



Genesis Vicariate Pastoral Council

TO SHARE CHRIST IN AND THROUGH THE URBAN CHURCH

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"Together In Faith" Pastoral Planning Reflection Process June 13, 2011 Meeting ~ Groups I & II

Parishes present: Our Lady Queen of Apostles, St. Ladislaus, St. Hyacinth, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, St. Raymond, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Blessed Sacrament, St. Gregory, Church of the Madonna, St. Bartholomew-St. Rita, St. Benedict

Parishes not present: St. Florian, Assumption Grotto, Trans-OLCH, St. Louis the King

Parish Reflection Questions

Question 1: "Based on the reflections and dialogue, and parish activities now and proposed for the future, what are the most important aspects of the Church's presence within the planning group, and in the vicariate? In the region? What are the most exciting things? How can these activities continue and grow?"

Group 1:

Recommendation 1: Actively engage with the community. All have weekly food distribution programs and St. Vincent DePaul, holiday outreach, Know they all lack young adult programs in the parishes; see it as a weakness. They know they all have weak homebound ministry programs; they have some but need strengthening.

Recommendation 2: Uphold the dignity of the vulnerable who live among us, treat them with respect and embrace them when they come to Mass; get them to join in fellowship after Mass and provide them with things they need (clothes and furniture from St. Vincent DePaul and food from the Food Pantries).

Recommendation 3: Have the Black Urban Ministry develop a diversified young adult program.

Group 2:

Recommendation 1: The church maintaining a visible sign of Catholicism in a Muslim community by celebrating Mass/sacraments referenced in the sacramental statistics

Recommendation 2: Co-existence with the numerous ethnic groups and ecumenical dialogue – example = Children of Abraham.

Recommendation 3: Providing Christian service and outreach opportunities for the needy (Catholic and non-Catholic) providing basic sustenance.

Recommendation 4: Providing religious education opportunities (in both English and Polish language) to the youth in the metro area.

Recommendation 5: Create a monthly bulletin (to distribute amongst themselves) of all upcoming activities.

Question 2: "What are some best practices that should be duplicated in other parts of the vicariate, region or archdiocese that are not occurring now? What can other parishes and vicariates learn from this planning group?"

Recommendation 1: Develop a brother/sister relationship with a suburban parish. The relationship should result in a partnering on projects and sharing of resources in support of each parish's mission.

Recommendation 2: Sharing of youth ministry & Vacation Bible School, increase attendance and volunteers. Challenge is transportation. The location should be rotated and increase from 1 to 2 weeks. Possibilities the same model could be used for evangelization.

Recommendation 3: Increase youth participation by implementing "Youth Sunday" (youth will need training). Implement this on a regular basis, ensure everyone knows it's on the calendar. Based on the number of participants, it can be held monthly or bi-monthly.

Group 2:

Recommendation 1: Strong emphasis in religious formation of youth (Polish and English language).

Recommendation 2: Have a stronger emphasis for catechesis for Polish speaking High School-aged students.

Recommendation 3: Monthly collection from associate parishioners.

Recommendation 4: Ecumenical dialogue which enables a better opportunity for evangelization.

Recommendation 5: Maintaining Polish cultural traditions.

Recommendation 6: Establish sister parish relationship(s) that have a predominately Polish congregation in the suburbs.

Recommendation 7: Direct debit from bank accounts to be established for weekly collections.

Question 3: "Review the final recommendations from the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. How will the parishes improve on what they are already doing, in response to the APC plans, or how will these plans be implemented in the future? How are these plans supported by the data and the planning process to date? What resources will be needed, including people, time, talent and treasure?"

Recommendation 1: Align our parish bulletins to provide the communication needed for all aspects of stewardship recommended by the APC: events, prayer, service, thankfulness and grateful giving. Have bulletin editors exchange information for publication.

Recommendation 2: Each parish create a parish stewardship committee if they don't already have one. Establish a parish and vicariate-level evangelization committee. A rep from each parish will participate at the vicariate-level.

Recommendation 3: Support food bank/outreach/health services and publish in each other's bulletins what each other has to offer and what they need.

Leadership level: The vicariate is to offer training as a group to be taught at Sacred Heart Seminary (with financial support) for people identified as lay-leaders; EME's, lectors, server, etc. Their deacons have been offering training for those who needed it.

Youth: Develop programs such as quarterly activities for youth at the diocesan-sponsored level. Form a committee with youth reps from each parish to formulate the needs and activities for youth under 18.

Group 2:

Recommendation 1: All the churches in the planning group should encourage sending youth to English or Polish religious education programs. Instructors would be trained and certified and the combined congregations would pool resources to support such program(s).

Recommendation 2: See if there are social activities to organize for youth and young adults outside of formal education program.

Recommendation 3: Comprise a needs list and share with all Churches in the planning group.

Recommendation 4: Each parish will establish an evangelization committee, priority for evangelization will be to search out non-practicing Catholics and attract them back to the Church. Create a plan to connect with non-Catholic Christians in the neighborhood

Recommendation 5: Establish a mentor/mentee relationship for young adults.

Recommendation 6: Formal training for Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, and Hospital/homebound ministry – parishes would support the training.

Recommendation 7: Talent survey of parishioners for roles/responsibilities in the church.

Recommendation 8: Each parish will form separate stewardship and finance councils; establish a better communication tool to convey parish finances on a yearly basis.

Question 4: "What recommendations can be made about future clusters, mergers, or different parishes configurations? Which ones and when? How would that increase or grow the activities identified through the initial reflection process?"

Group 1: Recommendations for Question 4 are homework for the group and will be discussed at the June 27th meeting.

Group 2:

Recommendation 1: St. Lads, Trans/OLHC and STLK are already in the merger process to form a new parish; finalized July 2011.

Recommendation 2: Queen of Apostles and St. Hyacinth will not identify a cluster partner yet, but will work in a collaborative nature with each other until issues such as pastor re-assignment, death/serious illness, etc. are reached.

Recommendation 3: The planning group is concerned about St. Florian's growing debt. If the parishes were to combine and assume the debt of St. Florian, existing church buildings would need to close and be sold in order to make this merger possible.

- Upon the Society of Christ order vacating the parish, and St. Florian still having debt, the parish would close or operate as a mission for Our Lady of Czestochowa Sterling Heights.
- If the order leaves, and the parish is debt free, then the remaining collaborating parishes in the group would be open to cluster discussion.

Recommendation 4: Parishes will collaborate on coordination of Mass schedules

Question 5: "Could parishes within the planning group combine financial and administrative activities to result in a merged parish with possibly one or more worship

sites? Which ones? How would this increase the activities identified through the initial reflection process?"

The discussion group didn't come to a clear consensus of opinion on all of the recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Some in the group have already merged. St. Raymond & OLGC will be merged with one site; maybe Our Lady of Good Counsel with Queen of Heaven in the future using OLGC as a worship site.

Recommendation 2: Madonna/St. Benedict/St. Gregory/Blessed Sacrament Cathedral to merge to 2 sites with the Cathedral being one. Try to get a more energy efficient buildings; buy or build more efficient sites.

Group 2:

Recommendation 1: A combination would not be feasible. We feel it would be detrimental due to the number of people we would alienate and who would establish connections with suburban parishes.

Question 6: "Could a parish or worship site in its current form close and solely operate as an outreach center or to serve some other ministerial activity? How would that increase the activities identified through the initial reflection process? What resources will be needed, including people, time, talent and treasure?"

Group 1: No consensus. St Gregory has food outreach and if it arises, they may have to do more. They were discussing the Raymond and Q of H; outreach at one could remain if warranted.

Group 2:

If worship sites were closed, based on the financial data provided, there would not be any source of financial support (weekly collections) of parishioners, making it impossible to continue operating as an outreach center. Unless the Archdiocese would provide funding, such an option wouldn't be feasible. Also, due to zoning laws in Hamtramck, it would be hard to convert a building from a religious to a non-residential use. Our churches are properly and architecturally "church" structures, not designed for any other uses, not easily converted to other uses.

Recommendation 1: If St. Florian were to close it might be able to operate as a mission for Our Lady of Czestochowa, Sterling Heights, who is also operated by the Society of Chris order.

Question 7: "If there are no Catholic Schools within the planning group, how will the parishes ensure that Catholic School Education is available to students within their parishes? How will the parishes support Catholic School Education?"

Recommendation 1: Regional support of St. Bart School marketing to keep it open and flourishing.

Recommendation 2: Vicariate support of St. Bart. Supporting data is the same for both.

Recommendation 3: Create a Catholic School Vicariate committee

Recommendation 4: A Grade 9-12 school.

Group 2:

Recommendation 1: To retain young families in the planning group, the Archdiocese needs to conduct a needs assessment to determine if a Catholic school is needed in the planning group and if one school could be sustained through a major fundraising campaign outside of the parishes.

Such a school would need to concentrate on the Polish immigrant children, and a support base would need to be established in the Polish American community in the Archdiocese.

Recommendation 2: If a need is identified but a school is not sustainable, the parishes would collaboratively invest in building a strong religious education program to instill catechetical formation.

Recommendation 3: Churches that have charter school/public school income from rental of school building could offer a stipend/scholarship. This amount, along with archdiocesan grant amount, could help to lessen the cost of yearly tuition at the school of parents' choice.

Question 8: "Does the condition of the current buildings and facilities meet the needs and projected needs of each of the parishes in your planning group? Of the schools, if any? Could a parish better serve its population and mission in a different location and where?"

Recommendation 1: School may need a new roof in the next 3 years.

Recommendation 2: All parishes have an engineering study and energy study on all of their buildings if they haven't had one in the last 3 years.

Recommendation 3: St. Bart be brought bring up-to-date for handicapped-access.

Group 2:

Recommendation 1: St. Ladislaus school building and rectory are for sale; Transfiguration school building is up for sale; St. Hyacinth school building can be sold or leased and the St. Hyacinth activities building (parish home) is also for sale.

Recommendation 2: Relocating any of our parishes would be feasible because of the history of the parishes church structures.

Question 9: "How do the data, maps and statistics provided support these recommendations?"

Group 1: Recommendations for Question 4 and 9 are homework for the group and will be discussed at the June 27th meeting.

Group 2:

Based on the 2010 census, the number of registered households is understated in data presented to us by nearly 2000 households (compared to SEMCOG data). Data demonstrates that the majority of parishioners are outside of the parish boundaries, and the young adult constituency is not coming to church as well as a significant number of non-practicing Catholics in the planning group.

Although, according to resources provided, our planning group is in a financially challenged area but the majority of parishes are holding their own in terms of finances.

Data shows there is an overcapacity of seating relative to the number of masses and the number of people attending. For example, there are five Saturday masses celebrated at 4 pm across the churches in the planning group.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Archibald
Genesis Recording Secretary