

## Case Study for Reflection

You inherit a suburban parish, St Francis Xavier, as the new pastoral leader of the community in an area undergoing rapid development. It is a parish community with around 2,000 attenders spread over four weekend Masses.

The parish struggles to attract attenders from the local Catholic schools and the relationship between the former priest and principal was apparently tense due to differences in liturgical styles, or so it's been rumoured.

Being a relatively wealthy area populated with professionals and young families and with financial contributions remaining fairly steady over the past five years, there are questions about how the parish might best respond to the growing families in the area which are likely to increase given the new train station being built nearby.

There is a full-time secretary in the parish who seems (frankly) angry most of the time, a parish pastoral council chairman who has been in place for the last six years who presides over a group of eighteen. He also chairs the local SVDP conference and coordinates the acolytes.

The finance council chairman resigned a couple of months ago as the council was bitterly divided over the spending of money on a new youth ministry position which didn't seem worthwhile to him as there were no young people coming to Mass anyway.

There is a part-time bookkeeper also on staff who is the parish secretary's brother. There is a part-time sacramental coordinator who struggles to keep up with the queries due to the demand for sacraments of initiation from the local schools in particular, though she seems passionate about the faith and eager for change in the parish.

At the first gathering of parishioners you meet, many who are elderly, are urging you to move the tabernacle from a side Eucharistic chapel into the centre of the sanctuary though this is expected to cost more than \$235,000 given the architectural changes that would need to be made.

There are some sixty parish groups listed on the parish calendar but many of the contacts seem to be out of date or missing altogether.

### **Question for Reflection:**

How will you go about leading this parish to renewal? What are the key questions or considerations you would seek to address in the first months of your leadership of the parish?