

THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. ISIDORE

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Church Unveils Exciting Plans for Expansion

Members of St. Isidore Roman Catholic Church on March Road were treated to a sneak preview of the preliminary drawings for a new expansion at the Annual General Meeting, in September.

"The response of parishioners to the first visuals of the **expanded church** has been exciting and positive," said Parish Priest, Father Ross Finlan. Professional drawings were presented by **Architect Ralph Vandenberg whose firm was awarded the long-term project. Parishioners viewed the new plans** at the church and at All Saints High School where Sunday Masses have been held for three years to accommodate the overflow of the small 120 year old church located at 1135 March Road, Kanata.

Gripping details of the proposed expansion project became the 2006 focus of the Parish Pastoral Council reported Chair, Darlene Gollesch.

Organizers are thrilled with the constructive plan for the historic and picturesque building which has long been a distinguished landmark along the March corridor. Standing proud with a towering steeple, the old church has been an icon since in 1887. A five-acre field was purchased, a cemetery established, and a rectory was under construction by 1889. In 1979 a new hall was opened and in 1987, the church celebrated its Centennial.

The aging church requires updating and expansion to accommodate the extensive change in local demographics. With continuing growth in the South March region, Morgans Grant and Kanata Lakes, the congregation has increased significantly and future growth is inevitable. The building must become more user

and family-friendly with adequate seating for Sunday Masses and special occasions. Meeting rooms are required to serve the active parish community, while washrooms and a new heating system are crucial to improved comfort.

Deacon Des Adam, Chair of the Expansion Task Force reported that "Most Rev. Marcel Gervais, (Archbishop of Ottawa) determined that any expansion must take place on the present site where the church owns adequate land. The cost of purchasing new land would be prohibitive, even if a suitable building lot was available, in Kanata." With no expansion since 1886, changes are well overdue. A larger building will permit the parish priest to preside at all Masses, eliminating the need to hold one Sunday Mass at All Saints High School. A well-planned expansion will simplify the scheduling of music and reading ministries, and better accommodate special events such as large weddings and funerals.

For several months, the Building Committee, chaired by Mike Green, has discussed site access, traffic flow, parking needs, integration of church and parish hall while retaining the distinguished aesthetic appeal of the present structure. Green announced that Ottawa's Ralph Vandenberg Architect Inc. has been awarded the contract based on his preliminary renderings, experience and discussions.

Vandenberg acknowledged that "versatility of the new space was an essential criterion." His first round of drawings reveal a new main entrance facing south, the parish hall expanded to the south and east and existing windows preserved, where possible. Part of the existing church will become a chapel. The expanded structure will have seating for 500 which will partially surround the altar. Overflow space in the parish hall will be available through the use of cleverly designed removable walls or partitions. Space will be dedicated for a much-needed Baptismal font. An inner courtyard will provide quiet reflection space or a seasonal meeting room.

Chartered Accountant, Gordon Armstrong estimated the cost of the proposed project to be \$7.82 million.

Roy Carver, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that "the parish is currently in a healthy financial position with no debt." He stated that "there are approximately 1129 families registered in the parish and that cash on hand will be used for initial expenses associated with the renovation strategy." Creative fundraising will be the next significant leap forward, he added.

Tom Hewitt, parish member and professional fundraiser, has agreed to pilot an exciting funding plan. He told parishioners at the AGM that "the expansion project will transform and rejuvenate the parish and could perhaps be the most important effort that we, as a community, will ever participate in...renewing a church...what an extraordinary legacy." Hewitt declared that he "was encouraged by the exceptional leadership and vision demonstrated by Father Ross, Deacon Des Adam, the Pastoral Council and the Building Committee."

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Rendering of front concept provided by **Ralph Vandenberg Architect Inc. Ottawa, ON**
3D images by "**FINEline Perspectives**" Concept not finalized.