

Bishop Lopes' Comments for the Parish on the Master Plan

The Master Plan developed for St. John the Baptist Parish seems to me to be exactly right in terms of what is needed and is in accord with both the mission of the Parish and the Ordinariate. Buildings are important, but especially in the early life of our diocese, buildings cannot become the main focus at the expense of the mission to proclaim the Gospel and draw people into a life-giving relationship with the Lord in the Catholic Church. At the same time, the Sacred Liturgy is the privileged place where that relationship with the Lord is celebrated and renewed.

It is my hope that, as the Plan unfolds, work on the church building proceeds alongside the other areas on the plan. Indeed, the work beautifying the church can be a barometer marking the growth and development of the parish in other, less tangible ways.

A good example of this is the proposed steeple, which would be a welcome addition to the church and mark St. John's in the Bridgeport skyline. Sacred architecture is meant to be a sacramental representation of a parish's presence and activity in the community. A steeple is meant to be seen, but a parish becomes truly known in the community by what we do in terms of outreach, education, and service. These things—already clearly seen in the thrift shop and Aid for Friends—draw people into the church itself. The beauty of our mission invites people into the beauty of worship and prayer in a beautiful space dedicated to the glory of God. We must therefore make sure that our efforts in outreach and ministry are as robust as the sacramental representation of the architecture. Build that steeple as high as our penetration into the local community is deep!