

Questions asked on 12/28/2023

The best possible effort was made to capture questions and answers from Fr. Stan's question/answer/listening session, below is a list of those questions. At the end of this document are comments that were taken from the session.

- The timeline we were given was very short, over the holiday break, the people we were told to email had out of office replies set for after the January 1st deadline we were given. We feel very disrespected by the timeline. Have you asked for an extension?
 - I asked for an extension but have not heard back.
- What is the reason that neither Holy Family, St. Francis, Bulldog or Flyers can be in the name?
 - From my understanding that would not be a new name. I will have to ask the archbishop for clarification.
- Why wasn't Clarkson or Leigh included in this?
 - I do not have an answer to this.
- Through the survey, through the merger meetings, option 2 was very highly rejected, and the merger committee has been telling us that option 2 was never open for discussion. Can we have an opportunity to discuss why this option is the right solution? Can we get an explanation?
 - I have no idea why the archbishop chose option 2 considering that wasn't something that was discussed.
- Was a consortium discussed/considered? A consortium was done in 2012 with schools in Omaha, none of them were expected to rebrand. Why did the archbishop not consider that in this situation?
 - I believe in that situation it was all grade schools, and not high schools, but I cannot answer further.
- Why isn't the archbishop delivering this message, why isn't he present to hear our points?
 - No response given
- Rumors that Lindsay will be starting a private school, is the archbishop aware of this? How many students are we going to get?
 - I can't answer for sure on either of those. I can assume he knows that this is happening.
 - No one knows for sure how many students will come, but the archbishop is looking 10-15-20-30 years down the road, not just into the next year.
- Concerning the number of students; what would be the timeframe for students from both of the current schools to say they will attend?
 - To be honest, I don't know. That is why I am asking for the time line to be slowed down.
- With asking for an extension would it be helpful from the parish to help ask for more time. Would it help if school boards and others did a joint letter?
 - I am hoping to get the name aspect pushed back.
 - Regarding the joint effort: I would not be against it, but I also don't know if it would make a difference.
- If we can show that we can come together and work on this together can we do it without him (archbishop)?
 - I do not have an answer for that.
- Are we just wasting our time here today? Why does the archbishop continue to waste our time for the past 4 years, when he could have just made this decision and stop tearing us all apart?
 - I am here because people wanted to ask questions and I'm here to give the answers I can.
- We understand that you are an employee of the archdiocese. The archbishop can be referred to as a pontiff, what is a pontiff? Pontiff means "bridge maker", but that bridge has been burned and we haven't had an opportunity to cross that bridge, because of the "bridge maker". With that being said, is there anything we can do as a community to mend that bridge and feel as though we are heard?
 - I will do what I can, but I won't promise something that I have no answer to.
- As a parishioner of St. Francis, what kind of commitment do we have from Holy Family to send students here. They have already lost students to Humphrey High, so if we have no commitment why are we being asked to rebrand?
 - I will ask the archbishop that exact question.

- I cannot make any promises
- As a parent or an employer, you have to come up with a reason why. When you stand up at the pulpit you talk about family, and looking around here you look around and you see family. You have someone here from Lindsay saying they are not coming, so why do we rebrand?
 - The archbishop said we have to.
- When we turn on the TV every day, we see things here and there telling us that “they know better”, but the archbishop doesn’t know better on this.
 - I agree with you, but I am not the archbishop.
- Did the Archbishop take into consideration the cost of rebranding, I think we can be better stewards of our money and instead pay teachers and staff better instead of rebranding?
 - I have that same question.
- Father this is directed towards the archbishop, in his email he said he was happy to repeat and clarify what has been said. But to repeat means to say again, but what you are saying to us was never said to us in the first place. Did he look at any traditions? I’m asking the archbishop to look in the mirror and ask yourself if this really makes sense, if it does then repeat and clarify.
 - I believe he would say that he was referring to his letter he sent.
 - I will ask him those questions.
- Will any of these questions be answered before our deadline of January 1? Can we delay the process?
 - I am hoping to delay the process, because I am meeting with him next Tuesday.
- There are people who believe that in order for this to work both schools have to close, we just heard that at the soonest we can hope that we would get just 1 student in 6 years, so why do both schools have to close?
 - I somewhat agree, but that is the archbishop’s decision. I don’t get to decide, I wish I did, but I don’t.
- If/When churches get closed are we going to rebrand the churches? If this does go through, how do we decide on teachers?
 - When it comes to the aspect of family parishes, technically we were to come up with a new name. I just haven’t done it.
 - I’m not 100% sure, we are to do our best to offer all teachers a job.
- If Lindsay Academy opens, realistically they would need teachers to teach. Do we know if we will get any new teachers?
 - I don’t know.
- Are we not combining resources?
 - We will try to.
- In 9 months, we are supposed to start a new school, we have no idea about teachers, students, no name, and in 9 months we are starting a new entity, there is so much to be done. This should have been decided a long time ago and not over Christmas break.
 - Correct.
- For the archbishop, if the Lindsay academy goes through, will Lindsay have to change names, will they be accepted as a school into the diocese?
 - The school will not be accepted in the diocese and so the archbishop has no say over it.
- I appreciate Wade’s comments, I would like to make a comment from the St. Francis side, that we were sad to hear that the archbishop did what he is doing to you. We feel as you have lost more, and is there some way to do a joint petition from both sides, that we are against what the archbishop is trying to ram down our throats.?
 - No response
- I’m not catholic, but I have 3 kids who have graduated from this fine institution, I’m not from here, but it’s very obvious, and I hope this goes back to the archbishop, because they don’t have the concerns of the students. They don’t know about the teachers, the students. As the husband of an administrator, I can tell you that without having all these things answered it would be a nightmare. Tonight, all we have heard is we don’t know, but you have to deal with it. Someone said, this is a family, coming in from outside we have been accepted into

this family. If we have to do this, which it sounds like we do, then let's slow it down and do it right so these next few years don't have to suffer.

- I have heard so far some good questions, some comments, thing we have to remember as Catholics respect, peace when it come to following the bishop, the pope, not to say, "they are always right" anyone who knows the church history, one still has to have a matter of faith, respect of our Lord Jesus Christ, assent to what they try to do. I don't say you have to agree with, but to not make it a bashing.
- I feel my people, this is why I go into the classrooms, this is the crux. The aspect of throwing things away when we are not happy, if we can't find peace with it, it will eat at us. I tell people who come to me in confession, when they are struggling with something, "pray about it, and write, write and write until you can write no more. Typing doesn't work, you have to write! Offer it up in prayer."
- I don't think there is anyone here who is blaming you, I think what everyone in his gym is asking for is more time to make this decision. We've been told by someone that we can't expect more students so why are we changing so fast?
 - I saw something before I came that said it would be next school year 2025-2026, I don't know why the archbishop moved it up, the only thing I can think of is because we aren't building a new high school (building).
- Humphrey St. Francis & Holy family have a very long history, that they are very proud of. When Fr. Tom was here, we met with them (archdiocese) and we were asked to close the high school at Lindsay and they said absolutely no. We support ourselves on our own. If we don't do this, will we lose our grade schools too?
 - As it comes to losing the grade school, while I am here you will not lose it.
- How long are you going to be here Father? Fr. Olsen was also supposed to be here for a long period of time, but he's gone too?
 - No answer
- Who is going to take care of the school financially?
 - No answer.
- Who is paying for the rebranding?
 - No answer
- The original letter from the archbishop was quoted - stating that the decision for the mascot, name and colors would be local guidance? Does the archbishop understand the history behind our mascot, can he provide us at least 5 more schools who have meaning behind their name?
 - No response
- Can we get a committee in front of the archdiocese, archbishop and his decision-making team? It seems that we at least deserve that.
 - No response
- Most of us are parents, trying to raise our kids and they already have so many obstacles to overcome when they get out of here, and we need more priests, and then we are treated this way, how am I as a mom supposed to go home and tell my son to be a priest?
 - No Response
- Who is paying for the rebranding, when we are already facing major repairs, the boiler is about to go, the bats are so bad that service providers for our students at the grade school will only meet with students in the high school because at a public school it would not be considered safe environment? How are we going to focus on improving what we have? To sustain we have needs at the grade school that need to be addressed?
 - There is not much I can do in that regard.
- Earlier this year I helped the school get an updated mat for the wrestling program, by raising money, with the flyer logo on it, but now you're telling me I must send it back?
 - No response
- In a time when politically and financially things are unstable, can you explain the endowment and how can we use that money, can we take it out. Will we lose our endowment, where will it go? Because if we have to come up with half of the rebranding cost, that could be put to better use.

- There were rumors that at the end of this the archbishop was taking Lindsay Holy Family's money, that is not true. When it comes to the aspect of finances of the parish or a school, it does not go to the archdiocese, when it comes to a parish if it closes, ceases to be a parish, then the money follows the people. If a parish has 100, 40 goes to this and 40 go to this parish and 20 go to this parish that's how the money goes. 40/40/20. If I understand my basic church rules, I would understand that with the school it would be similar, but I can't say for sure. When it comes to the endowments, I can't say for sure how they are set up, I have 5 parishes. But I can say for certain it does not go to Omaha.
- Would we have access to the money (endowment)?
 - From my understanding we can only use what's above the principal.
- Would we have enough to build a new grade school?
 - No answer
- What happens if we do not change our branding, will he force us to close? Is Norfolk Catholic & Scotus prepared to absorb our students? What happens if we don't resolve this tonight?
 - We aren't going to resolve anything tonight; this is simply to hear questions and answer what I can.
- Why didn't the archbishop have a representative here?
 - I didn't tell them I was having the meeting
 - I don't think anyone would be around (holidays).
- If it's this important, why wouldn't they come out?
 - I can't speak to that.
- Is your only form of communication phone, email, letter and how long does it take for him to typically respond and for you to get a meeting with him?
 - We communicate for the most part, email or phone call. The aspect of meeting wise it depends on both of our schedules. Just like it does for anyone who wants to meet with me. But for most things, at least for me it is easier to do them face to face.
- Once you meet with the archbishop how will families know if there has been an extension or other information?
 - It will be communicated via the websites and other means.
 - I will provide a list of questions answered and unanswered on the website
 - I will provide a list of answers I am able to get
- Do you think that it would be reasonable to say to the archbishop that we are going to pause until we get further clarification?
 - I don't know how he will respond to that. In some ways no. He expects certain things to be done.

I am a teacher here at ST. Francis, for 17 going on 18 years. I have past teachers/coaches here in the stands, I have my father, my grandmother, and I intend for my daughter to attend this school. I worked at Boys town and made more money and could work at any public school and make more money, but I chose to come back here because it was God's calling for me. This is my vocation. I want to teach faith to our children. There is hatred, there is hurt, you are tearing families apart. This is our family. What are we teaching our children? What message are we sending to our children?"

- No response was made
- I am too from out of town, we chose to send our kids here from Madison and have always been welcomed. If this is going to happen, why are we not reaching out to Clarkson and Leigh, why would we miss that opportunity to be inviting to all other communities, if Lindsay isn't going to send students, why aren't we reaching out, there is potential that there are people who want to send their kids here for faith, not just for sports. We don't know how much the archbishop is being influenced by God, we can only trust. But I do think there is potential for good to come from this, and I don't understand why we aren't reaching out. There may be people from those who would choose to support it. I know there are other communities in the state that do that, so why are we not reaching out to them.
 - I would like to present that idea, I had success when I was at Osmond of doing that.
- As I see it, looking at the future, we've been here for 100 years. We are strong, Lindsay is strong, are we going to be the Guinee pigs of closing schools? Are we the idiots to close both schools?
 - I will ask the archbishop.

Father's closing comments:

The principals along with myself always fight for Catholic education, my job is to get everyone that I minister to Heaven, and it's sad to say that not everyone will. It even happened with Jesus and the apostles because they couldn't get themselves to change.

These were comments made throughout the night, that were not questions:

- I am Wade Pfeifer; I will speak for Lindsay a little bit. As for the school, we are going to move forward with that school, because we want to protect our community. It is our understanding that we will not lose any students to neighboring school. We are asking people to let us know if they are planning to leave because we can't lose anymore. We feel confident that 1-5 grades will stay (at Holy Family Grade school) and decide later. The high schoolers may choose to go to Humphrey High, because they have already been participating. So, we have asked Mr. Bishop and I asked Vickie, why are they messing with St. Francis? I have submitted two names. St. Francis Flyers and Holy Family Flyers. We are here to support you and for you to keep your name, it probably won't happen.
- It appears they don't care about us little folk.
- I have a request, that when any communication comes, anything to do with this school situation, that St. Francis and Holy family receive the exact same information in the exact same format. If you aren't checking the parish website regularly you might miss something. I'm just asking that everyone receive it at the same time and in the same way.
- We were all invited to send an email to Mrs. Dunn & Mr. Bishop, I have already done this and I think it is something we all can do. Fill the inboxes.
- I'm in an unusual position because I received vows from the archbishop, and I have a responsibility to him, but I'm also a business person and I think about if someone presented an idea to me that was going to cost a lot of time, money, pain and virtually showed no chance of success, I wouldn't be able to support it. I can't pretend to have the passion that others have, we moved here 10 years ago, I serve both Lindsay and Humphrey and I love them. I don't have a question, but I want to say this doesn't feel like a successful venture. Raising questions about something that you think is right and good is not unholy as long as it is done properly, so we should not feel guilty about asking questions.
- I feel as though our community is so successful because we take time to do things right and put great thought into it, the archbishop has to know that he has put us on a timeline that will not allow us to be successful, help us understand why he would put us on this impossible timeline.
- I'm sick and tired of the friends that I've lost, the lies and the deceit between the two communities, I sick and tired of how powerful we are, how good of communities we are and that we have to come into these conversations knowing that you may be judged. We are fighters and that's why this school has continued to be here. We will make the most of it. I don't want to look at each other every day and not trust each other, I hate the back talk and we can do this. Let's figure this out.
- If we are going to do this, we need to do it right. Our PE teacher was over heard recently telling the kids, who were washing tables in the cafeteria, do it and do it well! If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right!

Questions asked after the meeting:

Shouldn't you (archbishop) be focusing your attention and energy on opening new Catholic schools in Nebraska to serve those that don't have current access, not closing two perfectly thriving schools and losing people?

I would like to request a meeting of five elders from our parish of St. Francis to meet with the archbishop to help make a good decision and in a timely manner.

If a scholarship was awarded to St. Francis Student, will they be able to continue using it at the new school?

If we are truly closing and trying to become a central Catholic school then why aren't we bringing in other cluster parishes and gaining their support?

If a parishioner makes a tithe to the parish and states on the donation "not for school use", does the parish have to honor that or can the money be used in the general budget to cover their portion of the school expenses?

How will each parish's financial support of the new school be determined?

How does this affect the use of the Hassenstab gift that stated it was for the purpose of St. Francis School?