

CLUSTER SUGGESTION TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Cluster made up of the following parishes:

Name St. Ann	City: Tobyhanna, PA	County: Monroe
Name St. Bernadette	City: Canadensis, PA	County: Monroe
Name St. Mary of the Mount	City: Mt. Pocono, PA	County: Monroe
Name	City	County

What:

In preparation for our suggested model we did the following: (Check the appropriate items.)

- 1. We as individual parishes evaluated ourselves based on the Criteria set by the Planning Commission.
- 2. We as a cluster studied and applied the Criteria set by the Planning Commission.
- 3. We worked in our cluster to discover where and how we could be cooperative.
- 4. We studied and analyzed the relevant data from our parishes and understand the implications of the data for our future.
- 5. We prayed together and studied the Models for Parish Organization.

Based on the above we suggest to the Planning Commission that we adopt for our cluster:

MODEL ONE: CONSOLIDATED PARISH

MODEL TWO: LINKED PARISHES

MODEL THREE: PARTNERSHIP PARISHES

MODEL FOUR: IN SOLIDUM (TEAM)

For our cluster this model would look like: (Describe what the model would mean for your cluster. Refer to specific pages in the Cluster Planning material which details your relationship.

OVERVIEW

Our Cluster Planning Group believes that a Partner Relationship would best meet the needs of our Parishioners. We would share resources and combine or initiate new activities to make our Parish life better than it is today. While improving our Parishes now, this will also cause us to work together, to get to know one another, and lay the groundwork for potential areas of future cooperation that may be required.

The types of activities we intend to conduct as Partners fall into two types:

1. Those that our Parishes already excel at such as CCD, RCIA, and adult catechesis. It is our intention to merge these programs throughout the cluster. Presently, St. Bernadette's and St. Mary's use Msgr. McHugh School for CCD, and members of both parishes have attended classes offered by PFI and Msgr. McHugh.
2. New initiatives that we all desired in our self-evaluations but did not have the volunteers, participants or resources as a single Parish to implement. The activities and programs that we discussed were: a FIESTA with the Latino community, programs for teens after Confirmation, for young adults, for social outreach, and a much greater emphasis on family events and activities.

We plan to begin working out the details this summer in order to fully implement the PARTNERSHIP before the July 2009 deadline.

We would start by:

1. Improving Cluster communications by creating "Cluster Events" sections in all our bulletins and web pages.
2. Setting up Cluster Committees for specific functions and activities (e.g. CCD, families, teens, youth ministries, post confirmation catechesis, bereavement support groups, social justice committees, etc.) to prepare implementing plans that would be acceptable to all three Parishes. This may involve sharing programs at our individual Parishes or initially by using the facilities at Msgr. McHugh School.
3. We will no longer think only in terms of PARISH but in terms of CLUSTER when planning, and consider sharing whatever we can with our cluster partners, including functions, etc. This would help to bring us together as a community and as a cluster partnership. Facilities permitting, we would occasionally share liturgies.
4. We will also work toward having a cluster retreat for our combined Pastoral and Finance Councils
5. While initially using Msgr. McHugh School for large activities, we will look into building a common regional Cluster Parish Community center which we would all support and utilize.

In summary, we all support and need each other for different reasons. We are all part of the Body of Christ.

Rationale: Each of our three Cluster Parishes has some uniqueness which would benefit the other Parishes in our Cluster and could be shared. Each of our three Cluster Parishes expressed wanting many of the improvements as described above but felt restricted due to lack of volunteers, participants or facilities. These restrictions would best be alleviated by working collaboratively as a Cluster.

We make this suggestion for the following reasons:

- Our parishes have strengths and weaknesses; overall our three parishes are vibrant communities that strive to meet the needs of our parishioners. Our Parishes exist in demographically growing areas. As part of this process the State representative for our area provided us with population data for 2000 and 2005 and projected population growth for 2010 and 2020. This data covers the various townships and borough in the cluster group.
- We must acknowledge there are challenges regarding the sharing of activities especially in the winter months. In this area winter can be treacherous at times, but it is something that we have become accustomed to as individual parishes. As a cluster, we would have to consider weather more closely when planning activities in the winter.
- We believe that this model will assist St. Ann's parish to overcome the financial shortfalls and problems resulting from leadership instability that has plagued their Parish in recent years through the increased participation of the other parishes in the Cluster that have experienced more continuity and stability.
- Another challenge will be the integration of individuals who are responsible for running the various programs and activities. Initially there could be tension among people. However, by working in a spirit of cooperation and trust these problems can be overcome.

Collectively our parish demographic base is sufficient to support the Partnership model and partnership provides us the best chance at achieving a balance of resources between the smallest (St. Bernadette) and largest (St. Ann) parish.

In recommending the PARTNERSHIP model at this time, we do realize the possibility that in the near future the declining number of priests available to serve the parishes might result in a new parish model such as IN SOLIDUM. At this time, Partnership will enable us to establish the foundation for a new parish arrangement, should the need arise. Since our demographics support the need for three priests for several years to come, this will provide us with the time and opportunity to evaluate the suggested model of PARTNERSHIP and re-evaluate if and when necessary to shift to a different model.

Signatures of Cluster Core Committees from each parish

Fr. Joseph Kypacz, V.L. P. Paul Wang
Barbara Page Mary E. Mitchell
James P. ...
Mary ...
Bill O'Boyle Katherine Callaghan
Deacon
Patricia Tanigrossa
Alan S. ...
Sister Joel Marie Sheshe, I.H.M.
...
Michael ...

Date: June 14, 2008

Date due: June 15, 2008

Please mail, email or fax the original to:

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Thank you!