

**Summary
Report on the Discussion of the
Proposed New Priests' Residence
May - September 2009
St. Mary Parish
Riverside, Illinois
Analysis of Listening Sessions**

The report was delivered to the Parish on 1 December 2009. It describes statements made by parishioners between May and September 2009 about the parish proposal to build a new rectory in the area called St. Mary Park.

The report concludes, after analysis of the number and origin of the public statements, web posts, hearing comments and letters to the parish, that "a relatively small number of St. Mary Parish members vociferously opposed the proposed plan to build a new rectory in Mary Park. An even smaller number of parishioners spoke in favor of the plan."

For example, the report recites an analysis of the petition against the proposed plan. After checking for multiple signatures from families and subtracting non-parishioner signatures, the analysis found that just over five percent of registered St. Mary Parish families were represented on the petition. Viewed alternatively, it showed that more than 94 percent of registered families did not sign the petition.

However, there was no such petition - or other vocal, visible and organized support - for the proposed plan presented by rank-and file parish members.

The report cites numerous official records and documents held by the parish that played a part in the discussion, such as the site plan whose May release by plan opponents sparked initial opposition.

This topic and its discussion engendered strong feelings. Some who read the report in draft were disappointed that more of their view is not presented, or that their support of the plan did not emerge.

The report was not written to vindicate, and certainly not to justify, any side of the conversation. Rather, it seeks to stand apart from the spasm of sometimes heated and personal debate to provide a detached analysis of what was said about the proposed plan, when, where and by whom.

When the document was submitted, the parish's next steps were unknown. The report recognizes that all participants were parishioners, that our actions *in toto* represent us to ourselves, our community and most importantly to God. To judge and improve ourselves, to improve our next parish discussion, to be honest in our life as a Parish, we need an accurate depiction of what we said and did.

For all of this, the report does not aspire to be a history. Despite ardent requests, it does not assuage motives. Each one of us must confront these issues, both individually and as we are represented by institutions such as the Finance Committee, the Pastoral Council and our clergy. But to do so, first we must know what happened.

A full report may be obtained by calling the parish business office.

February 2010