



Frequently Asked Questions about the Closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Church

I understand there was to be a site review committee meeting to discuss the input from the parish meetings back in December. What was the outcome of the meeting? After several parish information sessions for all parishioners regarding the future of Our Lady of Lourdes Church on December 3, 2023, the Parish Discernment Team met on December 9, 2023, to determine the best path forward. After much prayer, serious discernment and thoughtful dialogue, the Parish Discernment Team made the recommendation to the Multisite Review Team to end regular Sunday worship at the Our Lady of Lourdes Church on May 19, 2024. We received word that this recommendation has been accepted by the Archdiocesan Multisite Review Senior Leadership team and will be reviewed by the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council in March 2024.

How could the Our Lady of Lourdes community increase attendance when the number of Masses was reduced, and there was a restriction on the use of the parking lot? Our Lady of Lourdes is a large church and can accommodate many worshippers. Historically, attendance at many Sunday Masses was rather low, and therefore, with limited priest help between the two worship sites, it was necessary to consolidate Mass times. Despite numerous efforts to increase participation at the Sunday Masses over the last few years, Mass attendance has steadily dropped.

What are the estimated costs to address the capital improvements at Our Lady of Lourdes Church? What about ongoing maintenance? Our Lady of Lourdes Church needs over \$2 million in immediate repairs. There is no viable plan to raise that amount of money from our parishioners and still be able to maintain the church building for any future capital needs. According to last year's parish annual report, Our Lady of Lourdes Church incurred \$480,000 in operating expenses (which does include shared expenses of the entire parish) and received \$260,000 through Sunday and Holy Day collections, donations from the Grotto and other income. There was a \$220,000 shortfall to operate Our Lady of Lourdes Church. This, sadly, is not sustainable.

Why can't the parish fundraise and seek large donations to address the capital repairs needed for the Our Lady of Lourdes Church Building? Historically, our parish fundraising efforts and events would not raise enough money to cover the annual operating shortfall. With the sale of the school building, there are limited options to hold fundraising events locally. These fundraising efforts would not provide a long-term solution to the church's financial needs.

If we are one parish, why can't we utilize the financial reserves and donations of St. Mary of the Lake Church to keep Our Lady of Lourdes operating? You can see from the parish's annual report that the income received at St. Mary of the Lake Church has already been subsidizing the operations of Our Lady of Lourdes Church. This is not a good use of the parish's financial resources. Despite the reserves on deposit at the archdiocesan bank, many of these funds are earmarked for specific purposes.

Can the proceeds from the sale of Our Lady of Lourdes School and the adjacent parking lot be used to make the necessary repairs to Our Lady of Lourdes Church? What happened to the proceeds of the property sale? For many years throughout the archdiocese, the use of property sales and lease/rental income was used to fill the budget gap. This has proven to be a poor use of our resources. The *Renew My Church Initiative* was a response to this reality. Parishes have failed to use proceeds for evangelization and mission-driven efforts, and therefore, we are suffering from our past failures. Archdiocesan policy now states that using the proceeds of a property sale cannot be used to simply to repair buildings with no plan for future sustenance of that building. The property sale proceeds are deposited at the archdiocesan bank earning interest income until the parish administration with consultation of the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils determines how the funds should be used or invested for future use.

When will the last Mass be at Our Lady of Lourdes Church? A final Mass will be celebrated at Our Lady of Lourdes Church on Sunday, May 19. The community of Our Lady of Lourdes will be asked for input on this final liturgy. Former priests and parishioners will be asked to celebrate the legacy of Our Lady of Lourdes Church. More details will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead.

What happens after Sunday, May 19, 2024? Masses will no longer be celebrated at Our Lady of Lourdes Church. All liturgical celebrations including funerals and weddings will be held at St. Mary of the Lake Church.

What will happen to the Grotto? The Grotto will no longer be open for prayer and adoration after May 19, 2024. The parish will look at opportunities to relocate or rebuild something like the Grotto at another location.

In what ways will the parish assist the parishioners who walk to Our Lady of Lourdes Church find another worship site for Masses and Adoration that is close to Lourdes? It is the intent that all parishioners be able to fully participate in the life of the parish at St. Mary of the Lake Church. The parish will make every effort to ensure the community of Our Lady of Lourdes Church is served and provided the opportunity to attend Mass, devotional services and other sacraments. This could include transportation options to St. Mary of the Lake Church for Masses and other various parish activities. If parishioners who attend Our Lady of Lourdes would like to attend another parish. Our pastoral staff is willing to help make an introduction to the neighboring pastor at the new parish.

Does St. Mary of the Lake Church have to the capacity to handle the worshippers from Our Lady of Lourdes Church? Yes. While the attendance at St. Mary of the Lake Church is healthy, there is always room for more. The parish will consider additional Masses at St. Mary of the Lake Church to accommodate the community from Our Lady of Lourdes as well as the anticipated increase due to evangelization efforts in our community.

How will Our Lady of Lourdes Church be incorporated into St. Mary of the Lake Church? After the closure of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, sacred and momentous items will be brought to St. Mary of the Lake Church for safekeeping and use in our sacred worship.