

St. Blaise Parish, Austintown, Ohio

February 8, 2026, Town Hall Report

At the request of Bishop Bonnar, Fr. Gregory Fedor (Pastor) hosted a town hall meeting for St. Blaise parishioners at the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) campus to gather their opinions on the sale of IHM property to current tenant, Horizon Academy. Bishop Bonnar also asked Fr. Fedor to give parishioners an opportunity to express their opinions about the vision for St. Blaise Parish in the next five years. In light of the parish's ongoing planning work and the recent development of a vision document, parishioners were asked to focus on their vision for the IHM campus.

The following report begins with a summary of the findings and ends with the raw data. The survey was administered both at the town hall meeting in paper form and made available to all parishioners online and in paper form for one week following the town hall meeting.

SURVEY SUMMARY

Overall Response Volume

- **Total survey responses:** 241
- **Vision question responses (open-ended):** 151
- This is a strong participation rate, especially for a reflective, open-ended question for a parish with average weekly Mass attendance of approximately 600.

Question 1: Sell the IHM School Building

Result: Very strong support

- **Yes:** 207 (89%)
- **No:** 24 (11%)
- **No response:** 10

Interpretation:

There is overwhelming agreement that selling the school building is appropriate. This is one of the clearest consensus points in the entire survey.

This likely reflects:

- Recognition that the building no longer serves its original function
- Awareness of maintenance costs
- Desire to align facilities with current parish realities

Question 2: Sell the Entire IHM Campus (School, Church, and Rectory – Not including the Parish Center)

Result: Strong opposition

- **Yes:** 36 (16%)
- **No:** 189 (84%)
- **No response:** 16

Interpretation:

Parishioners strongly distinguish between selling the school building and selling the entire campus.

This suggests:

- People are pragmatic about unused or burdensome buildings
- But deeply value maintaining a meaningful presence at IHM
- There is broad resistance to a full withdrawal from the campus

This is not resistance to change; it is resistance to abandonment. The parishioners have consistently shown their willingness to change over the past several decades.

Question 3: Vision for the Future of the IHM Campus

This question reveals the heart of parishioner imagination. Several strong themes emerged.

Theme 1: Preserve IHM as a Sacred Space and Community Anchor (Most dominant theme)

Many parishioners expressed a desire for IHM to remain:

- A worship site

- A spiritual home
- A place of gathering and belonging

Common sentiments included:

- Desire to continue Mass and sacramental life there
- Emotional and spiritual attachment
- Recognition of its importance to Austintown Catholics and to the Austintown community in general
- Seeing the campus as a unique complement rather than a duplicate of the St. Joseph campus

“This building is more than bricks and budgets to me. It represents safety, belonging, and decades of memories and spiritual life. When we close spaces like this, we lose something irreplaceable. Church should stand for connection and care, not simply financial efficiency.”

Theme 2: Expand Community Outreach and Service

This was one of the strongest and most consistent themes.

Parishioners envisioned IHM as a hub for:

- Food pantry and hunger ministries
- Outreach to the poor and vulnerable
- Other ministries serving real human needs

“IHM is a vital part of service to the Austintown community. We have a lot of outreach with our food pantry. Both St. Joe's & IHM complement each other to fulfill so many needs of Austintown.”

This suggests parishioners see the campus as a sacred place where spirituality is expressed as care for others, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Theme 3: Use Remaining Facilities in Flexible, Creative Ways

Many respondents encouraged adaptive reuse rather than preservation for its own sake.

Ideas included:

- Meeting and ministry space
- Multi-purpose gathering areas

- Shared use with community organizations
- Worship and ministries distinct from but complementary to ministries at the St. Joseph campus

This reflects openness to transformation rather than resistance to change.

“...the diocese has experimented with IHM by piloting the Parish Administrator model and other campaigns, as it endeavors to deal with the declining number of priests. We, the parishioners of IHM, always reorient and find a way to work and thrive through adversity and new challenges.”

Theme 4: Desire for Parish Unity Across Campuses

Many respondents emphasized:

- One parish identity, not two competing locations
- Thoughtful integration of both campuses with unique identities and purposes
- Strategic use of buildings to support mission, not nostalgia

“I wonder what it would be like to develop the two campuses in distinct ways. Maybe the St. Joseph campus could have certain kinds of ministries and a certain style of Mass, and the IHM campus could have others ministries and a different approach to Mass than the St. Joseph campus. It would all be unified by being St. Blaise parish.”

This reflects emotional maturity and pastoral realism. St. Blaise parishioners want to be one parish with an expansive campus that serves a variety of purposes under the umbrellas of spiritual growth for all people and community outreach.

Theme 5: Strong Awareness of Financial Reality

Parishioners frequently acknowledged:

- The importance of financial sustainability
- The need to reduce maintenance burdens
- The importance of stewardship

This is not denial; it is discernment. There were frequent references to IHM’s history of generosity.

“This church continues to have parishioners show up for weekly mass along with community-based events, and I see us continue to do well financially because of our strong leadership within the IHM campus. Our campus is full of parishioners of past generations who have taken care of this campus, and the traditions, love, and hard work of those individuals continues to light our church.”

Theme 6: Desire for a Vibrant, Future-Oriented Parish

Many expressed hope for:

- Greater engagement of younger families
- A welcoming, active parish environment
- A parish that serves both spiritual and community needs

“I also think we need to adjust the way we do all of our ministries, including worship, so that a broader population of people could feel spiritually helped by our parish.”

The vision was rarely nostalgic; it was forward-looking and expansive to include a variety of people who are not currently present.

The Overall Narrative Emerging from the Data

Taken together, the responses tell a remarkably coherent story:

Parishioners are realistic, mission-oriented, and thoughtful.

They overwhelmingly support:

- Selling the unused school building to reduce unnecessary facility burden
- Adapting to new realities and repurposing physical space based on the parish’s emerging vision as a Catholic spiritual hub for the betterment of Austintown
- Maintaining a meaningful and unique parish presence at IHM
- Using the campus as a center for worship, community, and service
- Ensuring decisions strengthen, not diminish, the parish’s future

Other important insights:

This is not a divided parish.

It is a parish making careful distinctions.

Parishioners are not resisting change; they are supporting purposeful change aligned with mission and vision.

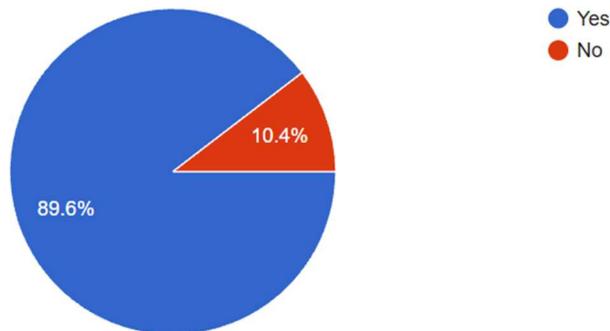
They want to:

- Let go of what no longer serves life.
- Preserve and transform what still can.

SURVEY RAW DATA

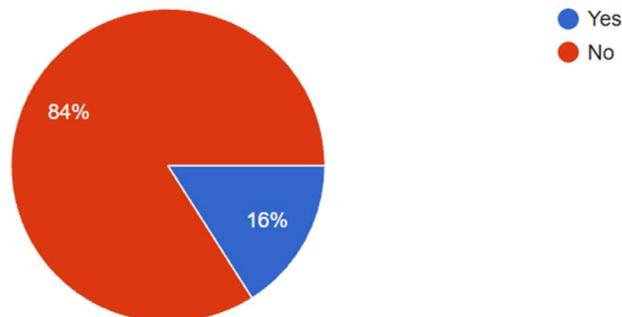
Question #1: I think St. Blaise Parish should sell the IHM school building.

231 responses



Question #2: I think St. Blaise Parish should sell the IHM school building, the IHM church building, and the IHM rectory.

225 responses



Question #3: The St. Blaise Planning Team is currently developing strategies based on an overall parish vision for a vibrant future. This vision has been reviewed by parishioners and adapted to parishioner feedback. The vision does not have property decisions within its scope. In a few sentences, please describe your vision for St. Blaise Parish as it relates to the IHM campus. What do you see as a viable future?

I think this action by the bishop should be a wake-up call for the parish. It's time to move in a new and bold direction. We should focus our energy on meeting the real needs of people inside and outside of the church. How else will we sustain and grow our membership? I also think we need to adjust the way we do all of our ministries, including worship, so that a broader population of people could feel spiritually helped by our parish.

I feel we have a beautiful hard-working community-parish. Our church has been constantly improving and is beautiful due to the hard workers and good ideas. It's a very friendly parish with good ideas. Please don't sell our church.

I see the IHM campus continuing to be a successful parish and continuing to work with St. Joe's campus to make St. Blaise strong.

Growth

Continue to keep the two parishes under St. Blaise as is now. Father Fedor is doing a great job and should have total control with the finance committee of separating the church, not the bishop.

I would like to see both campuses stay as is. We are both doing wonderful projects in both. We are all coming to terms with both campuses doing things together. It was told in the very beginning that we are both doing good financially and we should keep this going as is.

I wish that both parishes could understand that we are one parish, not two. Seeing this report shows that IHM is a very viable part of St. Blaise Parish. In the future, as more people move or pass on from old age or illness, the selling of the church will probably need revisited.

I feel the future of the parish should continue to stay in the direction it is, our parishioners have continued to support the church financially and spiritually, we have rolled with many changes from the diocese and continued to thrive with out many ministries . Closing the parish will be detrimental . Father Fedor is doing a phenomenal job and as long as he is able to do so with the help of fill in priests , it should stay as it is .

IHM Church should remain open. The church is strong along with family members.

This is an awesome church and parish with a lot of great things happening all the time. To close this church would be a harmful thing for the diocese.

A viable parish with a church

Keep our church

Keep the church

Keep our church

Keep our church

We are doing good financially and the sale of the school will help us to keep open and invest in our future. We have been here for over 70 years and we want to stay. God will provide.

Great place to live in Austintown

Welcoming supportive community in Austintown-Youngstown area with quality religious services.

Bring back children involvement! We used to have children involved in Christmas Eve Mass - We loved that!

Start children's choir! Involve both churches in all!

We need to keep our church. We are a family here.

Build up membership - Visual campaign to promote our church. Tell of the good things we do. Get out to the community.

Keep IHM church open. Sell school.

Keep church open

Keep St. Blaise vital and growing.

By the grace of God's blessing, we are able to keep both campuses running! May our Lord help send more faithful parishioners.

One Parish - Two Sites!! Has anyone considered selling school building at St. Joe? As a teacher from a charter school, I would be looking into St. Joe's building, it is all in one. Why isn't that an option?

IHM is a thriving giving parish. Don't change that. Keep growing!

Keep both campuses. We want to be a beacon in the Austintown community. There are many activities and community programs visible at both campuses.

Parish Center is too valuable to be part of a package deal.

We want 2 campuses!

We want 2 churches in our community. St. Blaise (IHM) is alive and well, people are returning to church, this is a very special place for the Austintown community.

Continue to keep the church building, rectory, social hall and garages open. Keep our community of parishioners intact. This is what is important to sustain Catholicism.

The vision is good. Stay the same.

We are obviously in the black, so there is the future; we are growing. Attendance is better.

IHM is a vital part of service to the Austintown community. We have a lot of outreach with our food pantry. Both St. Joe's & IHM compliment each other to fulfill so many needs of Austintown.

Sell the school ONLY (property around to be included). Since the food pantry can not remain in the school cafeteria and we can not build a replacement, a compromise of using the rectory and garages will work.

Two campuses, however, clubs and organizations, including fish fries, need to merge so parishioners of both campuses are united as St. Blaise.

St. Blaise wants to be a presence in Austintown. We need to maintain two viable campuses to be as strong as possible. IHM has been strong for many years

To continue as we are and work on growing all facets of St. Blaise.

My vision for the IHM campus in the future is to continue serving St. Blaise parishioners as a place to worship. I also envision it to continue serving the community in its function providing food for those in need and providing a social hall to rent for the community to use.

We are in the black which shows more people are starting to come and the church is building more families. I grew up in this church and family is also growing. Once the 43 priests die off, how many churches are you going to close, and what is going to happen to the Catholic faith? I see a great future in our church.

I believe St. Blaise Parish is a very viable asset to Austintown. Both campuses are strong and offer so much to the community.

The Parish of St. Blaise is made up of 2 campuses who work well together but also have unique ministries. The food pantry has been a vibrant part of our community. The students of St. Blaise CCD have had the opportunities to celebrate Mass together at both campuses and be influenced by traditions that were developed by members of both campuses when they were 2 parishes. We worked hard to make this merger successful but still maintain both campuses. If we are financially supporting this, there is no reason to close a church campus that is still providing unique services to our whole community.

Both churches contribute to the vibrant parish that we are. If IHM is closed and consolidated, we will lose a fair portion of the active people which would hurt the parish as a whole.

We are a viable parish and have developed a positive future before we combined with St. Joes. We have only become stronger with two sites under the name of St. Blaise Parish. We as St. Blaise Parish are the only force of Catholicism in Austintown and we are a positive force. Father Fedor is a great leader over our Parish of St. Blaise. The parish works well together and also is not in the negative. I don't see any viable reason to sell the church or rectory. Maybe the bishop can come and experience the community of St. Blaise and see why we feel strongly about keeping the church and rectory.

I want St. Blaise to be a vibrant loving parish that allows us to continue our good works.

St. Blaise Parish has 2 thriving campuses. IHM and St. Joseph's. I see both campuses as loving, vibrant places of worship and outreach. As a 50+ year member of IHM, I continue to see great things coming out of this church. My children and grandchildren are active in the parish. Our food pantry serves many people. Please do not destroy this wonderful place of worship and community outreach! We do great things here!

I feel that the IHM Campus is vital to the continued growth of St Blaise Parish. My fear is that if we close the IHM campus, we will lose parishioners to other parishes or even worse, maybe loose them as Catholics. Change like this can be detrimental to the parish.

My vision for St. Blaise Parish as it relates to the IHM campus is that it continues to be a welcoming, faith-centered space that supports worship, community connection, and outreach. A viable future includes using the campus in ways that strengthen parish life, encourage engagement across generations, and respond to the evolving needs of the parish and surrounding community. The IHM campus can serve as a place where faith formation, service, and fellowship come together in a sustainable and mission-driven way.

I wonder what it would be like to develop the two campuses in distinct ways. Maybe the St. Joseph campus could have certain kinds of ministries and a certain style of Mass, and the IHM campus could have others ministries and a different approach to Mass than the St. Joseph campus. It would all be unified by being St. Blaise parish, and we could have a major St. Blaise celebration every year for everyone from both campuses to reinforce our unity even though we have differences at each campus. Another way we could unite everyone from both campuses could be to do an off site retreat every year. All parishioners could go to a retreat house somewhere not too far away for an overnight with lots of spiritual and recreational activities that emphasize our unity as a parish.

With nearby Parishes closing, many people will need to find a new "home." IHM can fill that need and welcome these displaced parishioners into our family!

Selling the church serves no one except the school. Let them build their own gym. There are too many organizations at IHM that function very well and do not need to change anything. The food pantry with a few changes can fit and operate very well in the rectory/ garages. The parish center is a money maker and selling it would be counterproductive. Many church organizations use the parish center and it is a great place to gather and serves as a great extension of the church.

St. Blaise Parish has shown itself to be a vibrant and committed Catholic presence in Austintown. To take away the IHM campus, would impact negatively how St. Blaise ministers to the Austintown community, particularly in regards to the Food Pantry. If there is a decrease in participation from the IHM community, then selling the entire property can be considered but to do so now would be killing a lively community. Plus there would be a lot of parishioners from both campuses who will no longer trust the diocese.

Immaculate Heart of Mary is still a growing Catholic church. One of the jobs of the bishop is to grow the church. If IHM is closed a number of the parishioners will leave St. Blaise and a number of them WILL stop attending the Catholic Churches. My wife and I have been parishioners here for approximately 45 years (previously at St. Dominics in Youngstown) and do not want to have to change again.

My husband stated my thoughts already

I got involved in the food pantry ministry a little over a year ago, not as something to do for the parish but more to help the people in our area that need help. Last summer I placed a watermelon in the back seat of a car next to a five year old boy who exclaimed "oh boy a watermelon" and the look of joy on his face. Need I say more but this ministry must be continued at IHM campus.

I think we are making great strides in having the Parish Center be a viable source of income. I also think our community greatly benefits from the Food Pantry and the programs and parishioners at our church. I don't see WHY, if we sell the school building, we shouldn't be permitted to use some of that money to add a heated pole building or necessary structure to continue to grow the Food Pantry, that in turn can help grow our parish community by having people join because they may be the ones benefiting from our Food Pantry, and looking for a church community to join.

The combined churches is new to us and taking the church too might be too dramatic for many. If Horizon wants the school,, maybe, in time, the church may have to go too but not now!

I do not see the dwindling parish members able to afford two campuses. Therefore I would seriously consider selling the IHM property. It may be due diligence to hire the appropriate appraiser.

I see a very welcoming and giving community. We have a great many volunteers who provide food assistance to hundreds of families. We have many volunteers who assist Father with spiritual needs in our community as well as addressing some who also need help in other ways. I see this continuing in the years ahead. We are financially able to have two vibrant campuses with a congregation willing to share the gifts that God has given to us.

We are a very giving parish with many hands to do God's work. We are able to support two campuses and I know we can continue to do so.

Selling the IHM campus does not affect me. The times I have attend events that involve younger people on that campus (CCD events, school events after the school merged, Youth ministry after the program merged) I have not felt welcomed and I dread when I am required to go there. I always feel like I am an outsider and I cannot have any input to what we are doing. I feel like my family and I are always visitors there and not considered equals under the St Blaise name. (I would also like to point out I felt like this before the "why are THEY here" comment at the town hall meeting. I came to the meeting to hear the announcement first hand and not through rumors and to see if I had any input that could be helpful)

I believe selling would be the best course as the church would not only gain that money to help, but eliminate future cost by only needing to run one church. Our attendance has dwindled and this would be a financially smart choice, especially in coming years if attendance does not increase.

With the current trends of parish mergers and closings, I think it would be a smart decision to at least look into the cost savings to operate one campus. If only a sale of the school, concerns this would make IHM only an occasional worship site like so many in our diocese or a closure. At that point, hope Horizon would still be interested in purchase.

Selling the school makes a lot of sense as it is highly unlikely that we will ever have enough students to ever fill it again. Just make sure the purchase price outweighs the rent revenue that will be lost. I do not support selling the rectory and church. I believe the parish needs to put a more visible effort into bringing people back to church. And selling the school should put us in a better financial position for the church to become more self sufficient. I will ultimately support whatever your final decisions are, but I do feel that selling off the church and rectory would basically mean you are throwing in the towel and giving up on the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Good luck and God Bless.

We have two churches within a mile of each other. All can be accommodated at the campus on New Road much more efficiently and effectively. It is a sensitive topic, but is the right thing to do. It is going to happen eventually and there is an interested buyer now.

We will be down to one location eventually and are mostly there now. There is an interested buyer so we should sell.

An opportunity is presenting itself to sell the IHM property. In my opinion it should be sold instead of having all those buildings sitting empty and have to worry about selling them in the future.

St. Blaise currently has a vibrant community in both campuses that work together but also contribute different traditions, experiences, services, and ministries. Based on the information I have reviewed, selling the school would benefit our parish and financially, we would be able to keep both campuses and continue the ministries and events that benefit the whole parish as well as our community. It does not make sense to sell the other buildings considering the financial growth this campus has had when members of both campuses have benefitted from the activities at both campuses as well as the differences at both. The food pantry would be able to continue to operate at the same location with the people who do so much to make it work without disrupting it. The traditions at both churches are important to the people at each campus and they deserve to continue to pass those along as long as they are able to financially support it. We are extremely fortunate to have a pastor who recognizes the value of continuing each campus and their unique events, traditions, and ministries but is also practical enough to know when change would benefit us. We combined our CCD program and have exposed the children to both campuses to show them how we all share our parish and our faith together but also have differences that they can experience. The adults have figured this out as well. Unlike some mergers, our pastor does not have to go far to support both campuses, and he has been extremely supportive of the people at both campuses, seeing their strengths and value. His leadership has helped this merger go smoothly but he has also been willing to make tough decisions when needed, such as preparing to sell the school and being straight with us when there were financial issues that needed to be addressed. It is important for anyone in a leadership position to care about those they serve but also be willing to be honest and direct when needed. Based on our financial situation, I believe the IHM campus still serves an important role in our parish and think it would be foolish to disregard that. If things continue in the direction we are going, we have a viable future as a parish with two amazing campuses that offer our community a variety of ministries and experiences.

Doesn't the church have a good amount of property? I wouldn't sell everything and give that up.

I think with the closures of other parishes on the west side of Youngstown which have many older and poorer parishioners we need to keep our church as an option for them.

IHM has a very strong group of people that work very well together. We have improved our financial status. We are very lucky to have a pastor to work with us.

As someone who found a home at the IHM campus as a college student, and converted to Catholicism 5 years ago there surrounded by loving, supportive, and faith-filled people, I see a strong future for the IHM campus that includes weekly Sunday masses, food-banks, celebrations at the IHM Parish Center, and a continued strong attendance of mass and events. I see the church continuing its bocce league in the summer, strong music program, and CCD program. This church continues to have parishioners show up for weekly mass along with community based events, and I see us continue to do well financially because of our strong leadership within the IHM campus. Our campus is full of parishioners of past generations who have taken care of this campus, and the traditions, love, and hard work of those individuals continues to light our church.

I think it makes sense to sell the property if you have an opportunity. Faith and fellowship comes from the people. I would be happy to attend St. Joseph campus. Thank you!

St joes has always been my home base church. I feel with a great opportunity for IHM to be purchased rather than shut down and abandoned that is a wonderful blessing.

One main church

The IHM Church campus is vibrant and critically important to the local Austintown and wider Youngstown community. The community ministries we provide and support are vital. Our Food Pantry ministry supports hundreds of families. We regularly support The Needle's Eye, the Ursuline Sisters AIDS ministry, the Dorothy Day House, and Our Community Kitchen in the greater Youngstown area. St. Blaise Parish provides a monthly Rosary at Resurrection Cemetery and a weekly Rosary and Holy Hour of Adoration.

Use available facilities to become more of a via hub for community (not just Catholic) services.

I believe we should all come together as a parish and stand firm against the bishop to keep our thriving Austintown Catholic community for generations to come. I am willing to help in any way I can.

I can see the selling of the school building, however, our parish is very active with different groups, associations, choir, food pantry, etc. to entertain the thought of selling the church building at this time. I am disappointed in the Bishop for wanting to sell the IHM church. We have combined two great parishes and need the two campuses.

This building is more than bricks and budgets to me. It represents safety, belonging, and decades of memories and spiritual life. When we close spaces like this, we lose something irreplaceable. Church should stand for connection and care, not simply financial efficiency.

I think we need to keep our church and Parish Center on campus not only for nostalgic reasons but also to give us more flexibility with the St. Blaise Parish. I think as it stands now the two campuses work fairly well and we are working towards being one Parish family. I know that we still got our own identities in many ways, but as a choir member, I do enjoy working with the combined choirs and working with the two churches, I think that if we sell our church at IHM, we're going to alienate more parishioners and possibly drive a few people from the church which we have lost so many since Covid as it is. I think keeping the two buildings might help us in the future to gain some ground. I've always been a positive person and tried to look for the upside of everything but as of right now, I don't see the upside of closing IHM campus down.

2 sites 1 parish

All members attend mass together at St. Joes.. people join together as one

The parish community must collectively work together to ensure our continued viability for future generations.

The power of choice and traditions with 2 churches

The rental of the school is a good income for the parish & is helping to keep IHM viable. I am AGAINST selling the church.

It would be so very nice if the IHM church and rectory were not sold. I am a charter member and have very fond memories of years of worship and involvement.

I agree that the school should be sold. The proceeds from that sale will insure that IHM and Saint Blaise parish will be viable for the foreseeable future. I pray that Bishop Bonnar will allow us the opportunity to grow our faith community.

I attended the meeting and I felt that if the Bishop wanted this meeting, he should have been there to answer our questions.

I was at the town hall meeting. And my impression was that no matter what the parishioners want and vote for, the bishop is going to do what he wants and our input is useless.

"Turn the school into a senior activity center. Exercise, craft classes, walking, bingo and educational/mental activities for a minimal fee. Offer a pick-up service again for a minimal

fee. It would help with feelings of loneliness and give them a purpose and something to look forward to.

"I believe that the writing is on the wall and common sense should prevail. The Catholic church is short on priests and the people from our churches are starting to leave in search of better alternatives. Until the church allows priests to marry, this trend will continue. It is inevitable that we will have to eliminate buildings to accommodate the number of priests in active ministry. Therefore, the closing of individual churches and sale of those buildings is necessary. Unfortunately, people, me included, don't want to lose their churches because of historical and emotional reasons. Therefore, I see the family of IHM joining the campus of St. Joseph and the sale of the IHM campus. The building are 70 years old and increasingly will become a larger money pit due to repairs and replacements. We cannot financially sustain that burden unless we gain more members."

St Blaise parish is doing very well. Father Fedor has been supportive and relates well with the parishioners. HE SEES AND FEELS OUR VISION to continue leading us as a Good shepherd does and wants to along with all of us to keep our church open. He does it and has health problems. We need to continue our mission that Father Popovich started in helping feed our community.

We are a vital parish and should remain open. Closing the church is not an option and should not be considered.

The church should stay open. Many families worship on both campuses. You can't count attendance when one church has one mass and the other has 2 masses. The church is holding its own. The fish fries will be non-existing if the parish closes. You're not respected now see what happens if you close this parish. You are responsible for the loss of 2 priests already. Shepherd like you should. You need money to payoff Ursuline lawsuit's. Keep IHM open

My vision for St. Blaise is that both campuses, including IHM, continue to grow together as one strong parish community. Past mergers have shown that initial hesitation can give way to real stability and even greater presence over time. Closing a campus after only a year would disrupt that progress, so I believe we should allow the IHM site the time it needs to continue proving its viability and contribution to our St. Blaise parish future.

Although there is still a core group of vibrant parishioners, it appears to be shrinking. There does not seem to be many younger families replacing the dwindling older parishioners. I believe Austintown can be serviced with one Catholic church. So if there is a fair offer for the IHM campus (excluding the center), then as much as I hate to say it, then it should be sold. The parish and church name can then be St. Blaise (no longer St Joseph).

As much as we have enjoyed attending IHM sometimes things have to be done for economic reasons. It's sad to see so many churches not being churches but reality needs to be faced. With many prayers a decision will be reached.

I think ST Blaise parish will be more economical with one church.

I'm not sure what the answer is but there has to be something. My grandpa helped build the church. I don't want to see it sold

You have to ask the kids at IHM if they enjoy going to St. Jose or if they would rather be in their own school. If they want to be back at IHM, build them and the horizon kids a school that can accommodate all. I understand it's expensive but you have to spend money to invest in the future of the children

We have been members of IHM for 44 years we raised our family here with our children going to IHM school k-8. My girls would have loved to send their children there but unfortunately it closed. I would really hate to see the church closed also. I understand the shortage of priests plays a part into this decision. With Fr Fedor willing to do Mass here I see no reason to sell the church. I pray that the right decision will be made leaning towards keeping it open.

The school building is in need of repair. The schools combined at The previous St Joe's is working out fine. That church was built by my in laws and means so much to many of us. The parish center was built in my lifetime and is a beautiful gathering spot for so many functions in the parish family. I'm against the sale of our church and parish center

Sounds to me like the bishop is trying to raise money any way he can to try and cover the legal expenses that are going to devastate the catholic community from the Ursuline disaster. My father labored a lot of hours in building the church along with my uncles. It would be an absolute shame to sell our church and school to cover someone else's mistakes!

My vision is to always have the IHM Campus

I think that the parishioners are determined to continue all of the good will and love that we share with each other and toward any new members, including receiving the weekly visitors and new members to the parish. We have a lot to share with our brothers and sisters of all faiths and ancestry. We are fortunate to still have wonderful priests and religious to guide and encourage us in our faith.

As someone who grew up and went to school at IHM, it saddens me to see this happening. However, it is not financially sustainable to keep both properties. I think as a parish we

must take this offer. I fear that in future years there will be many abandoned Catholic churches in our diocese.

When there is an opportunity to sell property, ANY Parish should move on it sooner than later (especially when there is more than one campus). We all have to face the reality that it is only going to get more expensive to maintain properties (and the properties are ageing along with the parishioners!) Change is hard; but generally most people learn to adapt. And if they can't, oh well! If you hold out for those resistant to change, the opportunity may not come around again. In these decisions, emotion has to be removed. This is a golden opportunity for the Parish! There is plenty of room to support all members of the Parish in one church. We aren't even close to "standing room only" at weekly Masses. We also have to lighten the burden on Priests! Sell!

To stay open as long as we can and worship together

The town hall survey results are telling. We do have adequate revenue streams from the Parish Center and the school building to keep the IHM campus viable. Over the last number of years there has been considerable amounts of money invested into the church building to beautify the altar, seating area and more. The survey shows pretty consistent attendance at Mass and the collections have risen. If the school building could be sold for a sum that would be equal to 10 or so years of rent, I believe that is the good solution. The reality is, in my perception, since the retirement of Father Miller and the failed experiment of a parish administrator, the atmosphere, mood and outlook of the parishioners has fallen significantly. Many long time families and highly involved individuals have left the Parish with the feeling of a lack concern for the IHM congregation. I personally feel that there is much more attention paid to the St. Joseph campus than IHM. I have made a number of calls to the diocese to voice concerns and those calls have seemed to fall on deaf ears. The reality is, no matter what these surveys show, the Bishop is going to do what he wants regardless of the feelings of the parishioners.

A vision for St. Blaise should be all inclusive. Welcoming to all. Christ centered with Faith, worship & service. Hope for the future.

"I see both church campuses of St. Blaise Parish busy with Catholic/Christian Community activities and events.

The clientele is older and change is difficult. We must put emphasis on growing more family memberships.

Sunday early Mass at I.H.M. would help.

"As a young family within the St Blaise Parish, it can be challenging trying to balance mass and CCD on the same days. We would love to be able to attend the 11:00 am mass (as this is just easier with such small children) but it isn't an option when we often aren't out of CCD till 10:45-10:50. We would most likely be late for 11:00 mass. It would be so nice to have mass in only one church and time choices at that one church on Sunday.

We absolutely love the beautiful hall at IHM though, and it would be such a shame to no longer have that as a part of our parish.

We are truly torn about what would be best. We just want whatever will allow our parish to grow and thrive. "

The IHM campus church building should not be sold as its members are at home attending Mass here. Many members are active in more than one organization and always step up to the plate when needed for anything. Selling the school alone will bring us funds that can be parlayed into greater finances to be used not only for our campus but for the community of Austintown. The rectory should not be sold as it can be utilized for our food pantry- which is one of the best. The rectory can also be used for meetings for our many vital organizations. St Blaise parish needs this campus for its people as well as the community and beyond.

The church is very special to so many people it is a home for so many..we feel at home in God's home.

I understand that Horizon Academy is interested in buying IHM- but I also know of a different Christian school who is also interested: Legacy Christian Learning Center. This is a rapidly growing hybrid- homeschool program that is Christ Centered. My friend is in charge of searching for a building for the legacy center and will be in contact. It would be nice if St Blaise decides to sell and they can get the most out of the building sale- as it would only benefit our parish's mission.

"I am a lifelong member of IHM; my grandparents helped found this church. I have seen IHM, and many other area churches, have struggles as the demographics of the area changed with the exodus of Steel Mills, GM and the like. In addition, the diocese has experimented with IHM by piloting the Parish Administrator model and other campaigns, as it endeavors to deal with the declining number of priests. We, the parishioners of IHM, always reorient and find a way to work and thrive through adversity and new challenges. In the early 80 's, we started one of the most successful church festivals in the area that ran for 35 plus years. During that festival, we began a small rummage sale, that grew to be our biggest and most reliable fundraiser until it ended 2 years ago. Just before Covid, we began

with just a small group of volunteers with the shared vision of feeding the hungry. That vision has become our Food Pantry, feeding nearly 400 families every month.

I could go on and on, but the point I am making is that IHM is resilient, resourceful, and dedicated to being the hands and feet of Christ. We will not only make the best of sharing our property with a new tenant, we will capitalize on it. We will forge new relationships with the parents and children of the school and hopefully gain new parishioners in the process, bringing more people into the faith. I see this as an opportunity to grow, not downsize, just as Monsignor Prokop did when building our church. The church was not built in the vision he had originally planned, but rather in a way that God had planned. He stepped out of the way, despite being low on funds, and let God's plan work. I see that as our way forward now. God has once again filled out school with the energy and excitement of children and families. l

Let's not walk away in defeat. Let's make the most of this new opportunity to enlarge our parish population, despite giving up some ground."

Considering our readings at mass today, I think this was a good time to think about the vision for the IHM campus. The readings stress Jesus teaching us to be the salt of the Earth and a light on the mountain. We are called to serve our fellow man and to preach the gospel and be examples. At a time when businesses are moving to Austintown and new housing developments are being built, it seems this would also be the perfect time to expand our presence in the community. God has blessed us with many provisions that we need to share with our community. We have the volunteers willing to do it, so why would we want to shrink our presence in a growing community? IHM provides food for those in need, spiritual guidance through Bible study, and proclaiming the gospel through fellowship. This is what we are called to do. This is the mission Jesus designed for us, that is, to be his hands and feet. My vision for Saint Blaise Parish is for both campuses to reach out and serve our community. There is so much need right now, and we have the opportunity and ability to fill the needs of our neighbors.

"I think that IHM does excellent work for the community and that needs to continue, but younger people will need to step up and be mentored. I think that focus needs to be on getting the families to continue attending church after baptism, first communion and confirmation. Every church sings it, but only few live it...All our welcome in this place. And, let's not forget that we do have the best music and praise band in town. "

The Sunday mass at IHM should remain - IHM should not be treated as the "lesser" of the two worship sites. The IHM church offers abundant seating capacity; the Parish center brings in revenue; and IHM is the mother parish of St. Joseph. If mass were to end at the

IHM site I would not attend mass at St. Joseph; I would cease giving money to St. Blaise Parish and would register at St Columba Cathedral Parish.

I think st Blaise parishes should stay exactly the way it is!! ❤️🙏

IHM is home to so many of us.

Why not sell St. Joseph's school, church, and rectory?

"Mass should continue to be held at the IHM church. The location on the northern part of Austintown is more convenient for those that were on the West side of Youngstown and North central part of Austintown especially when considering the discontinuation of Mass at St. Brendan church and the close proximity to Mahoning Ave., Raccoon Rd., Meridian Rd., and Rt. 46.

Also considering how close St. Christine, St. Michael, and St. Joseph churches are located. The majority of the population in Austintown is located in the Mahoning Ave corridor region and East towards Youngstown and North. My understanding is that the apartments and Cape Cod style houses in that area were constructed primarily due to GM opening the Lordstown plant in the 60s which has since closed. Granted, the closer you are to the Boardman and Canfield areas, the greater the typical family income will be. But this is should be more about the needs of the people. Also, the Parish Center is still fairly new and can be a good community center for events even outside of the Diocese which could help generate revenue; especially considering the capacity being 640 occupants or having two separate rooms available for events. Events as simple as the pancake breakfasts put on by the KoC always generate a greater attendance at Mass. "

I think st Blaise parishes should stay exactly the way it is!! ❤️🙏

As a charter member of IHM Church I would feel terrible if IHM was gone but I am more concerned about the food pantry being gone if the school building because the refrigeration I believe is in that building If no one lives in the rectory then it should be sold. It cost money to heat and upkeep.

I appreciate being asked my thoughts and ideas. However - I'm sure the Bishop has already made this decision!!!

"Selling the school and the church may sound like a good idea financially but consider the other possible outcomes. The Horizon School charges no tuition and yet they are planning to buy the school and the church. They will borrow from a bank and then pay back the loan over time.

But what if the ""no tuition"" plan does not generate enough money over time to service the loan? They may default, the bank will take possession and then plan to sell the building to some other entity. The new owner may evict the Horizon Academy as tenants since they defaulted on the loan and then use the building as who knows what? Low rent apartments, senior citizen housing, a drug rehabilitation facility. And then how will this affect the Parish Center. Will people want to book events there if there is low rent housing or a drug rehab center near-by. Give the possible outcomes a lot of thought before you go ahead with the sale."

Our food pantry food storage will take more room than the rectory can sufficiently handle. Problem needs to be addressed.

The sale of the school building will cripple our food pantry food storage. If we use the rectory there clearly will not be room for all the product we distribute. An alternative storage area is a necessity. We provide food for 300-350 consumers.

Why should we sell our church? No! No! All societies are doing well! Financially doing well! Fr. Fedor has helped us to unite well with St. Joseph and now we are St. Blaise Parish! Our Food Pantry is one of the best in Ohio! CCD is attracting more youths because of our two excellent teachers! Fr. Popovich, Fr. Miller and Fr. Fedor all told us we can manage our church pretty much on our own! Adeline Suhovecky, IHM Altar & Rosary President!!

I am sorry to say that I truly believe that this property is going to be sold regardless of what you do. The Bishop is not returning your calls now and I doubt he's going to change his mind in the planning of things. My suggestion is that we take the proceeds from the sale of the property and build a fellowship hall on the St. Joseph campus that would support the food pantry and other activities and call it the Immaculate Heart of Mary fellowship hall.

I see the IHM campus as a concerned unit and a helping community. With a strong leadership for keeping this campus alive and well.

I believe the IHM campus should continue to function as long as it can maintain itself financially. If the school needs more classrooms they should convert the convent upstairs

into feasible space. If they keep the preschool it would help with maintenance expenses. I appreciated the meeting and getting this information.

Each church is special so keep both open as is!!

If selling the school will keep the church open I am all for it! I have been a lifelong parishioner of IHM and my kids attended school here. There are many great things going on here! This church has meant so much to me. I feel if you close this church you will probably see a total decline in attendance if combined. This parish has been a foundation of Austintown. We have been able to support ourselves.

If the school sells, what percentage of the sale stays with St. Blaise Parish? How much of the sale would the diocese want for their part? With Fr. Fedor being so passionate about keeping IHM and the parishioners who are willing to maintain the church with weekly offerings, the church should not be sold. I don't have an answer for the vision. What kind of future is there with downward slide of parishioners through the years?

I don't feel we should sell the church! My family has attended Mass here since it was built. We attend mass weekly here, participate in church functions and have used the parish center that we generously donated to. This is our parish and you have gotten rid of enough churches already.

We are founding members. We attend church weekly. This church has not only shared our joys of our daughters weddings, but also provided comfort when we buried our family and friends. This church is not a building to come to but to a place I call peace and home!!! My faith and this church (IHM Church) has saved me in my darkest times. It was the coming home for that hour or so that I truly needed, and looked forward to. That place that brought me comfort and healed my heart and soul. The church (building) is why I am still here today.

The IHM campus definitely has a viable future as it is now thriving financially and most importantly spiritually. We need to recognize that we are blessed with this opportunity to sell the school building as it makes strong financial sense to do so. Any serious consideration of closing the campus would be an irresponsible disservice to "the faithful" and to both the Austintown and Upper West Side of Youngstown communities.

"St. Blaise is a caring parish located in Austintown Township with only two Catholic worship sites that include the IHM campus.

We have adjusted from a declining number of parishioners by encouraging more involvement, survived Covid pandemic, and demonstrated resiliency in repairing the facility and finances

Throughout the IHM history, we build a new parish center, remodeled the sanctuary, put together the logistics for a first class food pantry for the community at no cost to the parish. In fact many organizations donate money to purchase food.

I would like to say many parishioners have connections in the community that helped up throughout the years.

Fr. Fedor has led us through the last 5 years in this turnaround. The church needs operating subsidy, but if the school is sold, we wouldn't be saddled by its high operating expenses of an old building."

Keep the IHM church open! Increase activities especially for young people. Try to reinstate the parish festival. Have more fundraiser dinners at the parish center. Be as open and welcoming as possible to new people that have never attended IHM. More activities and events, stronger IHM.

I see St. Blaise IHM campus serving the Austintown community. We are financially in great shape to maintain 2 campuses to continue the food pantry and other valuable services. We do well with renting the parish center.

I see St. Blaise reaching many in the community in different ways on both campuses. IHM campus has Bible study and the food pantry. We also contribute to the Giving Tree, Dorothy Day House, and Needle's Eye at Christmas and our fish fries are not only a good source of income during Lent, but brings our neighbors to IHM to get to know who we are. I am against selling the church building or rectory.

The vision is to continue thriving as is with the current efficiently-located flourishing church building, rectory and parish center feeding into each other and providing outreach to the community through the food pantry and parish center drawing community members to the conveniently located church in an all-in-one complex.

I don't see a viable future for IHM if the diocese doesn't support its parishioners. There are many hard workers at IHM dedicated to giving back to our church and community. We are Christians working to live as Jesus taught us! It's time for the Bishop to support us by keeping our church open!

To keep it open as a free standing church parish. To hold onto the history of this parish and the people who made it happen.

"Dear father Fedor, my prayers are with you. Matthew 16:18 "I also say unto thee that thou art Peter and upon this rock I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Difficult decisions are to be made, and it is tough to know what decision is the best. In the above Jesus established a hierarchy of the church and not a bureaucracy it is best in my

opinion to defer to that hierarchy and not attempt to make such an important decision with insufficient knowledge. The financials are helpful, but more knowledge is needed from the diocese to make the decision about the property that is owned by the diocese. My vision is different from your vision and your vision is different from the Bishop's vision. My thought is the bishop needs to spend the greater effort and prayer growing the Catholic Church through expanding its membership instead of focusing on consolidating the church. There are many alternatives to selling the horizon school. If the horizon school does not wish to renew the lease the diocese could reestablish our own Catholic school. With school choice more government funding is available than in the past. The need for Catholics young and old to be educated is growing. If the building is too old a new one could be built. If a new building cannot be built right away the old building could be torn down in the meantime. The property could be used for low-income housing. This might be a better use of funds than giving directly thousands of dollars to individuals and their landlords. The property could be used by Saint Vincent de Paul to serve the poor. If that is not possible our yearly rummage sale could be a year-round thrift store. Don't be quick to discard such a valuable parcel for pennies when the land itself could be an investment in our future. We would even lose the ability to bring back our parish festival when the crowds come back to the church that is needed more than ever. My prayers are with you, and I hope the best decision will be made to bring in the most souls to the church and save the souls that are already in it. I am always available for further discussion and prayer. David sokol