

# FRIENDS OF SACRED HEART UPDATE

Lexington, Massachusetts

www.sacredheartappeal.org

July 29-30, 2006

## *Two-Parish-One-Pastor Alternative in Cardinal's Hands*

### Work Continues on Draft Master Plan

**A**t the last joint Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) meeting on May 21, 2006, a Master Plan for the Catholic Community of Lexington was presented that proposed a merger of the parishes of St. Brigid and Sacred Heart. Fr. Mark O'Connell, the Canon Lawyer for the Archdiocese of Boston, attended the meeting in response to Fr. Colletti's request. During the meeting Fr. O'Connell noted that Cardinal O'Malley did not have a set plan for the Lexington Catholic Community, and could accept either the parish merger model or a two parish, one pastor model. The Cardinal's final choice would be influenced by the

supermajority approval (75% acceptance) of the two parishes involved. Later that evening, when the proposed Master Plan was taken to a vote by the combined PPC's, it did not receive a supermajority approval from council members. After some consideration, around the end of May, Fr. Colletti forwarded this Master Plan to Cardinal O'Malley, with a cover letter from the Master Planning Committee (MPC) that explained the process and the failure to obtain a supermajority affirmative vote from the combined PPC's.

In the days after the vote, work began on developing a more collaborative plan that would

propose a two-parish-one-pastor model. Over the last six weeks, the co-chairs of the St. Brigid and Sacred Heart PPC's, members of the MPC, and members of the Sacred Heart PPC have been working on the revised Master Plan based upon the two-parish-one-pastor model. Fr. Robert McMillan, who has assisted other parishes in the Archdiocese in developing plans associated with their reconfiguration, has met with representatives of the PPC's, MPC, and Fr. Colletti. Fr. McMillan will continue to provide assistance to us as the revised planning process moves ahead.

While there is a considerable way to go to realize a full consensus and approval from both PPC's, a draft of the revised plan has been prepared that has received informal, but not complete approval, from members of the MPC, the PPC co-chairs and a majority of the Sacred Heart PPC members.

A decision regarding the Lexington Catholic Community is anticipated from the Cardinal in the near future, perhaps by the end of July. In order to

## Religious Education Classes Return to Sacred Heart

**T**he combined Religious Education Commission for St. Brigid and Sacred Heart has been working over the summer to fill the staff position for the director of Religious Education. A number of candidates have been interviewed by Fr. Colletti, staff and commission members from

both parishes. Some candidates have been called back for a second interview, with an offer to be made (if not made already) to one prospective DRE very soon. The new DRE is expected to be on board prior to September to oversee the organiza-

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## Work Continues On Alternative Master Plan

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inform the Cardinal and provide him with some understanding of the ongoing efforts and movement towards a revised Master Plan, a draft of the plan was delivered on Friday, July 21. A cover letter, supported by 7 members of the Sacred Heart PPC, which described the work and progress since the May 21 joint PPC meeting, accompanied the draft revised Master Plan. Collaboration to develop the revised Master Plan will continue this summer.

With a revised Master Plan that would be responsive to the desires and needs of both parishes, optimism has been expressed by those involved that a widespread commitment could be obtained from the PPC's and diverse groups within each parish by the late summer or early fall. Acceptance for this Master Plan would allow the commencement of a period of reconciliation, renewal, and revitalization, not only for the Lexington Catholic Community, but for the Archdiocese as well. It would enable all of us to share our gifts to realize our potential as Catholics worshipping together in a community that respects the needs and integrity of each parish in a positive and peaceful manner.

## Religious Ed Returns

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tion and implementation of the Religious Education program for the Lexington Catholic Community. The Commission will continue to meet over the summer to further plan and prepare for the coming year.

Recent parish bulletins have announced that classes for students in grades 1-6 will be offered during weekdays at St. Brigid's and on Sundays at Sacred Heart, coordinated with the liturgies. Classes for older students will be offered at various times, either on Sundays or times and places to be determined. Initial mix-ups in the format and distribution of registration forms have or are being addressed.

The final determination of and set up for classes, needs for teachers, supplies and support will be determined based upon the number of registrations received. Sacred Heart had a long and very strong tradition of Sunday morning Religious Ed. This program provided opportunities for families to attend a liturgy together, gather and interact with other parishioners, and build the community through the shared hospitality and educational opportunities. The Sunday morning Religious Ed contributed significantly to the vitality and

growth of the parish.

Prior to the announcement that Sacred Heart parish would close as part of the Reconfiguration within the Archdiocese of Boston, there were 450 students enrolled in the Religious Education program. In their responses to the parish survey conducted early in this year, a high percentage of Sacred Heart respondents indicated a desire to reinstate and participate in a Sunday morning Religious Ed program at the parish.

However, as of last weekend, only 20 registrations for Sunday Religious Education classes at Sacred Heart had been received. It is critical for our community's growth and renewal to not only bring back families with children and young adults to our Sunday liturgies and Religious Ed program, but also to ensure that both children and adults are involved in active and successful educational and fellowship activities.

Please be sure to register your children for the program, especially if you are interested in the Sunday morning opportunities at Sacred Heart, as soon as possible. Registration forms are available at the parish office or on-line through the parish website.