

# Feasibility

# Study Report

Submitted by:



**Greater Mission**



Presented to:

**Father John Paul Walker, O.P.**  
Pastor

St. Gertrude Parish  
Cincinnati, Ohio

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## INTRODUCTION

Greater Mission, LLC is pleased to present St. Gertrude Parish with this Feasibility Study Report. It was a pleasure to work with Father John Paul, Father Luke, Hope Ramundo, the parish staff, and the entire parish community on this project. We deeply appreciate the level of cooperation, hospitality, and candor extended during the study process, all of which helped us produce this report. We are most grateful to serve this wonderful Catholic community.

### Case for Support – Capital Projects

Greater Mission conducted a feasibility study to determine if St. Gertrude Parish could conduct a successful capital campaign to raise up to \$20 million to fund the projects outlined below.

## CASE STATEMENT

### *Building for a Vibrant Future*

St. Gertrude Parish was founded in 1923 as a mission church. Since 1927, the Order of Preachers, more commonly known as the Dominicans, have served the parish, bringing their special charism of preaching and teaching the Gospel and reverently celebrating the sacred liturgy in the tradition of St. Dominic. St. Gertrude gained full parish status in 1944, and the parish has continued to grow ever since. St. Gertrude School was established in 1934 and was immediately entrusted to the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia. Over the years, the original school was expanded several times, until the new school building was constructed in the early 2000s. The Parish Center was added in the 1980s and is the locus of the ministerial and communal life of our parish.

From our humble beginnings over a century ago, we have grown into an exciting community of over 2,000 active families. Mass attendance has increased over 50 percent in the past three years, and new families continue to join St. Gertrude Parish every month! The parish has over 60 established ministries with the hope of adding even more to allow the faithful of the parish to engage in learning the faith and living the Gospel through service and community. Our school now has over 360 students, and we anticipate adding even more students next year. We look forward to a vibrant future, building on our faith-filled and historic past under the guidance and leadership of the Dominican Friars.

### Why Now?

We are so grateful to God that our parish is flourishing. However, our parish facilities have not been able to keep pace with our tremendous growth. We desperately lack adequate meeting and gathering space, leaving our 60 active ministries to compete for just four meeting rooms. In addition, our parish and school staff have grown so much that our offices do not have enough space for everyone. This has resulted in our parish staff working out of separate buildings and the sharing of individual offices between multiple staff members.

One of the beautiful aspects of our weekend Masses is how many people remain outside after the liturgy, visiting with each other and the friars. However, during inclement weather, this beautiful community-building time is lost due to the lack of indoor space for such gatherings.

Our five weekend Masses are full to the brim. A full church is a beautiful blessing, but it also creates some significant logistical difficulties. Currently, the vestibule serves as a sort-of “cry room,” but it was not built for that purpose—it is far too small and is also the only way to access the restrooms.

Our church organ, which is mostly electronic and was bought as a temporary solution, is beginning to fail and needs a lasting replacement.

In this era when school safety is more important than ever, we have come to realize that having school children crossing a busy parking lot all day, every day, to attend gym classes is a significant vulnerability and one that needs to be addressed.

Finally, the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia, who have generously served our school children and their families for nearly 100 years, need a new convent. Their current house is too small and was not built for the rhythms of religious life. A new convent will enhance their community life and create a more suitable living situation for them.

This effort is not about meeting wants; it is about addressing the critical needs that have been identified by our recent parish strategic planning process and the continued reflection of our clergy and staff over the past several years. It is about providing the physical facilities so that every parishioner can participate in the life of our parish, live the Gospel, and celebrate the sacraments, allowing each person to encounter Jesus Christ in an ever-deeper way for decades to come.

### **Looking to the Future**

The projects we are considering include:

- Renovating the current gymnasium and expanding the Parish Center into adequate meeting and office spaces for parish staff and parish ministry groups. This would include relocating all the current parish offices from the school building to the Parish Center. This move would not only provide more space for our growing Catholic school but also increase the safety and security of our students by limiting the number of people who currently enter the school building for non-school reasons.
- Constructing a new gymnasium attached to the school. This would increase safety and security for our students, as they would no longer need to cross our busy parking lot.
- Creating a narthex connecting the church and the Parish Center. This will be a welcoming and clear entrance to the church and function as a natural post-Mass gathering space, which will not be dependent on the weather, as the space currently is.
- Updating the church building, increasing the number of confessionals, expanding seating if possible, creating a dedicated “cry room,” and other projects.
- Purchasing and installing a new organ for the church.

- Purchasing or constructing a new convent for the Dominican Sisters.

To determine whether a capital campaign with a potential goal of \$12 to \$20 million, depending on which projects are advanced, is feasible, we have engaged Greater Mission, a respected Catholic development firm, to conduct a parish-wide feasibility study. Over the next several weeks, parishioners will be invited to provide confidential input. Your honest feedback, your hopes, concerns, and level of potential support—will guide our next steps.

### **Your Voice Matters**

This is a moment of shared stewardship. The generations before us built and preserved these sacred spaces with faith and sacrifice. Now it is our turn. Your participation in this study is critically important. All responses will remain confidential. Together, through prayerful discernment and open dialogue, we will determine the path forward for our St Gertrude Parish community. Thank you, in advance, for your participation. We look forward to hearing from you.

### **Feasibility Study Process**

Anthony “Tony” Gwiazdowski, Greater Mission executive vice president and partner, conducted the study during May and June 2026. David Hampton, Greater Mission research director, assisted with the donor research of the parish database. There were several major components of the study process:

#### **1. Case Development & Material Development**

Father John Paul, Hope Ramundo, and several members of the parish staff reviewed, edited, and approved the preliminary case statement. The case statement above was used for the study.

#### **2. Giving Analysis & Constituent Research**

Tony conducted a comprehensive review of current parishioner giving. Greater Mission correlated this data with research from one of its partners, DonorSearch. DonorSearch conducted a comprehensive electronic review of public financial data, philanthropic giving, and other information to produce preliminary gift capacity ratings. Greater Mission then used this data, conducted follow-up research, and invited input from local leadership to identify parishioners who may have leadership capacity. Then, Greater Mission created a master table with parish giving data and developed a suggested starter gift range for each parishioner based on the available information. Several names from the DonorSearch process, as well as significant offertory contributors, were added to the interview list.

#### **3. Individual Interviews**

Tony conducted 48 personal interviews with a total of 71 St. Gertrude Parish parishioners, ranging from being members of the parish for just one year to entire lifetimes. There were two instances in which the interviewees canceled the interviews. The interviews provided the opportunity to present the case, receive input, and answer questions. They also provided the opportunity to gauge how much those individuals may be willing to consider giving to a campaign, their willingness to serve as campaign

volunteers, and their specific support for the project. The interviewees were also afforded the opportunity to voice concerns, share advice, and become more fully engaged in the project.

#### **4. Town Hall Meetings**

The entire parish was invited to two town hall meetings, held on May 12 and May 19. An approximate total of 179 parishioners attended the two meetings. Father John Paul began each town hall meeting with a prayer and some remarks about how the parish arrived at this moment. Tony shared the case, goal, volunteer opportunities that would be needed to conduct a campaign and briefly went over the campaign process. John Rademacher, senior vice president of Elevar Design Group, spoke about the master site planning process for the proposed projects.

To complete the projects highlighted in the case, a goal of up to \$20,000,000 was presented for consideration. Survey forms were distributed and completed by 81 of the 179 people who attended. Those responses have been included in the data collected for this study. Some attendees at the town halls were also part of the individual interview process and were asked not to fill out the survey. Some attendees indicated that, based on the information they received, they would answer the input form via the online survey.

The town hall meetings provided the opportunity for parishioners to learn more about the projects and to share their opinions, concerns, and input regarding the specific projects proposed, the possible goal, their potential level of financial support, and their willingness to volunteer for the campaign.

#### **5. Online Survey**

The online survey with the parish case statement and gift plan went live on the parish website on May 23 and closed on May 30. Parishioners were asked to review both pieces of information before completing the survey. The same survey form, case statement, gift plan, and volunteer opportunities used in the interviews and town hall meetings were attached to the online survey. During the week the survey was available, 196 parishioners responded to the survey. As in the other methods of data calculation, all parishioners did not answer all the questions.

A total number of 446 parishioners, which is 22 percent of the total parish community (roughly 2,000 registered households) participated in the study. This is above the norm of 8 to 10 percent participation in most parish feasibility studies.

### **FEASIBILITY STUDY FINDINGS**

The following are the findings of the study process.

Parishioners were asked a series of questions about the parish to gauge their level of involvement, feelings about the parish, and concerns. Please note that, where it is appropriate and to be concise, we will combine answers from each data collection method. Please note that question 1 was about the number of years the person was a member of the parish and what, if any, ministries he or she served. The respondents ranged from parishioners who only recently joined the parish to lifelong parishioners, with

the majority in all data collection methods having been parishioners from 3 to 30 years. Many respondents indicated that they were either currently involved in at least one ministry program or had been involved in past years. This was an icebreaker question and is not included in the overall tabulation. *All cited answers for each question are in rank order, beginning with the most frequently cited answer; however, all noted comments were provided multiple times. Greater Mission also wishes to note that not every respondent provided an answer to every question. The statistics are based on the actual number of responses provided for each question, not on the entire cohort of respondents.*

**2. What do you appreciate most about your parish?**

Parishioners gave several answers to this question. Across all data collection methods, there was a strong consensus of the most-often cited responses. In fact, the difference was so small that we compiled the responses in one chart. As noted above, these are in rank order:

Most Frequently Cited: From All Methods
The Dominican charism/Fathers/novices.
Reverent and authentic liturgies.
Excellent and instructive homilies.
The vibrant, intentional, and faith-filled community.
The Dominican Sisters.
The strong formation of children and the school.
The traditional/orthodox/conservative nature of the parish.
Warm, welcoming, many young families.
Access to Mass/the sacraments/ministry opportunities.

**3. What are the greatest challenges facing the parish?**

Similar to question 2, there was tremendous commonality of respondents’ most-cited challenges. By far, the most-cited answer was “space.” This answer outpaced all others by at least 2:1. The following are the most frequently cited answers compiled from the individual interviews, town halls, and online surveys:

Most Frequently Cited: From All Methods
Space (lack of it).
Growth (managing it, planning for it, concern about its rapidity).
Overcrowded Masses. <i>Tied with “We need another Mass on Sunday.”</i>
Parking.
Parish finances/debt concern.
Noise at the Masses.
Lack of parking and adequate space for gatherings.
Welcoming and integrating new parishioners into the parish community.
Relationship between the school/homeschool/general parish community.

**4. What is your initial reaction to the case that has been presented to you?**

Based on the interviews and a review of the responses to the town hall survey and online survey, the parish is supportive of the case. Over 60 percent of those who responded across all methods of data collection indicated they were in favor of the case. An additional group of respondents indicated support of the case with some caveats, the most common and often-cited caveat was about the organ. By far, purchasing a new organ received the most negative responses across the study.

Most Frequently Cited: From All Methods
Very positive/excited or exciting.
Reasonable and doable.
Needs to be done.
The case must be prioritized and phased in.
The organ does not fit the case. The organ is a want not a need.
This is extremely ambitious, and we cannot go back into debt.
Buy/do not build a new convent.
Dedicated atriums are essential in the project.
The case needs more detail.

**5. How would you rank the projects presented to you in terms of importance to you or to the parish?**

Project	#1 Priority	#2 Priority	#3 Priority	#4 Priority	#5 Priority	#6 Priority
<b>Renovate Gym/Expand Parish Center</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Construct New Gym</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Create Narthex</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Update Church</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Purchase New Organ</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Purchase/Build New Convent</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>

When viewed in the context of the stated greatest challenges facing the parish, parishioners ranked those issues related to the acquisition of space among their top priorities. Parishioners often cited the creation of meeting space, new offices, dedicated atria for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, and moving the adoration chapel to a quieter location. The cry room, additional confessionals, and expanded (if possible) seating in the Church were the most often mentioned aspects of that case element. However, Greater Mission also wishes to note that, while the cry room was more heavily supported than not, those who do not want to have or use a cry room were quite strident in their comments. The convent also received very strong support from parishioners; however, there was a stronger sentiment for the purchase of a new convent rather than construction. Parishioners expressed concerns about losing parking and/or parish green space if a new convent was built on the parish property, but they are not opposed to the purchase

of a new convent on the parish side of Miami Avenue. Parishioners are very aware of St. Gertrude Parish’s landlocked space and the need to preserve as much property as possible for parking. Finally, as the ranking indicates, the purchase of a new organ has very little support as a part of the campaign. Many parishioners indicated that they do not recall being informed that the present organ was meant to be “temporary” when it was purchased and often stated that the organ the parish currently has sounds good to them. There was some strong commentary about not wanting to spend a great sum of money on an organ when the other important projects may cost as much as \$20 million or more.

**6. Do you feel the case statement represents the most important needs of the parish? If not, what do you feel are priorities not included in the case?**

The purpose of this question was to elicit items not included in the case that respondents felt were important needs. Most respondents indicated that they felt the case addressed the most pressing needs of the parish, apart from purchasing a new organ. However, many parishioners had suggestions for other projects that they thought were priorities. The following were the most-often cited other needs/priorities:

Most Frequently Cited: From All Methods
Parking. This was cited 2 to 1 over all others mentioned.
Another Mass on Sundays is needed to alleviate crowded Masses.
Parking lot lighting.
The church needs interior cleaning, and the exterior statues and grounds need attention.
The parish needs a safety team.
Funds should be spent on teacher salaries.
The church bathrooms need to be updated.
We really need a bigger church.

**7. Do you think the parish can raise \$20 million for the needs presented in the case statement?**

**Individual Interviews**

Raise the Funds	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<b>Yes</b>	34	68 %
<b>No</b>	1	2 %
<b>Unsure</b>	15	30 %

**Town Hall Meetings (combined)**

Raise the Funds	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<b>Yes</b>	50	65 %
<b>No</b>	5	6 %
<b>Unsure</b>	22	29 %

## Online Survey

Raise the Funds	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	121	62 %
No	29	16 %
Unsure	46	23 %

In general, parishioners who were interviewed thought that raising \$20 million is possible. The most common reasoning for this answer was that the parish has been very generous in the past and there is some wealth in the parish. There is a general concern that many older parishioners may not be able to give larger gifts and that many of the younger families are being stressed by today's cost of living. Several respondents commented about the general economic climate—the rise in cost of living for everyone, rising gas prices, and an overall uneasiness about the national economy.

## 8. Where does St. Gertrude Parish rank in terms of your own philanthropic giving?

### Individual Interviews

Philanthropic Priority	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
High Priority	39	78 %
Medium Priority	9	18 %
Low Priority	2	4 %

### Town Hall Meetings (combined)

Philanthropic Priority	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
High Priority	51	62 %
Medium Priority	30	36 %
Low Priority	2	2 %

## Online Survey

Philanthropic Priority	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
High Priority	105	54 %
Medium Priority	67	34 %
Low Priority	23	12 %

Overall, parishioners who responded consider St. Gertrude Parish a medium to high giving priority. Additionally, the above average sample size and the very low number of parishioners who consider the parish a low giving priority bode well for a potential capital campaign. (NB: Many respondents are likely regular financial contributors to the parish.)"

9. Would you support this campaign financially?

Individual Interviews

Support Financially	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	47	98 %
No	0	0 %
Unsure	1	2 %

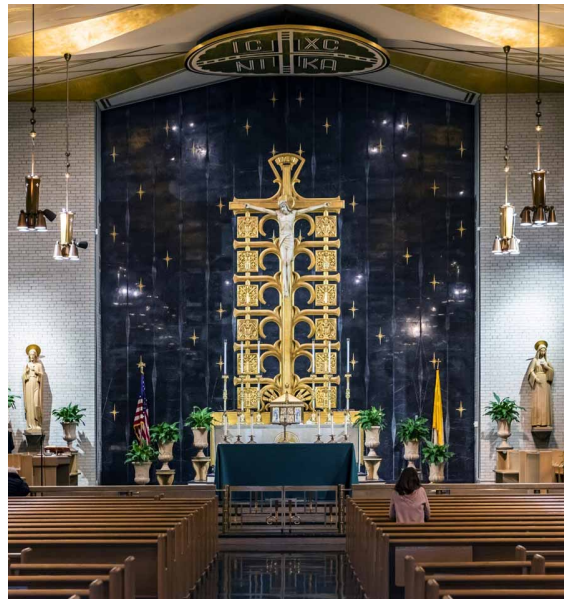
Town Hall Meeting (combined)

Support Financially	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	72	92 %
No	1	1 %
Unsure	5	7 %

Online Survey

Support Financially	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	171	82 %
No	13	6 %
Unsure	25	12 %

The overwhelming majority of parishioners who responded indicated that they would provide financial support for the campaign. Few respondents indicated that they would not support a campaign. This positive response bodes well for participation in the campaign.



10. Upon reviewing the possible gift chart, at what level could you see yourself contributing?

GOAL - \$20,000,000						
ADVANCE LEAD TIER						
Level	Amount Per Year	Amount Per Month	#	Total	# Identified	Cumulative Total
\$2,000,000	\$400,000	\$33,333	1	\$2,000,000	0	\$0
\$1,000,000	\$200,000	\$16,667	3	\$3,000,000	2	\$2,000,000
\$500,000	\$100,000	\$8,333	6	\$3,000,000	2	\$1,000,000
\$250,000	\$50,000	\$4,167	10	\$2,500,000	4	\$1,000,000
MID LEAD TIER						
Level	Amount Per Year	Amount Per Month	#	Total		
\$100,000	\$20,000	\$1,667	35	\$3,500,000	8	\$850,000
\$50,000	\$10,000	\$833	50	\$2,500,000	11	\$550,000
\$25,000	\$5,000	\$417	75	\$1,875,000	24	\$600,000
\$10,000	\$2,000	\$167	100	\$1,000,000	45	\$490,000
PARTICIPATION TIER						
Level	Amount Per Year	Amount Per Month	#	Total		
\$5,000	\$1,000	\$83	100	\$500,000	34	\$170,000
\$3,000	\$600	\$50	150	\$450,000	45	\$135,000
\$1,000	\$200	\$17	200	\$200,000	24	\$24,000
below \$1000	\$100	\$8	100	\$50,000	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>830</b>	<b>\$20,575,000</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>\$6,819,000</b>

NB. In two of the columns of identified gifts (\$100,000 and \$10,000), the actual stated gift amounts were above the stated level but below the next higher level, thus the totals are above the average gift for that range.

The cumulative \$6,819,000 total noted in the table above includes responses from all forms of contact. This total represents 34 percent of the possible \$20 million goal. A stated gift total of 34 percent is *well above average* for a feasibility study and indicates strong support for the case. A total of 446 individual parishioners participated in the study, and 45 percent (199) indicated a gift level. Most who did not provide a gift level did indicate that they intended to financially support the campaign. The 199 household responses represent 10 percent of the total parish families and 20 percent of the regular contributors (1,010) for 2025, defined as the 51 percent of registered households giving \$100+ to the parish. (NB: The national average for parish offertory participation is 30 to 33 percent.) The average gift noted in the responses is \$34,266, which is skewed by the eight identified lead gifts of \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 and would not represent the actual average gift at the end of the campaign. In addition to those who indicated a gift level, a total of 59 parishioners who indicated that they would financially support the campaign responded that they were currently unsure about an amount and either wanted time to pray about the gift level or were seeking for more concrete information about the case priorities and cost before making a decision. In our experience, we would suggest that most of these parishioners will give at some level.

Greater Mission is pleased that we were able to identify people who indicated that they would consider making a lead gift. Additionally, our research indicates that there are others who can make lead tier gifts. We have refined our rating system over many years and many campaigns. Our rating process takes into account many factors indicating capacity and propensity to give and is designed to be conservative, yet accurate. When the stated gifts were analyzed versus the gift ratings, many of the stated gifts were above the ratings we assigned. This is an indicator of strong support for the case. When extrapolating the gift total base using *average* participation in a parish capital campaign, the model indicates that \$20 million could be achieved in a campaign. This is buoyed by the fact that, in all methods of data collection of those who responded (75 percent) to Questions #9, would you give to the campaign, eighty-seven percent of the respondents indicated they would make a gift to a campaign for this case. These are above average statistics. Should the lead gift effort raise more than projected, a larger amount could be raised.

#### **11. Who would you recommend to be among the lay leaders to assist Father John Paul in leading the campaign?**

Parishioners in each of the data collection segments provided insight into potential parish leaders. There were dozens of names cited, with many of them cited multiple times as potential campaign leaders. The majority of respondents made an effort to respond to this question, which is not common and is an indicator that parishioners know and respect the leaders of the parish. We have provided this list to Father John Paul in a separate memorandum.

## 12. Would you volunteer to be involved in this effort as a leader, advocate, or other?

### Individual Interviews

Volunteer	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	38	79 %
No	3	6 %
Unsure	7	15 %

### Town Hall Meetings (combined)

Volunteer	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	41	63 %
No	11	17 %
Unsure	13	20 %

### Online Survey

Volunteer	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Yes	116	63 %
No	25	14 %
Unsure	40	23 %

The total number of positive responses (195) is sufficient to conduct a successful campaign. Often, a portion of the “unsure” agree to serve once they have a better idea of what is being asked of them. A good number of parishioners indicated that they would be involved as a prayer champion, be on the hospitality team, serve as a campaign advocate, and “do anything that Father John Paul asks me to do.” Remarkably, 31 parishioners indicated that they would be happy to host a home gathering. With a parish the size of St. Gertrude Parish, this will help ensure an adequate number of these gatherings can be organized. The parish has exceptionally talented and committed parishioners who are willing to make this campaign successful. As is always the case, there are other parishioners who did not participate in the study who will offer volunteer support.

## 13. Who do you think might be able to support the campaign at a significant level?

Answers were provided through all methods of data collection, and we have provided the results to Father John Paul under separate cover. This is often the most difficult question for people to answer and the one that people most often indicate that they would rather not say. Dozens of parishioners were identified through all data collection methods, and many were mentioned numerous times, which helps us solidify our donor research to determine gift levels.



**14. Do you have any further advice that you would like to provide Father John Paul and the parish leadership?**

Parishioners offered a great deal of advice in response to this question through all methods of data collection. Greater Mission received hundreds of comments, and many were mentioned multiple times. The table below illustrates the most-cited responses in rank order.

Most Frequently Cited: From All Methods
Father John Paul is doing a great job, keep up the good work. (Great leader, often cited.)
Be transparent in all that we are doing.
These projects need to be prioritized and phased.
More specific information is needed about all these projects. Need to know cost of each project.
Communication, need to keep people informed.
No debt, do not spend more than you can raise.
We need to add another Mass on Sunday regardless of other space issues.
Only focus on the projects that relate to space.
Learn from the mistakes in the last campaign.
The parish owns the school, and it should be open to all after school hours.
The focus should be on the continued spiritual development of the parish, not buildings.
What are the long-term maintenance costs going to be?
Do we need 60 ministries?
This is a huge project; does it need to be done all at once?
Father John Paul is spread very thin, concern about Father John Paul's health, concern about his ability to do it all.
Questions about the convent/no need for a new organ/parking is a critical need.

**Conclusions to the Findings**

St. Gertrude Parish is an amazing Catholic community. The level of commitment and dedication among the parishioners is sincere and very impressive. The love of the Dominican community and the Dominican charism permeated every conversation and interaction. Greater Mission cannot overstate the love and respect that parishioners have for the Dominican Friars, Sisters, and novices. The intentionality and deep faith commitment of the parish is also extremely evident and sincere. In

many years of serving the Church, St. Gertrude Parish is among the most special places we have served.

There is strong understanding that the parish needs additional meeting and gathering space, as well as space within the church during Mass. As one parishioner noted, “we are sardines.” Anyone associated with a ministry group is acutely aware of the space needs. Through the interviews, town halls, and online surveys, parishioners expressed the frustration of canceled meetings, meetings being moved from space to space, and, in some cases, a total loss of space for meetings. The consensus surrounding the issue of needed space was very strong.

Even with this consensus, parishioners mentioned concerns. A general summation of these concerns can be stated as “has the parish learned from perceived mistakes made during and after the last major capital campaign?” “How will the parish phase the projects, meaning what gets done first, second and so on?” “How will costs be monitored and contained to stay within the funds available?” Greater Mission has been made aware that updated archdiocesan policy in planning projects like this limits the chance of incurring debt. More details about this policy should be promoted during the campaign, as well as addressing the concerns about phasing and project cost containment.

Concerns about dedicated atria for CGS are apparent, and this issue needs to be addressed. For many parishioners who experienced the last campaign, additional concerns about parking, the parish being landlocked, and the difficulty with the neighbors and the city are still front of mind. These concerns will also need to be addressed.

Parishioners understand a \$20 million campaign is a large undertaking. While there is a general consensus that the parish has the capacity to raise that much, the people still need and want more specific details about the cost and timing of the projects. Prior to advancing any campaign, a much more robust cost estimate and construction timetable will be needed. Parishioners will also want some assurance that Father John Paul will not be reassigned while the campaign and construction projects are being undertaken. Overall, the parish has great confidence in Father John Paul’s leadership and motivational skills, although there are many parishioners concerned about his health and his ability to handle all his regular duties and manage such a significant project. Many people indicated that Father John Paul would need project management assistance going forward.

Parishioner responses to the study questionnaire indicated clear priorities for the parish leadership. The renovation of the current gym and expansion of the Parish Center, the construction of a new gym for the school, and updating the church were the top priorities. Regarding updates to the church, the cry room, additional seating space, and the repositioning of the adoration chapel to a quieter and more reverent setting were mentioned most often. However, Greater Mission would be remiss if we failed to note that many parishioners were also opposed to a cry room. In general, the new convent received strong support, although many people favored the purchase of a larger and more suitable home in the neighborhood versus building something on campus, due to space constraints. There was some push back regarding the convent, but it was evident to Greater Mission that it is because many people do not understand the nature of the community life of the Dominican Sisters. A clearer understanding of how the current convent does not provide space for proper community life, as well as needed space for guests, would be helpful. The presence of the

Dominican Sisters as part of the St. Gertrude Parish community is extremely positive—they are loved, respected, and seen as a tremendously valuable part of the parish.

The narthex is not clearly understood. While some parishioners like the idea of a covered gathering space, others lament the loss of outdoor gathering space. A clear idea of what the narthex would look like, what it would be used for, and its specific value to the issue of needed space would be helpful for many people.

Unfortunately, the feedback regarding the organ was that it did not fit the needs of the case, which was focused on space, and it would take substantial time to educate the parish about the need for the organ and would not fit the timeline of the campaign.

The identification of nearly 35 percent of the proposed goal is encouraging. Two seven-figure gifts and several high six-figure gifts, as well as a solid number of gifts at other key levels, were identified. As identified by our research and fellow parishioners, there are several additional top six- and seven-figure prospects in the parish. One of these prospects declined an interview but indicated that they were fully supportive of the campaign case. This is a very positive response. St. Gertrude Parish has significant six-figure prospects, as well as solid depth of prospects at the \$25,000, \$50,000, and \$75,000 level. The identification of gifts at all these levels during the study was very encouraging and gives us confidence in recommending that a goal of \$20 million could be achieved.

Based on the level of support for the majority of the case, Greater Mission believes that there would be enough financial support, at all levels, for the campaign to achieve the goal if the questions and concerns noted above were appropriately addressed.

## **Recommendations**

1. The findings of the study indicate that there is solid support for much of the case, and there is a clear understanding that the lack of space is the greatest need of the parish at this time. Greater Mission recommends the development of a prioritized case for support, the securing of cost estimates for each project, and the promulgation of an estimated timeline for implementation/construction. Greater Mission further recommends that the parish undertake a capital campaign at the earliest opportunity to take advantage of the momentum built by the feasibility study.
2. Greater Mission recommends that St. Gertrude Parish works with Elevar Design Group to propose a cost control and right-sizing process that will ensure that the parish takes on no or extremely limited debt.
3. We recommend that the purchase of the organ not be included as part of the case for fundraising. Should the parish determine that purchasing the new organ is essential, then the parish should discuss and implement some other means of funding the purchase. However, Greater Mission recommends that any alternative funding that would require fundraising should not take place during a wider parish campaign.
4. While our model of fundraising typically does not include a quiet phase, Greater Mission recommends that, prior to the final announcement of an overall campaign goal, the solicitation of all seven- and high six-figure prospects takes place. At the conclusion of this effort and based on the results, a final goal can be announced to the parish. A goal of \$20 million is achievable, but successfully concluding this stage of the campaign will provide additional confidence that success is possible within the parish community.

5. Greater Mission recommends launching a communication effort to inform current parishioners of the results of the feasibility study, letting them know that their input has been taken into consideration.
6. We recommend launching a communication effort to share information with parishioners about the requirements for a new convent in support of healthy religious life, to address the use of the future buildings as it relates to all constituencies in the parish, to address the process to limit debt, and to clearly delineate the phasing of the expansion process.
7. Greater Mission recommends developing a campaign communication strategy to inform, inspire, and educate parishioners during the entire campaign.
8. We recommend building an aggressive but achievable gift table for the campaign that will help stimulate broad-based sacrificial generosity. This gift chart must challenge the entire St. Gertrude Parish community to support the campaign at levels that will be sufficient to augment the identified lead gift potential by strengthening mid-tier giving and creating a strong base of participation-tier giving, focusing on a high level of participation across all gift ranges.
9. Father John Paul (with the help of his parochial vicars) will need to take a pivotal role in personally meeting with at least 50 to 75 major donors.
10. Campaign committee involvement will be critical. Members will work closely with Father John Paul in engaging parishioners in the campaign and promoting strong participation.

## Final Thoughts

Every campaign is a challenge, and this one will be no different. The biggest obstacles that we may have to overcome may be beyond our control, due to the current world situation. Every journey, even a difficult one, begins with a first step and dealing with the facts as they presently exist. To be successful, we will need to work toward and achieve a high level of participation. St. Gertrude Parish has many devoted parishioners who are very generous in spirit and treasure. The parish has a well-liked and respected pastor who has extremely good communication and administrative skills and whom we believe will do well fundraising. His parochial vicar, Father Luke, who has been highly involved in the feasibility study process, is also well respected in the parish, and his involvement, along with other members of the Dominican community, will strengthen the potential for success. The parish also has strong lay leadership and lay involvement.

Our goal in conducting a feasibility study is to give parish leadership the clearest understanding of what parishioners feel and think about the case and goal. In this case, the findings are positive and strong. With a full commitment from the parishioners and parish leadership, this campaign can succeed. Greater Mission stands ready to assist St. Gertrude Parish in moving forward.

It has been a great privilege to serve this wonderful parish and its people in conducting this study. We are profoundly grateful to Father John Paul, Father Luke, Hope Ramundo, the Feasibility Study Committee, the entire parish staff, and the many people we encountered during the study for their kindness, support, and active involvement in this process. We felt very welcomed by the parish community. We consider it a privilege to be part of this exciting venture that will support St. Gertrude Parish for decades to come.



# Greater Mission