

Charlotte/Greece/Hilton Pastoral Planning Task Force
Wednesday, November 8, 2023 – 6:30-8:30 pm
Borromeo Ministry Center at St. Charles

ATTENDING: Holy Cross/Our Mother of Sorrows: Fr. William Coffas, Fr. Justin Miller, Marc Boeh, Joseph DiVincenzo, David Witkoski, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Fr. John Firpo, Gina Reeder, David Steklenski, **St. John the Evangelist:** Fr. Peter Enyan-Boadu, Paul Parkman, Nick Verdino, **St. Lawrence:** Fr. Lee Chase, Steve Amico, Jeri Rombaut, , **St. Leo the Great:** Fr. Joseph Catanise, **St. Mark's:** Deacon Frank Pettrone, Peter Blind, Kimm Wesley, **Facilitator:** Karen Rinefierd, **Minutes Scribe:** Maryanne Sutton

EXCUSED: Holy Cross/Our Mother of Sorrows: Ryan Snyder, **St. Leo the Great:** David Jones, Barbara Surash

1) **Prayer** (Mt 25:1-13): faith sharing, intercessory prayers, the Lord's Prayer

2) **Updates on the 7-parish collaborative initiatives and opportunity for questions/feedback to the committees** (evangelization, shared website, vocations): Karen

- Committee work will take more time in our meetings as the three committees need regular feedback.
- The **vocations committee** had their first meeting. In preparation for their next meeting, they agreed to bring back what are 2 things that we can do to foster vocations to priesthood, 2 things to foster vocations to the permanent diaconate, and 2 things to foster vocations in general or to religious life or lay ecclesial ministry. The committee's brainstorming will be followed eventually by choosing priorities and action steps.
- **Shared ROC Northwest Catholics website** should be live by the beginning of Lent.
- The **evangelization team** has created a flier of Advent events open to parishioners of the 7 parishes. Karen will be emailing the almost finished draft to the task force, evangelization team, and staff members for any last needed changes. The team is also working on compiling a list of Catholic electronic resources (e.g., apps, podcasts).

3) **Discussion re. 10/18 Clustering Sub-Committee Report**

- Thank you to the committee for their fine and timely work.
- The first meeting went well. The choices for parish groupings became clearer among the members once they started from the groupings with two leaders and then worked back to five leaders.
 - It is not our mission to discuss or plan for churches closing.
 - Clustering means sharing a leader.
- Lay members of the task force were asked to share their questions, opinions, and reactions to the Sub Committee Report.
- Distance between churches was the main consideration for this clustering arrangement.
- What other criteria were considered by the Sub Committee, and which should we include as we continue to develop these draft recommendations?
- What about schools? With the two largest groupings the Sub Committee did intentionally have one school in each cluster.
- We should include information about what is already shared among the parishes in any given cluster.
- Certain churches have certain cultures. What does a similarity of cultures mean? Do parishioners and leaders see this in the same way? If we know that two or more parishes will be clustering, we can begin to do the work of joining cultures ahead of time.
- It was recognized that while the bishop creates clusters and assigns their pastor/pastoral administrator, parishioners will go where they want to go. We do not know where people will choose to go.
- It is easiest if clustered parishes share the same school district.

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- Priests play a big part in encouraging and helping parishioners to accept the cluster. (Building a Bridge theme for Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows).
- Suggestion that the more options we present to the bishop the better. For example, being open to having a team of priests (pastoral team) overseeing multiple parishes (3 or more). Perhaps we can have one of our pastoral leaders write a description of the different options that are possible for reaction by the task force, staffs, councils, and parishioners. In any case, we could indicate that we are open to various options in what we present to the bishop.
- We recognized that the bishop may not accept our recommendations since he has the overall view of what is needed across the diocese. We cannot get into the mind of a bishop. We need to listen to the wisdom of the people and present our best thinking. We need to trust the work of the Holy Spirit in the bishop and in us.

Discussion of the specific groupings in this report from the Sub Committee for the time when we have five, four, three, and two leaders

- One sentence of the report was deleted at the request of one of the leaders since it does not represent where we are in the planning process.
- When the number of leaders decreases from six to five, we only have one option for what would happen. However, if the leader of one of those parishes is not the one to leave, it is very unlikely that the bishop would disrupt the leadership of all the other parishes. Therefore, we should have multiple options.
- Suggestion to include the two-leader recommendation at the top of the report and then move to 3, 4, and 5. There should be multiple options at each level as they make sense.
- Action: the Sub Committee agreed to meet again and do this work. They had originally considered a few other scenarios but did not document them.

Future Task Force meetings:

- Wednesday, January 10 at 6:30 pm at St. Mark's
- Tuesday, **March 5 (changed date)** at 6:30 pm, tentatively at St. John the Evangelist

The full task force meeting was shortened so that the pastoral leaders could meet:

- 1) **Advent flyer**: Karen distributed hard copies of the latest draft so that leaders could make corrections. Leaders will ensure that the flyers are posted on their parish websites and hard copies distributed to their parishioners in whatever ways make sense for the particular parish. Everything needs to be ready for parishioners at the beginning of Advent, the weekend of December 2-3.
- 2) **Staff gathering to review the recommendation of future possible parish groupings**: The date of Tuesday, February 27 was chosen (and the task force meeting that night was changed to 3/5)—beginning at 12:30 pm with lunch followed by prayer. Action: Fr. Coffas will reach out to Dick Orth, an experienced facilitator, to see if he would facilitate the presentation/discussion to follow. Action: Fr. Chase and Fr. Miller will create a draft of the logistics needed to make this day a success.
- 3) **Shared website**: Karen reviewed what is needed to make the website a reality. Each leader needs to identify someone to provide content (text, images, and pdf files) for their parish. The shared website committee feels that we will need someone to be the overall Web Coordinator. Several names were suggested, and one person will be approached first.
- 4) **Lent 2024 7-parish retreat**: Will be on March 17, 18, and 19. Unfortunately we cannot use our first speaker because of difficulty paying someone from Canada and it is too late to find someone beyond our diocese. Other names were shared, and two leaders agreed to contact specific possible speakers. [After the meeting, three speakers were confirmed: Fr. Ed Palumbos, Mike Sauter, and Damian Zynda.]