

Charlotte/Greece/Hilton Pastoral Planning Task Force
Monday, March 28, 2022 -- 6:30-8:30 pm
St. Charles Borromeo Parish Center
Minutes

Attendees – **Holy Cross:** Joseph DiVincenzo, Ryan Snyder, **Our Mother of Sorrows:** Marc Boeh, David Witkoski, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Gina Reeder, David Steklenski, **St. John the Evangelist:** Paul Parkman, Nick Verdino, **St. Lawrence:** Steve Amico, Jeri Rombaut, **St. Leo the Great:** David Jones, Barbara Surash, **St. Mark:** Peter Blind, **Facilitator:** Karen Rinefierd

Excused – **St. Mark:** Kimm Wesley (clergy not in attendance at this orientation meeting)

Prayer (Isaiah 43: 16-21): faith sharing, intercessions, the Lord's Prayer

Introductions: involvement in parish, work, interests & skills you bring to planning - a diverse group of talented and gifted individuals, active in their parishes, ready to work for the future of our church

Orientation to our work (Karen Rinefierd), questions, discussion

Goal of pastoral planning: to ensure that the Church's mission of Word, Worship, Community and Service continues in a vibrant way in our area under the constraints of demographics, financial resources, and priest availability.

Observations of Pastoral leaders at their meeting—individual, not consensus:

- questions the new bishop may ask: what have you done in planning for the future? What are you doing to create ordained and lay vocations?
- start with the mission of the church here; then what are the structures needed to accomplish that?
- Perhaps the synod will help us articulate a direction
- we need to pay attention to the different affinities within the group - particular church communities (connections exist between St. Leo and St. Mark; Holy Cross, Our Mother or Sorrows, St. Charles and St. John the Evangelist; St. Lawrence and St. John the Evangelist)
- don't forget the staffs in our planning
- don't forget the two Catholic schools at Holy Cross and St. Lawrence
- remember those who feel that they have been left behind - e.g., youth, LGBTQ+, inactive Catholics - pay attention to those people
- be able to present 1,2,3 proposals to the new bishop (may be either long or short term, could be alternative possibilities) as a result of the work of this task force; ideas mentioned by the leaders:
 - consider ministerial opportunities/the possibilities for sharing resources – e.g., faith formation, retreats
 - advertise/coordinate daily Mass schedule - within entire group of churches or just within affinities/ connect to funerals?
 - coverage for weekend Masses during vacations, retreats, illness - as # of priests decline

*Question: Are local churches more willing to cooperate than they have in the past? Less 'territorial'? Yes! - pastors have parishes' best interests at heart/ desire to keep parishes healthy. In the

Catholic Church in the past parish pride and parochialism were emphasized; we are now building an atmosphere of cooperation. Perspective no longer as narrow.

*Will Pastoral leaders be present at future meetings? Yes! First meeting just lay reps to establish groundwork.

Uncertainties the Task Force is facing:

- timeline when Bishop Matano's retirement will be accepted by the Pope and when a new bishop will be named - could be any time
- priorities and direction of new bishop, his style of leadership
- effect of diocesan bankruptcy on the parishes
- changes in our current priest assignments in these parishes
 - need in another part of diocese
 - retirements, sickness, death
 - might have to regroup if personnel changes occur
- this is a 'ground up' planning process but diocese may interject - task force recommendations must be approved by bishop - decisions ultimately come from the bishop (although some decisions can be made at the local level--e.g. Mass times); priest assignment-type decisions are made only by the bishop

Question: how long will the planning process take? We do not know at this point. Task force members should plan on at least a year's involvement.

Question regarding decline in parishioner #s/what will that mean for the parishes? - Answer - start with mission of church (see below) and go from there. We need to have courage to see what God is doing/what changes need to be made.

Priority of prayer/discernment - So important to include prayer in this process. Prayer can be among ourselves and parishioners at large. Pay attention to God speaking to us in this process. Make these changes in a way to support people's faith/help parishioners.

Our work needs to be mission-driven - what is our mission in this area? brief explanation of mission of the church (see attached sheet)

Importance of good, consistent, 2-way communication

Commandments of communications:

- we use a definite, clear process to draft and finalize communications including minutes
- pastoral leaders and task force members agree to the final version and when the communication will go out
- communications go out simultaneously to all communities
- no one changes the wording

transparency with parishes is key

We will be using bulletins, parish websites, and parish social media in this process. Karen is currently collecting names of communications contact persons and deadlines from each parish.

We are in the prayer and gathering data phase

Data to gather and review together:

From diocese: - data already gathered as follows

- Mass attendance 2011-2021
- sacraments 2011-2021 (funerals, weddings, baptisms, first communions, confirmations)
- ages and # of diocesan priests - as of now (need recent trends as well)
- school enrollment, class sizes, finances - need permission from pastors/principals re what we can share
- finances - need permission from pastoral leaders re what we can share/must be checked for accuracy
- parish maps showing boundaries

From parishes:

- last year's Kenedy Directory data (faith formation, ages of registered parishioners)

provides consistent method of comparison

- use as a template the spreadsheet "needs and ministries assessment" on the diocesan planning website <https://oprpdor.org/>: (simplify/delete Wayne info) tabs for ministries, councils & committees, staff, faith formation
- facilities info and projected capital needs from each parish: we can use as a template one of the following from the diocesan planning website--the diocesan building condition assessment OR the building usage and building needs tabs on the "needs and ministries assessment" spreadsheet
- how to obtain and organize this data (several members of Task Force are well versed in data organization and presentation)

Action items:

- **Steve Amico will take the "needs and ministries assessment" spreadsheet and use it to create a spreadsheet for our use in all of our parishes**
- **Jeri Rombaut will look at the "diocesan building condition assessment" form and the building usage and building needs tabs in the "needs and ministries assessment" to create one form/spreadsheet we can use for facilities information about all of our parishes' buildings**

Info to gather - Charlotte, Greece, Hilton, Parma? Clarkson? -

- The church's mission includes both serving inward as well as outward
- need to look at parish boundaries to determine which towns to include—definitely Charlotte, Greece, Hilton
- see the "sample community needs assessment survey" on the diocesan planning website for possible areas of need/concern
- focus on current needs/issues in towns and what is projected—choose one or two priorities that the towns have identified (examples: housing, education, food insecurity, addiction)—where are the gaps in what is available? how can parishes, working together, best address needs in our local communities?
- do we know anyone in our parish communities who would have access/knowledge?
- info should be available from the town halls

Action items:

- **Joe DiVincenzo and Ryan Snyder will investigate what they can learn about Charlotte**
- **Nick Verdino will do the same for the town of Greece**
- **Barb Surash and Dave Jones will do the same for Hilton**

Additional action items:

- ***Karen will send the info gathered so far out to everyone to review: what are your top 3 take aways in each area (e.g. Mass attendance, each of the sacraments, ages and numbers of diocesan priests)***
- ***Once we have agreed-upon forms for needs/ministries assessment and building assessment (probably after our next meeting) task force members from each parish will need to gather the information for their own parish***

What's a good way for this group to share info? Google docs? Emails can be cumbersome.

Action item:

- ***Steve Amico will research***

Tentative next meeting (depending on availability of pastoral leaders):

- Wednesday, April 27 6:30-8:30 pm
- Location: St. Lawrence - being confirmed
- About 24 people would attend - includes clergy and lay task force members

Ask pastoral leaders at next meeting what their goals/hopes are for the task force's work. For now, task force will be gathering data.

Submitted by Elizabeth Cilano