

Questions & Answers

Here are common questions and answers that have been brought up.

Q = Why can't St. Rita be merged with St. Charles?

A = St. Rita and St. Charles, like most parishes, are geographic parishes under canon law, which means that they cover a defined territory. Since their boundaries are not contiguous, they cannot be merged to form one geographic parish.

Q = What happened to the St. Leo merger option?

A = After reviewing everything involved with a merger, the Jesuits have declined the option of merging St. Rita with St. Leo/Sacred Heart parishes.

Q = Why didn't the survey go out?

A = The reason for the survey was to give parishioners an opportunity to say which option they preferred: joining the new parish community or merging with St. Leo parish. Since St. Leo merger is not an option, there wasn't a need to do the survey.

Q = Why can't we continue having Fr. Ron Knudsen say Sunday Mass at St. Rita?

A = Fr. Ron is a senior priest, which means that he is actually retired. He is currently filling in the role as a parish priest. His continued availability is not something we can rely on. A healthy parish is not one that provides one Mass on the weekend and no other sacramental, spiritual, discipleship, charity, evangelization or other ministries.

Q = Why can't Visitation and St. Rita be combined with one Sunday Mass at St. Rita for both parishioners?

A = The pastor and his parish leadership of the new parish community in Tacoma will determine what should be done with the parishes' facilities. The whole reason for joining in community is to have a strong and vital parish comprised of all the parishioners; not to have it divided into two parishes.

Q = Why can't St. Rita parishioners find their own priest and be categorized as a National Italian parish?

A = Parishioners do not seek their own priest. All priests are assigned by the Archbishop based on recommendations by the Office of the Vicar for Clergy and the Priest Personnel Board.

Q = Why are we told that St. Rita's finances are in decline when we believe it is financially sound?

A = Over the years St. Rita parishioners have been good stewards of the money in the savings account. This money is primarily from generous bequests made from parishioners' estates. However, that money will not last long if it is needed to pay for the parish's monthly operational expenses. Overall, the parish operating expenses exceed its income. A recap of the last three years shows:

- year ending June 2018 expenses were \$21,275 more than income collected;
- year ending June 2019 expenses were \$3,600 less than income collected;
- year ending June 2020 expenses were \$11,000 more than income collected;
- and as of February 2021 expenses are \$20,380 more than income collected.

Q = Why does St. Rita have to pay for St. Patrick staff support when volunteers could provide this service?

A = St. Patrick's staff provides support services for St. Rita and Holy Cross. St. Rita previously had paid staff under a previous pastor with office administration, bookkeeping, marriage preparation and funerals. St. Rita no longer has its own paid staff, so their salary/benefit costs have been replaced by a monthly stipend, paid to St. Patrick for bookkeeping, administration & facilities, etc.

Q = Aren't there many St. Rita volunteers available to provide services?

A = The reality is that St. Rita has struggled to find volunteers for the last few years. A minimal number of volunteers are doing multiple jobs.

Q = Why did Tuesday Noon and Saturday morning Masses stop since COVID?

A = COVID certainly influenced the reduction in Tuesday and Saturday morning masses at St. Rita, but the most important reason was the lack of attendance even before COVID.

Q = St. Rita created a charism of giving to the least fortunate in our city, so how can we continue to serve if we are no longer a parish?

A = There is absolutely no reason to stop supporting the groups St. Rita has supported when combined with the new parish community. There should be even more folks available to strengthen these efforts. All parishes support Catholic Community Services and Nativity House might find even more support with a larger faith community.

Q = What are the subcommittees being created for the new parish community?

A = The subcommittees provide representation from all the parish communities to assist in the process of building greater inroads for a unified parish. They will produce a list of recommendations for the new pastor. St. Rita Stakeholders will be contacting parishioners to ask them to join these subcommittees. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Debbie Orlando or Marla Grassi.