



## Status Update: Catholic Community of Buffalo, North and Rightsizing and Reshaping

*Channel 7 News Statement from Fr. Joe Tokasz*

July 16, 2024

The Family of Parishes Leadership Team (trustees and clergy) of Family of Parishes #20 (The Catholic Community of Buffalo, North) has evaluated the recommendations presented and received on June 6, 2024 at Vicariate Meeting for the Buffalo (City) Vicariate. They have made the decision to not accept the recommendations received and plan to present counter proposals as per the guidelines/ processes which we have been asked to follow by the Road to Renewal Team of the Diocese of Buffalo. We will be submitting the written counter proposals before August 5th to the review committee and meet with them to present these counter proposals before August 23rd and await the decisions to be released by September 1st.

Many parishioners of the parishes in the Catholic Community of Buffalo, North of course have worries and concerns with regards to what this means for their parish community. This is natural, as this necessary restructuring which is taking place in the Diocese of Buffalo effects the parish communities and the people who make them up and their spiritual lives. This is hard for all the people, especially those who have spent their whole lives being a part of only one parish community or have found solace and consolation in a loving community of faith during difficult moments.

However, parishes that once had to offer six of seven Sunday Masses now only need one or two and these are never full, often using only a half or a quarter of the capacity of the church building. People have moved out of the city or out of WNY and are a part of parish communities elsewhere. Others have lost their faith or stopped actively being a part of the worshipping community of faith. We have too many aging church buildings and properties which are mere blocks from each other, a five-minute car ride, which are in communities that have changed greatly in the hundred and some years since these parishes were founded in places that were still fields and open spaces.

Every parish community has its own set of struggles whether it is financial, building problems, people focused on the wrong things (social or events rather than faith in God and the gospel message), not enough people, an aging population, change in demographics, lack of handicap or mobility challenged accessibility, properties built for a walking community now in a driving world, not enough parking, etc. We are doing our best to meet the signs of the times, looking at what we have realizing that we cannot keep all of it and make sure we have what is necessary to continue to share the good news of Jesus Christ and celebrate the sacraments for the future.