

## Family 18

### St. James Cathedral (Seattle), Christ Our Hope (Seattle), Immaculate Conception (Seattle)

Parishioners at all three parishes recommended that St. James Cathedral stand alone because of its role as the cathedral church of the Archdiocese and because of its sheer size and volume of activity. Parishioners at all three parishes also strongly suggested that Immaculate Conception, as the oldest church in the Archdiocese and cultural home especially to the Black Catholic community in Seattle, should stand alone and be preserved by the Archdiocese. People in all three parishes largely agreed that in any family model, Immaculate and Christ Our Hope carry distinctions that merit retaining and using both properties as active sites. Many also mentioned that ordaining women as deacons and priests and accepting married priests would address the priest shortage problem.

**St. James Cathedral:** Most parishioners who participated strongly believe St. James Cathedral should be a stand-alone parish given its unique nature as the cathedral church of the archdiocese and seat of the archbishop. It has a “responsibility to the Church, to be in relationship to the whole Archdiocese.” In addition, due to the cathedral’s exceptional size and resources, most expressed deep concern that the Cathedral would overwhelm the two smaller parishes, diminishing their identity and unique character, which they almost unanimously appreciated. “I heard a lot of compassion for the small communities.” “I think they might be surprised how much we are concerned about how they feel at this process.” A smaller number supported the idea of being part of a family to bring greater diversity of people, ideas, culture, and experience to the cathedral, which some noted has a tendency to be “insular.” “I love St. James, but every once in a while, we can get a little grand. It would do us good to be with churches with more modest means, less grand surroundings, trappings. That’s an interesting opportunity to ‘ground us.’” Parishioners also expressed concern about the success of a partnership given the differences in worship style among the three parishes, the significant cultural differences unique to each parish, a perceived increased workload for priests and staff and the financial impact on St. James as the parish with the greatest resources. However, parishioners also saw how a partnership with the smaller and different parish environments could be beneficial. “The pooling of volunteers for liturgy, outreach, service – it could open up more opportunities for all of us. I’m hopeful, and this is a good starting point.” “I am happy with the collaboration and continuity even though these communities are very different, but I think in the diversity, there is very much hope that we will grow if we live our values.”

**Immaculate Conception:** Parishioners who participated saw few benefits to being part of the proposed parish family. There was significant worry that their voices would not be heard within the two wealthier parishes and that their cultural and spiritual traditions as a diverse, multicultural community would not be nurtured or supported in the larger family model. “We have to be part of any family we join. We bring our gifts, and they shouldn’t be changed.” Parishioners generally shared a high level of anxiety and sadness that they would be overshadowed by the cathedral in particular and that they would not enjoy equal representation in how the family would develop. There should be “equal balance among all aspects of parishes so there is a true fostering of cultures, economics.” Parishioners also expressed a sense that families are being grouped by financial considerations only and not cultural compatibility, which is more important. Other concerns noted were loss of identity, whether daily Mass would continue at the church, the limitations of sharing priests in terms of building relationships, and the “historical significance (of the parish) as it relates to social justice.” At the same time, parishioners saw in the family an opportunity to meet new people,

learn from others, strengthen youth and outreach programs, strengthen finances, and share their own gifts with others: "Other churches will benefit from our spirituality at Immaculate." "Current proposal could help to 'loosen up' St. James to come into the 21st century diversity and inclusion journey."

**Christ Our Hope:** Parishioners expressed concern about losing their particular programs and culture, closing or changing Masses, losing their special relationship with the Josephinum, and losing their parish name. Since the parish is only 12 years old, many present-day parishioners are founding members who participated in forming the mission statement for the parish and choosing the name, and that identity is important to them. People also expressed significant concern with the loss or diminishment of their "lay-led" parish model and ministries since they perceive the family structure under Partners to be "a very clerical structure of leadership." We have "concern that our community won't have the ability to lead ourselves. We have confidence in our CoH community but don't have confidence that we'll be given the ability to lead and manage ourselves." Parishioners also voiced concern about the "power and size imbalance" with the cathedral, the "large, deferred maintenance costs" at Immaculate Conception, the loss of relationship with priests and staff, and potentially no longer having staff on site. Among the benefits of joining the family, parishioners cited the greater availability of resources for growing and expanding social and ministry programs, enhanced administrative and office support, having a larger number of persons to participate in parish life, serving as a model for lay-led ministry, and meeting new people. "Parishioners are hopeful that this can help us to focus on being better disciples for Christ. An opportunity to really lean into our mission and focus on coming together as the body of Christ."

### **Concrete Changes Suggested:**

- St. James should remain as the mother church of the Archdiocese and not merge with other parishes (many suggested).
- St. James Cathedral and Christ Our Hope (several suggested)
- St. James Cathedral and Immaculate Conception only – allow us to welcome a community of color; already has a relationship with the cathedral (a few suggested)
- Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph and St. Therese – as an alternative to the cathedral being a partner and because there are already relationships that exist between these parishes (several suggested)
- Christ Our Hope and Sacred Heart (a few suggested)
- Immaculate Conception with St. Joseph because Immaculate's origins are with the Jesuits (a few suggested)
- Immaculate, St. Therese, Christ Our Hope and Sacred Heart, as more culturally similar and having a better balance of resources to share (a few suggested)
- Immaculate Conception, given its history, should be a shrine or should be preserved, even if it is eventually not its own parish (a few suggested)
- Immaculate Conception with St. Therese – more of a natural fit (one suggested)
- Christ Our Hope and Immaculate Conception - as an alternative to the cathedral being a partner (one suggested)
- Immaculate Conception and St. Therese (several suggested)
- St. Joseph with Christ Our Hope (one suggested)



## Recommended Parish Family - 17

St. James Cathedral (Seattle), Immaculate Conception (Seattle)

## Family Recommendation Comparison

Original Proposed Families	Recommended Family
St. James Cathedral (Seattle), Immaculate Conception (Seattle), Christ Our Hope (Seattle)	St. James Cathedral (Seattle), Immaculate Conception (Seattle)
Our Lady of Fatima (Seattle), St. Anne (Seattle), Sacred Heart of Jesus (Seattle)	Our Lady of Fatima (Seattle), St. Anne (Seattle), Sacred Heart of Jesus (Seattle), Christ Our Hope (Seattle)

## Reasons for Recommended Changes

This change was recommended in response to the desires expressed by the people of God to connect Christ Our Hope and Sacred Heart due to their similar geography and overlapping charisms of service to the downtown Seattle community, as well as desires expressed to have fewer parishes connected to St. James Cathedral due to its unique position in the Archdiocese. This recommendation was made with the recognition that the relationship between St. James Cathedral and Immaculate Conception will be unique and require support through the process of becoming one canonical parish.

## How to Give Input

- Your parish may hold an input session and submit feedback from that session in a group.
- You can also provide direct feedback at these links:
  - English – <https://archseattle.org/for-parishes/forparishespartners/partners-public-comment-202308/>
  - Spanish – <https://archseattle.org/para-parroquias/companeros/companeros-comentario-publico-noviembre-de-2023/?lang=es>
  - Vietnamese – <https://archseattle.org/for-parishes/forparishespartners/partners-public-comment-202308-vie/> (in the process of translation)
- All input on the recommended families is due by **December 15**.

## Things to Remember

- This family configuration is still a recommendation: there is the possibility that some families may change as a result of Archbishop Etienne’s final discernment.
- All parish families will receive at least two priests; one pastor, and one or more parochial vicar(s).
- Final parish families will be announced in early 2024, and families will form July 1.
- Pastor assignments will be announced in Spring of 2024.
- Families will have roughly three years to determine their plan for becoming one canonical parish; it is during this time of discernment that major decisions around Mass times, building use, and other topics will be made.