

Charlotte/Greece/Hilton Pastoral Planning Task Force Meeting Notes
Tuesday, October 4, 2022 – 6:30-8:30 PM -St. Mark's Church

ATTENDING: Holy Cross/Our Mother of Sorrows: Fr. William Coffas, Fr. Joseph Martuscello, David Cataline (observer), Holy Cross: Joseph DiVincenzo, Our Mother of Sorrows: Marc Boeh, David Witkoski, St. Charles Borromeo: Fr. John Firpo, Gina Reeder, David Steklenski, St. John the Evangelist: Paul Parkman, Nick Verdino, St. Lawrence: Fr. Lee Chase, Steve Amico, Jeri Rombaut, St. Leo the Great: David Jones, Barbara Surash, St. Mark: Deacon Frank Pettrone, Peter Blind, Kimm Wesley, Facilitator: Karen Rinefierd, Minutes Scribe: Maryanne Sutton

EXCUSED: Holy Cross: Ryan Snyder, St. John the Evangelist: Fr. Peter Enyan-Boadu, St. Leo the Great: Father Joseph Catanise

AGENDA:

1) Opening Prayer: Adoration, Personal Prayer, and Reflection

2) Updates from the Parishes' Pastoral Leaders

a) Holy Cross/OMOS:

- Stephanie Hubbel Faith Formation Coordinator has stepped away
- Amanual Malik will direct faith formation for OMOS as well as Holy Cross
- Holy Cross will be moving to a family faith formation program where both parents and children participate (this model was already in place at OMOS)
- "Finding healing in the presence of Christ" is the theme of both churches for this year
- We are stressing that live streaming is only for those unable to physically make it to church

b) St. Charles Borromeo:

- In the initial stage of discussing with Saint Lawrence parish the possibility of a shared youth minister.

c) St. Lawrence:

- Faith Formation has started a movement of integrating with OMOS, Holy Cross, and St Charles
- The Regional Finance model is being instituted at St Lawrence where the Finance Director and supporting staff will handle the finances of 9 parishes

d) St. Leo the Great:

- Hired Danielle Hubbel as full time Christian Formation Director
- Had two Town Hall type meetings September 25th and 27th and discussed a variety of topics
- Shared a vacation bible school with St. Mark's.
- Had a music camp in the summer for children

e) St. Mark's:

- Part of the regional finance staffing which includes St. Lawrence and St. Leo
- Have a new deacon
- Exploring the ministry "Walking with Moms in need"

3) Collaborative Ministry Planning Ideas:

- Prayer service with other parishes
- A retreat (multi-day?) with time for mixed group conversations
- Adult faith formation talks—also with time for mixed group conversations

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- Open up bible study to other parishes
- We must find ways to integrate churches
- Hold a series of weekend Masses at different churches (every church would not have a Mass on these weekends, only some)
- Create a regional video “why I come to church” and have available on all parish websites
- Have a regional Vocation Committee to address ways to promote vocations—promote vocations in general but also what is happening already, make specific to each parish
 - (Father Martuscello (OMOS/HC) is starting the Ignite program for youth at Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows to discuss faith and have a base to ignite vocations)
 - David Cataline (OMOS/HC) is available to give vocation talks throughout the area
- Promote specific prayers to ask for vocations for permanent deacons, lay ministers, and priests
- Eucharistic Revival--a great way to bring parishes together as it is the source of our Christian life
 - Shared program(s) or shared prayer/Adoration
 - A video “what the eucharist means to me”
 - Communication for encouraging and teaching the faithful (e.g., poster in narthex, door signs, bulletin, website, social media, parking lot signs)
 - Sacramental and religious object give aways
 - Collaboration on offering Adoration
- Have a central spot where parishioners can see what is going on within all the parishes online
- Outreach to young adults
- Possibly share Buildings and Grounds services among the parishes
- Day(s) to clean up grounds and buildings at all our parishes
- Coordinating a newsletter/website for all the parishes to share what we have to offer
- Something on evangelization to invite people back to church--what are we doing to get people NOT in the pews back in the church?
- Some sort of elder ministry
- Anointings—offer a Mass of anointing together—is being proactive, can educate parishioners on the nature of the sacrament (not just for end of life)

Comments:

- This team will be focusing both on increasing collaboration in ministry and also preparing for a reduced number of priests serving our parishes. As we create objectives for collaboration, we will have to be mindful of our available resources (people and finances) and be realistic regarding who could coordinate any particular initiative. We will also need to consider how difficult it might be to accomplish any initiative.
- It is imperative that we always communicate clearly

4) Ideas for what we can do internally to prepare for a reduced number of priests serving our parishes

- Contingency plans in place at each church for an emergency when a priest takes ill and Mass cannot be offered
 - How to communicate an emergency to parishioners via technology
 - Comment: Each Bishop sets different guidance regarding how to handle emergencies (e.g. if communion services can be offered, if parishioners should be directed to another church)

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- Having shared priests on call at all parishes
- Share just how many priests are available to serve our churches—**Action:** Karen will get this information out to the task force
- A shared daily Mass schedule
- Start thinking about changing weekend Mass schedules
 - Possibly stagger Mass times
 - Should we think about reducing weekend masses to free up priests?
- A plan for how we will handle the sacraments when we go down another priest
- Shared sacrament of penance

Other:

- The priest shortage is a symptom of the problem and is a constraint
 - Joe DiVincenzo passed out the Theory of Constraints document

5) Communication with Parishioners

- a) Content for next bulletin article
 - We begin with prayer—adoration, abiding presence of the Lord
 - Updates from pastoral leaders/what changed over the summer
 - Where we stand with creating 2022-2023 objectives—3 areas: collaborative ministry, what we can do at our level to prepare for a reduced number of priests, what we can recommend to the Bishop when one or more of our priests are reassigned or retires and the Bishop has no one new to assign here/prioritizing at next meeting
 - We will be in prayer/discernment before making decisions
- b) What data do we share with parishioners now (aiming for something in bulletins weekly and use of social media)?
 - Age data of our priests
 - Who are priests within our 7 parishes?
 - Attendance/contributions since Covid vs. previous years
 - Sacrament numbers (especially baptism and funerals)
 - We aren't alone: other parishes and other Christian denominations face similar challenges
 - Tie this sobering data in with the multiplication of the loaves and a call to action: what you can do
- c) When/how will we initially hear from parishioners regarding their questions and concerns?
 - It is too early and premature to hold a town meeting
 - Possibly use a shared website as a vehicle for parishioners to submit a question
 - We can say we don't know if we don't know the answer
 - How do we answer the question "will my church close"?
 - Our group hasn't discussed that
 - The bishop makes decisions regarding the closing of churches

NEXT MEETING DATE: November 16th, 6:30 PM at Holy Cross Parish Center