thanksgiving food baskets/drive for the poor is also well done. In the past we have had a lot of continuing adult formation.*
- *Bulletin is updated and a nice online reference. The church is always clean.*
- *Patrick does a nice job of being approachable. He's a real guy with faith.*
- *The campus ministry does well getting the students involved with the parish.*
- *I feel we have a vibrant music ministry that brings people here.*
- *Personal interaction is the key.*
- *When the Newman center closed, a number of people really made us feel welcome. Most the people here are very kind.*
- *The people try hard to keep our parish organized and maintain the upkeep. It's a beautiful church and I am proud to be a member.*

**4. In your opinion, where does the parish need to improve?  
(Interview question #4 / Survey question #4)**

The most common responses to this question were:

- Address the inadequate facilities for social functions
- Attract and accommodate young families to grow the parish
- Increase the number of adult education opportunities
- Encourage more ownership of the parish
- Add activities for the youth

Representative Commentary:

- *Being more open with the parish members.*
- *The organ is really loud. It's hard to pray at times because the organ is so overpowering.*
- *The basement is such a mess. We need younger volunteers. The church attendance is down.*
- *I wish the choir would choose melodies that encouraged the congregation to join in the singing.*
- *The upheaval over the last several years has made everything more difficult. Right now we just don't have the good space for activities. Family ministry is nonexistent.*
- *We could do better job of evangelization and welcoming people to the parish.*
- *Education is the biggest area of need for all age groups.*
- *All I can say is I've never encountered such hard benches and kneelers.*
- *I wish something could be done to get people more involved. There too many people who just come to Mass.*
- *I hate to say it but there is nothing to draw people socially, so that's why we need a center or social place.*
- *I think the parish does a good job - it's up to the parishioners to improve our commitment.*
- *The church isn't handicap accessible. The restrooms are in terrible condition.*
- *I don't like Latin singing at Mass. There is already a Latin Mass for that.*
- *Get more parishioners to use the weekly envelope.*
- *We are unable to fulfill our parish mission due to a lack of facilities.*
- *I would love to see a kitchen here. All of the other parishes in our area have one.*

- *Although the music here is done well, it does not encourage participation. It feels more like a performance at times than communal.*
- *The challenge is to get more young families involved.*
- *I'd love to see a youth group.*
- *The same people end up doing everything.*
- *Return of the student mass.*
- *More consistency (and less hard core) attitudes regarding faith formation. It should be fun and inviting. Also, we need a community space (and not a damp, wet, moldy basement).*
- *Advertising events?*
- *The religious education needs to be revamped. We are not connecting with the students.*
- *I would like to see better communication between the leadership and the parishioners.*
- *When we had a place to go we could do more things. There's nothing for the teenagers.*
- *Going to social functions without knowing people is difficult. There has never been an integration of the people who were part of the Newman Center Parish.*
- *People aren't as active here. They're mostly elderly. There isn't much going on.*
- *The parish seems disjointed. We don't get a sense of unity or community here.*
- *Music-the organ is too loud. It hurts my ears.*

**5. What is your opinion of the proposed renovation of the church basement?**  
*(Interview question #5a / Survey #5a)*

<i>Project Summary</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Positive	54%	55%	54%
Negative	18%	17%	18%
Unsure	28%	25%	26%
No Response	-	3%	2%

The most common responses to this question were:

- Fix up the basement to make it usable again
- Resolve the water/moisture issues
- Don't invest too much money in the basement
- No matter what is done - it will always be a cellar
- Offices should not be put on the lower level
- Utilize the space for the parish hall
- Upgrade the restrooms

Representative Commentary:

- *The basement should be the priority. It will probably save us money.*
- *The basement needs to be completed. Make it usable. Then if we can build a new hall.*
- *If you are going to spend this much you might as well start with new.*
- *What is the people capacity of the basement? What would you do with the basement?*
- *Priority - pay off existing debt - fix present problems first.*
- *Don't put the offices in the lower level. Consider a chapel as we had previously.*
- *I didn't realize we needed all that space for meetings. All we've ever had was a basement.*
- *It's important to make sure that it isn't full of mold. Make the basement clean and functional.*
- *I think the space will be very useful for meetings/gatherings.*

- *At one time we had everything downstairs. The bathrooms really need to be fixed.*
- *Our restrooms are terrible. It's really disgusting.*
- *The basement can be completed with donated labor and materials, but we still need a hall.*
- *Basement is a basement no matter how well it's finished.*
- *If we can get rid of the allergens, but I'm skeptical that it can really be done successfully.*
- *We feel some work should be done to improve the appearance, dampness and safety, but more resources should go into a new parish hall.*
- *I'm not an architect but it seems like we are limited with what we can do with the space.*
- *Renovation projects tend to become huge disasters. As the project unfolds more problems emerge; thus cost overruns. I think it would be a nightmare.*
- *We should put a kitchen in the basement. The area is very large; big enough for a hall.*
- *Simply doing the basement is a poor idea. A lot of time and money has already been lost due to the problems we've had with it.*
- *We have to remediate the mold and improve the air quality.*
- *It makes more sense to renovate the basement given that it's in the same building as the church. We need the space for a parish hall, but we don't have to renovate every square inch of the basement.*
- *No matter what we do, it's still a basement in a one hundred year old building.*
- *Just do what needs to be done to make sure we are compliant with the health codes.*
- *We need meeting places but I am indifferent to the direction we go with it.*
- *Classrooms are most important. I don't like the idea of putting the offices downstairs.*
- *We have to maintain our structures to be vibrant. I think we should utilize the existing space and fix up the rectory.*
- *We have to update the plumbing and fix the drainage problem.*
- *I don't think we are going to resolve the water issue to make it worth investing big money.*
- *Even when in use, the basement was damp and musty. I can't see how it could be converted into a permanently pleasant facility.*
- *We could use some storage space but we also need to get rid of a few things.*
- *What's the sense? Let's build something on the same level as the church.*
- *Even if we renovate the space, it's still a cellar.*
- *It seems to be open area large enough for gatherings. We could use dividers for smaller groups.*
- *A portion of the basement should be completed regardless of whatever else we do.*

**What is your opinion of the proposed construction of a new Parish Hall?  
(Interview question #5b / Survey #5b)**

<i>Project Summary</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Positive	64%	46%	53%
Negative	10%	26%	20%
Unsure	26%	22%	23%
No Response	-	6%	4%

The most common responses to this question were:

- A new facility would be a tremendous community builder
- Ground level entrance would provide easy access for everyone

- Consider setting up the offices in the new building
- Operating and upkeep expenses would increase
- What impact would this have on parking?
- If possible, renovate the basement and build a new parish center

Representative Commentary:

- *It is something St. Mary's is long overdue in constructing. We are the only church in the area that does not have a facility to hold public functions.*
- *Yes, up and out! Connect it to the church. An above space would attract more teachers. Financially, we should have the best and pay for it and that means new.*
- *Would a parish hall impinge on the parking lot and reduce the ability to find parking?*
- *There would be more upkeep and expense. Our annual income is decreasing. We are going to be in trouble. You have to live within your income. Don't overextend.*
- *A separate building would allow us to have activities without disrupting Mass being held in the church at the same time.*
- *I'm open-minded so I could be convinced. An addition should not look like a tool shed. The church is too beautiful. A new attached building should not detract from it.*
- *I'd rather have a new parish hall to bring people here for social events. The place could be rented out. It's much more welcoming than going into a church basement.*
- *We should go back to the plan prior to the flooding.*
- *If we build the parish hall, then add a second floor for living space.*
- *It should connect to the church with a walkway. Make sure we still have enough parking.*
- *We should do all that we can afford. I would go for it.*
- *Our population is getting older. How many buildings can we maintain? What do we really need? How much would it actually cost? It would be taking up parking spaces.*
- *Anything is possible if we put our minds to it. We need a big space and could use dividers for smaller groups. Otherwise, it would be a waste of space. It needs to be a multipurpose building.*
- *It would be much easier to access for everyone.*
- *Unless we keep the rectory, the offices could be put in the new building.*
- *We could format a new building to fit our current needs. There could be a larger kitchen. A parish center would offer a lot of opportunities.*
- *Building a new hall would revitalize the parish.*
- *I am afraid a new building will cost way more than \$450,000.*
- *Who wants to be in a dark, dank basement? I do believe that the design should be friendly to the church (hip roofs and hopefully matching stone), but the space would be completely modern from the cement pad up -- and hopefully bright from windows (vs. a basement).*
- *Is it really needed? Would basement serve the same purpose?*
- *If we can focus on our debts and refinish our basement first, this could be a future goal.*
- *I feel very strongly that the parish center would be a boon to the church community.*
- *It makes the most sense.*
- *Critical need!!! In my opinion, it's a necessity to the long-term viability of this parish.*
- *If we do a parish center without classrooms, then we will still need some other meeting place.*
- *The offices should be added to the new building.*
- *People say that seating for 125 people is insufficient.*
- *The building would have to be handicap accessible. A more attractive gathering space would perhaps encourage participation.*

- *I think I am more excited about the idea of a Parish Hall because of the KITCHEN!*
- *My feeling is that the space is needed for parking. Can we add parking spaces elsewhere?*
- *The new building doesn't have to be elaborate. It should be a multipurpose area.*

**6. Are there other projects you feel should be addressed at St. Mary's?**  
*(Interview question #6/ Survey question #6)*

The most common responses to this question were:

- Complete the stonework as the top priority
- Consider other alternatives to repairing the organ
- Sell or repurpose the rectory
- Make the church more handicap accessible
- Parking
- Redo the pews

Representative Commentary:

- *The first thing that we need to do is dig around the whole church to fix the drainage problem. Several contractors have indicated that a French drain on the inside is not sufficient to resolve the problem.*
- *No matter what we need a kitchen.*
- *Put everything on one side of the street and maybe sell the rectory.*
- *Where would the equipment be stored if we sold the rectory?*
- *I'm totally against a major investment in the organ. It should be last on the list.*
- *Some people have said we should have install restrooms in the back of church.*
- *Refurbish pews, vestibule and choir loft.*
- *Do something with the rectory for meeting space. Take care of the buildings we have now.*
- *The stonework has to be done. We don't want the church to be crumbling.*
- *Our entrance to the church isn't really handicap accessible. It's a long way to get from your car into the pew. Can the handicap parking be angled to create more spaces? Our parking lot is full when the students are here. How far back to do we own? Can more parking be added?*
- *Why not a sky blue ceiling (in the church)? This would greatly improve lighting.*
- *The organ should be taken care of. Music is such an important part of the Mass.*
- *What are we going to do with the elevators?*
- *Look at the condition of the garages. The rectory could be renovated. Open up the walls and create a new space. We could put a tent on the grounds for parish functions.*
- *The rectory could be sold and the money used to help pay for the other projects.*
- *A small apartment could be put in the new building. The church organ seems pretty steep.*
- *We need to protect our investment in the church building.*
- *What are we going to do to the roof? How soon will it need repairs?*
- *Perhaps we should consider just putting the offices on the back of the church building.*
- *The cemetery has a water issue that needs to be resolved.*
- *We need to include plans for an adoration chapel with any type of renovation or addition. It would be a more energy efficient and safer environment for parishioners.*
- *Desperately need a safe handicap entrance. I seriously doubt if what is now available meets the standard of public buildings.*
- *The rectory is an old place. It's a money pit. If the diocese wants to do the upkeep, then fine.*

- *The organ seems to be pricey. We could purchase an electronic organ for much less money.*
- *The organ should be done, especially with Crane here.*
- *The steps leading into the back of the church do not have adequate railing. This is a safety issue that we need to address.*
- *The organ sounds fine to me.*
- *Pews*

**7. Do you feel that a majority of parishioners will volunteer their time, talent and treasure in support of a capital campaign to complete the project?**  
(Interview question #7)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviewees</i>
Yes	23%
No	36%
Unsure	<b>41%</b>
No Response	-

**8. Would you be willing to volunteer your time for the campaign?**  
(Interview question #8/ Survey question #7)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yes	<b>90%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>58%</b>
No	5%	32%	21%
Unsure	5%	25%	18%
No Response	-	5%	3%

Please see the [Potential Campaign Volunteers](#) Addendum for a listing of potential volunteers.

**9. Would you be willing to host a campaign event for parishioners in your home or at the parish?**  
(Interview question #9)

Please see the [Potential Reception Hosts](#) Addendum for a listing of potential hosts.

**10. If asked, would you be willing to commit your talents by taking a leadership position on the Campaign Committee to be formed in order to facilitate the campaign?**  
(Interview question #10)

Please see the [Potential Campaign Committee Members](#) Addendum for a listing of potential Campaign Committee members.

**11. Who among our parishioners would be good leaders of a capital campaign?**  
(Interview question #11)

Please see the [Potential Campaign Committee Members](#) Addendum for a listing of recommended Campaign Committee members.

12. In order to be successful in raising the funds necessary, Leadership Gifts are important. The Leadership Gift Phase of a capital campaign would seek pledges of \$25,000, \$50,000 or more over a 3-5 year period from parishioners, foundations and possibly corporations. In your opinion, are their individuals/businesses in the parish capable of giving at these levels?  
(Interview question #12)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviews</i>
Yes	61%
No	3%
Unsure	36%
No Response	-

13. Could you assist in identifying those families, businesses, organizations or foundations that could give at the following levels?  
(Interview question #13)

Guidance In Giving recognizes that some interviewees felt they did not know other people’s financial situation, while others may have been reluctant to provide names of individuals in the community.

Please see the [Potential Leadership Gift Prospects](#) Addendum for a listing of identified prospects.

14. While we are not currently soliciting contributions to the campaign at this stage in the campaign process, determining the financial potential of the parish community is an important component of the study. Once the project details are solidified and the campaign formally begins, could your family consider a “Leadership” level pledge of \$10,000 or more, payable over a 3-5 year period?  
(Interview question #14)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviews</i>
Yes	26%
No	56%
Unsure	18%
No Response	-

‘Yes’, ‘No’, and ‘Unsure’ answers will be incorporated into the GIG database for use during the proposed capital campaign. The self-nominated, Leadership Gifts prospects have also been listed in the [Potential Leadership Gift Prospects](#) Addendum.

15. What would you estimate your family campaign contribution to be over a 3-year period?  
(Interview question #15 / Survey question #8)

32 of the 39 (82%) Personal Interviewees responded, and 33 of 63 (52%) of the Study Survey participants responded. **Overall 65 (64%) responded.**

It is the experience of Guidance In Giving, Inc., that the families who participate in a Study may not be prepared to give an answer to this question; however, that does not mean that they will not

contribute when the parish enters into a capital campaign. The firm has also found that once a complete case is presented and families are challenged to make a pledge that is sacrificial, many are likely to contribute more than the amount they originally stated in the Study.

**PLEDGE RANGE: Gift-by-Gift Breakdown (Low estimate)**

<i>Gift Breakdown</i>	<i>Interview</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total Number of Gifts</i>	<i>Total Pledges</i>
\$100,000 +	0	0	0	\$0
\$50,000 - \$99,999	0	0	0	\$0
\$25,000 - \$49,999	1	0	1	\$25,000
\$20,000 - \$24,999	0	0	0	\$0
\$15,000 - \$19,999	0	0	0	\$0
\$10,000 - \$14,999	8	2	10	\$100,000
\$7,500 - \$9,999	2	1	3	\$23,000
\$5,000 - \$7,499	7	2	9	\$46,250
\$4,000 - \$4,999	0	2	2	\$8,000
\$3,000 - \$3,999	9	7	16	\$48,600
\$2,000 - \$2,999	1	5	6	\$12,600
\$1,000 - \$1,999	4	10	14	\$19,700
\$1 - \$999	0	4	4	\$770
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>\$283,920</b>

**PLEDGE RANGE: Gift-by-Gift Breakdown (High estimate)**

<i>Gift Breakdown</i>	<i>Interview</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total Number of Gifts</i>	<i>Total Pledges</i>
\$100,000 +	0	0	0	\$0
\$50,000 - \$99,999	0	0	0	\$0
\$25,000 - \$49,999	1	0	1	\$25,000
\$20,000 - \$24,999	0	0	0	\$0
\$15,000 - \$19,999	4	0	4	\$60,000
\$10,000 - \$14,999	8	2	10	\$100,000
\$7,500 - \$9,999	1	1	2	\$15,500
\$5,000 - \$7,499	4	2	6	\$32,250
\$4,000 - \$4,999	2	2	4	\$16,000
\$3,000 - \$3,999	7	7	14	\$42,600
\$2,000 - \$2,999	1	5	6	\$15,300
\$1,000 - \$1,999	4	10	14	\$17,900
\$1 - \$999	0	4	4	\$770
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>\$325,320</b>

**16. In addition to regular gifts to the weekend offertory collection and the diocesan appeal, is it reasonable to assume that 30% of the parish (~200 households) or more could contribute to a capital campaign at the St. Mary's?**  
*(Interview question #16)*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviews</i>
Yes	<b>64%</b>
No	13%
Unsure	23%
No Response	-

**17. Is it reasonable to ask the "average parishioner" of the St. Mary's to consider pledging \$75 or more per month, payable over 36 months?**  
*(Interview question #17 / Survey question #9)*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yes	<b>44%</b>	17%	28%
No	12%	<b>40%</b>	29%
Unsure	44%	<b>40%</b>	<b>41%</b>
No Response	-	3%	2%

**18. Is there anything in the local or parish community that you believe would hinder the success of the proposed project?**  
*(Interview question #18 / Survey question #10)*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yes	21%	<b>38%</b>	31%
No	38%	14%	24%
Unsure	<b>41%</b>	35%	<b>37%</b>
No Response	-	13%	8%

The most common, perceived hindrances to the campaign includes:

- Area demographics and the state of the local economy
- The number of elderly people living on limited fixed incomes
- Cost/scope of the projects versus the number of financial supportive parish families
- Strongly held opinions regarding which project best addresses the parish needs
- Lack of transparency/issues from the past

Representative Commentary:

- *Not if we have a clear vision and the right leadership. Do we have enough families to shoulder the costs and upkeep?*
- *The parish population is getting older with less younger people and priests.*
- *Present income seems to be less than previous years.*
- *If the wrong people do the asking, then there could be potential for division.*
- *If another industry leaves the north, it would impact the economy.*
- *Some people may be giving all they can.*
- *It depends on how much it costs.*

- *There are a lot of people on fixed income.*
- *This is a poor socioeconomic area. In the last several years I've noticed a serious decline.*
- *Financing is obviously going to be an issue, though I'm pleased to see that the debt on the tower work is much lower than I would have anticipated at this point.*
- *This is a fairly low-income rural area.*
- *Potsdam is a divided community between "the town and the gown".*
- *There are very strong opinions among parish leaders regarding the choice of project.*
- *Lack of financial support.*
- *Maybe I'm cynical, but it will be hard to do. Then again we could really be surprised. There is almost an indifferent attitude toward the parish community.*
- *I wouldn't think so.*
- *Ability of people to make pledges; tendency of people to "status quo". They don't like change.*
- *Some will say, "We don't need this". A further explanation will be required.*
- *Financially it seems that there are less people contributing to the local church.*
- *People having opposite opinions about what should be done.*
- *Knitpicking and gossip. But we have a lot of good-hearted people who really care.*
- *Depends on what we do. There has to be a consensus on what is needed. A relevant practical solution should be sought.*
- *Taxes in the village and township are very high and that could be an issue.*
- *In the past the people weren't always listened to. There were failures in the past ten years by not keeping the parishioners in the decision making process. We lost members.*
- *The biggest challenge we will have to overcome is getting people to support whichever project is chosen.*
- *I'm an optimist.*
- *Depends on the projects. People will more likely support a new parish hall.*
- *The local building and zoning laws. The site planning and approval process can be tedious.*
- *The only obstacle I see is funds. We've already accrued debt from the tower repairs.*
- *Incomes for many elderly who make up quite a few members of the parish.*
- *There are always people who will complain about everything.*
- *I don't know people's plight. Everybody won't support this 100%.*

**19. If the campaign proceeds as proposed, will you support the parish to the best of your ability to help ensure that the campaign is successful?**

*(Interview question #19 / Survey question #11)*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yes	97%	73%	82%
No	0%	3%	2%
Unsure	3%	16%	11%
No Response	-	8%	5%

**20. Are there any other topics or advice you would like to mention that have not been addressed in this interview/questionnaire?**  
*(Interview question #20/ Survey question #12)*

Representative commentary:

- *Possibly offer an evening Mass again on Sunday for the people that are unable to get to attend earlier due to work schedules.*
- *More times for Sacrament adoration. Ideally, I would like a chapel open 24 hours for adoration.*
- *I am thrilled this is happening. There have been so many frustrations due to the lack of appropriate space.*
- *No one has told us any plans. This should have input from parishioners.*
- *I would like to have a place to hang coats.*
- *I strongly believe that the people attending a Funeral Mass should be able to give a eulogy, not just at the cemetery.*
- *Most people just don't make the effort to cross the street.*
- *I miss the get together at those delicious St. Joseph's dinners. That's where we met our fellow parishioners.*
- *Thank you for asking my opinion.*
- *We had the money for a parish hall but it went into the church restoration.*
- *Community is what generates enthusiasm.*
- *There used to be a feeling of family. We've lost that I think.*
- *... As someone with a family history in the construction business, and a family of people with allergies, I believe it would be fruitless to waste money trying to utilize a space that will, ultimately, always be wet, damp, and mildew prone. I know of people who have spent large sums of money with "fancy" systems attempting to prevent water intrusions in basements, but they never work unless you are, literally, able to REPLACE the existing foundation with a solid pour cement floor/foundation.*
- *There are two groups of people who don't know each other because they attend different Masses.*
- *Have a mass that is more teen oriented with lectures and music that are more engaging for their age.*
- *There was no explanation for the introduction of Latin into the Mass. People who have the talent could help with the construction projects.*
- *Please review the "special" collections. These are tough times for many. What can we do to support the people caught up in the war, especially from the Middle East?*
- *Hopefully, we can grow our parish again. The cemetery has been well maintained.*
- *There must be grant money available for an historic building.*
- *Short programs that would bring more of the young people back. Ice cream social is an example.*
- *Keep us informed. It would be useful to tell parishioners why we need a renovated space. Tell us what can be accomplished that cannot be done with the current infrastructure.*
- *I'm really impressed with Father Rucker. He walked into this parish and just took charge. Our prayers will always be answered, just maybe not in the way we expect.*
- *Petition the state for a crosswalk.*
- *If the purpose of music is to elevate hearts to God, then it should be invitational.*

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- *Where is the money from the sale of the school and the Newman Center? How about the recent sale of St. Michael's in Parishville? Do we get any of that money back from the diocese?*
  - *Sports activities preempt church. I object to using the church for a concert venue.*
  - *We need to do a better job of education people on the meaning of religious freedom.*
  - *Do people tithe anymore?*
  - *I will pray for the whole thing and do what I am asked to do if I can.*
  - *I'm concerned about the whole communication process. The parish has to be invested beyond the finances of the projects. We need a strong public speaker, a motivator.*
  - *People need to realize that the workload of the priests has increased. They should be more supportive of their pastors.*
  - *Not having a place to meet has been on our mind.*
  - *There needs to be more teaching on how the Lord blesses those who give.*
  - *The traffic here is a problem-just trying to cross the street is dangerous.*
  - *We used to have fellowship in the basement here after Mass. Now people go out to the nearby restaurants instead. Other priorities sapped away money from addressing the need for a social facility. Emergency took precedence. We could create synergy by building a new parish hall.*

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## REVIEW OF KEY POINTS

### A. POSITIVES/SUPPORT

The idea of moving forward with a campaign to address the need for meeting space and the upkeep of the church received strong support throughout the Feasibility Study including the following findings:

- 84% of overall respondents indicated they would support the parish leadership in the decision **to move forward with a Capital Campaign** to the best of their ability (97% of interviewees and 73% of those surveyed indicated their support for the project) with only 5% indicating they would not be supportive.
- **59 respondents indicated that they would volunteer time and talent** in support of a campaign for the proposed projects, while 18 indicated they were “Unsure” until they understood what they are being asked to consider.
- Altogether, those who gave an estimated contribution amount (**65 households**) projected that they would be able to **pledge between \$283,920 – \$325,320** or more over a 3-year pledge period. This is an **average of approximately \$4,368 – \$5,005** and represents a **ratio to offertory of 2.4 – 2.7 times income** (*Ratio to Offertory pertains to a family’s campaign gift as it relates to their annual offertory income: i.e. If the Jones Family gives \$20/week for the calendar year (~\$1,000/year) in the weekly collection and make a \$5,000 gift to the campaign, they are participating at rate of 5.0 times their annual offertory income*).

### B. CONCERNS/NEGATIVES

During the Study, many participants voiced concerns toward the proposed plan(s) of action. When negative or concerned comments were offered, they were mainly focused on the following:

- the cost/scope of the projects versus the number of financially supportive parish families;
- strongly held opinions regarding which project best addresses the parish needs;
- the number of elderly people living on fixed income;
- area income demographics and state of the local economy;
- a lingering sensitivity among some parishioners pertaining to issues over the cemetery regulations and closures of the elementary school and Newman Center parish.

## ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and analysis of the 102 responses received during the Feasibility Study, Guidance In Giving, Inc. offers the following to the leadership of the St. Mary's Parish:

### A. Campaign Case

To reiterate the results from **Questions #5 & 19**:

#### 5. What is your opinion of the proposed renovation of the church basement? (Interview question #5a / Survey #5a)

<i>Project Summary</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Positive	<b>54%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>54%</b>
Negative	18%	17%	18%
Unsure	28%	25%	26%
No Response	-	3%	2%

#### What is your opinion of the proposed construction of a new Parish Hall? (Interview question #5b / Survey #5b)

<i>Project Summary</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Positive	<b>64%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>53%</b>
Negative	10%	26%	20%
Unsure	26%	22%	23%
No Response	-	6%	4%

#### 19. If the campaign proceeds as proposed, will you support the parish to best of your ability to help ensure that the campaign is successful?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yes	<b>97%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>82%</b>
No	0%	3%	2%
Unsure	3%	16%	11%
No Response	-	8%	5%

There is a clear understanding that the St. Mary's Parish must meet the challenges it faces in order to stay viable and grow the community. The study has confirmed that many parishioners realize and understand the need for a communal gathering place and the continued upkeep of the church building. A number of parishioners expressed optimism about the projects while holding concerns about the cost, the state of the local economy, socioeconomic make up of the parish and the future of St. Mary's. Parishioners also shared their concerns regarding the potential negative impact past issues might have on a campaign and the need to for everyone to work together regardless of their preconceived ideas.

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A successful campaign would need to address these concerns with sensitivity, clarity, and transparency. It will be vitally important for parish leadership to continue to be vigilant in developing and communicating the needs to all parishioners (how these projects were prioritized, the costs associated with each project, etc.), showing financial transparency and an overall sense of good stewardship. They are being entrusted with the gifts of the people and have the responsibility of utilizing these gifts in the most efficient and effective manner to achieve the goals of the campaign. This will be critical in laying the foundation of trust necessary for a successful Capital Campaign today and for future development efforts.

## **B. Conduct a Capital Campaign**

***TBD***

In order to conduct a successful campaign, the parish must be in the best position to succeed. This includes deciding on the priority of projects that best meet the needs of the parish community, providing and presenting the most up to date renderings, floor plans, cost estimates, construction timelines and an understanding of the various approval processes with the town of Potsdam and the Diocese of Ogdensburg. It is vitally important because many parishioners asked numerous questions and expressed concern about the projects. Some general questions that will need to be addressed in a campaign are:

- How were the projects selected?
- What is actual total cost of the projects?
- What are the criteria for determining the prioritization of the projects?
- What is the long-term plan for St. Mary's?
- What is needed to begin the projects (how much money in hand, how much in pledges, will we take out a loan)?
- When do we expect to complete the projects?

Parish leadership must be prepared to answer these and similar questions when they arise during the planning phases and ultimately, a campaign. If numerous questions are left unanswered, the entire effort will appear as poorly planned, uncertain and lacking realism in achieving the project success, particularly during the active portion of the campaign. This would undermine the credibility of the case and the confidence of the parishioners, resulting in a diminished level of support.

In reviewing the parish offertory records combined with the results of the Feasibility Study, Guidance In Giving, Inc. feels that St. Mary Catholic Church has the ability to raise \$500,000 - \$700,000 (or more) in a successful campaign, once a case has been finalized.

### **SAMPLE GIFT RANGE AND PARTICIPATION CHART**

**# of Families in the Parish: ~680 Families**

<b>25% Participation</b>					
170 Gifts	X	\$2,000 Avg. Gift	=	\$340,000	
		\$2,500 Avg. Gift	=	\$425,000	
		\$3,000 Avg. Gift	=	\$510,000	
<b>30% Participation</b>					
204 Gifts	X	\$2,000 Avg. Gift	=	\$408,000	
		\$2,500 Avg. Gift	=	\$510,000	
		\$3,000 Avg. Gift	=	\$612,000	
<b>35% Participation</b>					
238 Gifts	X	\$2,000 Avg. Gift	=	\$476,000	
		\$2,500 Avg. Gift	=	\$595,000	
		\$3,000 Avg. Gift	=	\$714,000	

#### **C. Further Leadership Gifts Identification and Cultivation**

As part of the Leadership Gifts Phase of the campaign plan, Guidance In Giving will utilize the information obtained during the Feasibility Study, the parish offertory, past giving records and input from parish leadership in order to quantify current potential Leadership Gift (LG) prospects as well as identify additional Leadership Gift prospects. Working hand in hand with Father Rocker and the Capital Campaign Committee, we will look to further expand our base of potential LG prospects and, through significant Prospect Review, determine a Solicitation Plan for each of the individual families identified in the LG phase.

An important part of the Guidance In Giving, Inc. Campaign Plan is the composition and performance of the Leadership Gifts Team. In addition to Father Rocker, this team should be composed of six to eight knowledgeable and highly regarded parishioners/couples who will serve as a sub-committee of the Campaign Committee. The role of the Leadership Gifts Team will be to identify and solicit all

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parishioners and friends of the St. Mary's Parish with the potential to give at a level of \$10,000, \$25,000, \$50,000, \$100,000 or more to the campaign.

It is imperative to the success of the campaign that personal outreach for Leadership Gifts be seriously pursued in the early weeks of the Campaign (utilizing a variety of fundraising strategies in order to educate and engage each family in this phase of the campaign).

#### **D. Lay Campaign Committee**

As a firm, Guidance In Giving believes strongly in the role of the laity of the Catholic Church, both in the campaigns it conducts as well as in the general life of the parish. The firm regards the participation of lay leaders as essential for the success of any endeavor, for it is truly the parishioners who make up the Church. Creating the sense of ownership among the laity, as a whole, is crucial and emphasizing the role of lay leadership in the development of the project, from its inception, will further strengthen how parishioners will view the overall plan. In addition, lay leadership can reflect on being a fellow parishioner, why the project is important to them, how this project will make a difference to them, their family and our parish as a whole and why they are involved in making it a reality.

Guidance In Giving will provide a detailed Campaign Committee Flowchart, including a description of Duties & Responsibilities and will assist Father Rocker and parish leadership in selecting the appropriate individuals who will represent a cross section of parish life. By empowering a strong Campaign Committee, educating them on the details of the Feasibility Study and Campaign, and giving them a voice in the decision-making process, we will be able to show that the project is driven by parishioners who want to secure the future of their parish.

#### **E. Promotion of Study Findings**

Copies of this Feasibility Study Findings Report should be provided to all Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and parish staff members, as well as other parishioners/groups as Father Rocker deems appropriate.

***A Feasibility Study Executive Summary has been prepared by Guidance In Giving and should be made available to every member of the parish. Counsel strongly recommends that Father Rocker present the Feasibility Study Findings Summary at each of the Masses in the coming weeks and that the summary report should also be posted on the parish web site.***

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## CONCLUSION

This completes the Parish Feasibility Study conducted by Guidance In Giving, Inc. for St. Mary Catholic Church. Guidance In Giving hopes that these recommendations will be helpful in charting the course for a successful capital campaign, and we thank you for allowing us the opportunity to serve as counsel. The findings presented represent analysis of the opinions expressed by 102 parish households: 39 households personally interviewed and 63 households responded via the Feasibility Study Survey.

Guidance In Giving, Inc. believes that there is support, excitement and potential for a capital campaign. Achieving the parish's potential will take a concerted effort on the part of all; including a generous response from parishioners, an optimistic atmosphere, strong leadership and a theme of Parish Stewardship.

We consider it a privilege to have conducted this Feasibility Study for the St. Mary's Parish. The parishioners we encountered were receptive to our inquiries, candid in their responses, and interested in providing meaningful commentary and direction. It has been a pleasure for Guidance In Giving, Inc. to have met and worked with the Parish staff, volunteers and parishioners.

**Thank you once again for allowing us the opportunity to serve your community. We are available to you at any time to answer questions, provide additional information or counsel, attend important meetings, etc., and look forward to working with the parish on a successful capital campaign.**