

LPA 12 Meeting
January 12, 2008

Introduction:

- Review of timeline: next meeting at St. Michael's on February 9 at 9:00 am. 3 meetings over next 3 months with final report due in May.
- Changes, based on geography and clustering already in place, to the parish composition of several LPA's. St. Bridget's no longer a member of LPA 12 and Our Lady of Lourdes (OLL) has joined LPA 12. OLL is currently involved in multiple clustering activities- reconciliation, CHRP, dinners, Food Pantry, etc.
- reviewed goals for today's meeting

Meeting:

1-Introductions and Expectations/Comments for Strategic Planning Process:

*need good communications at all levels; need to be open to change; work for everyone not just individual parishes; need better understanding of process; need to gather proper information and keep parishes informed; process needs to meet needs of diocese and individual parishes; parishes need to maintain their individual identities; November meeting was impressive – knowledge shown, sharing of information, spirit of process and reaching the common good; our responsibility to connect with real problem of too few priests requiring creating more vocations/new priests; develop the capacity of lay personnel as they will assume more critical roles in diocese; need proper resources to achieve goal of effective/efficient clustering; the networking which results from clustering will reap many benefits as parishes work together for example, connecting youth among multiple parishes; need to be patient as we move forward; don't do too much too soon.

2-Ground Rules:

*task to determine how LPA 12 will go from current 6 priests to 5 priests in next 5 years.
*meetings will start and end on time; 1 person talks at a time; no side discussions; respect all opinions offered; participation expected from all; stay focused on task; may or may not revisit decisions from one meeting at other meetings; at end of each meeting, will agree on decisions reached; there are no dumb questions; silence all phones.

*question raised: how did strategic planning group determine number of priests predicted to be reduced in next 5-10 years – did it include retired priests (answer – no); did it include loss of some of current seminarians (answer – yes); what other assumptions in model? (answer – Frank will find out); the model was based on Green Bay model.

3-Review of November report – questions and comments:

*areas where report needs to be amended (Andy to handle)
*what is 'Goochland New' – idea that a new parish may be created in the high growth Goochland area – if so, then LPA 12 needs to consider this new parish

*what is CRHP? Christ Renews His Parish – a parish-based program similar to Cursillo.

*It's okay that Redeemer was mentioned in clustering but is not part of LPA 12 – clustering is not limited to parishes within a specific LPA or within the Richmond diocese (sharing with Arlington diocese)

*why were some of the LPA 12 parishes not mentioned in report – for ex. 'based on demographics' section does not list St. Jude or Immaculate Conception. Answer- report only shows examples of clustering; not meant to be a thorough list and all parishes may not be involved in clustering. Appears most important parameter for clustering is geography.

*important considerations for clustering – 1) if you create a 'co-pastor' cluster, need to be careful. Priests are not used to sharing roles of pastor. No experience in this type of model. 2) Need to be sensitive to priests, deacons and parishioners. What impact does clustering have on mass times and ministries – don't want to start breaking down the structure of the community.

4-Review Cluster Models:

*reviewed 6 models from "Guideline" reference book. Noted that LPA 12 can choose one model or a mix of models or create a new model. Tendency to let geography have strong influence on model – advised to not let this happen. Noted that bishop will not continue with model of 1 priest/1 parish. Noted that new deaconate program will have various tracks including a 'deacon coordinator'.

5-Information needed to decide model:

*current financial resources of parishes-annual reports, etc.

*population trends – questions as to whether high growth areas were considered to-date. Need data.

*consider populations that can not be moved ex. Nursing homes, prisons, colleges

*need to cull list of potential models. Once top 2 (or 3) have been determined, need cost and time estimates for transition and then cost estimates of maintaining new model. Financial expenses for transition and maintenance must be part of decision making.

*Deacon information – current and new

*Lay personnel information – current and new

*Seminarian information

*review ethnicity data in report – It has errors in it

*get information on where priests currently live

*find out what diocese and American bishops are doing to increase vocations

*find out what planning/sharing/etc. is being done/planned between Richmond & Arlington

*need to visit parishes to get a better feel for them

6-Initial thoughts on clustering:

*St Mary's & St Ann's – due to growth

*Immaculate Conception & St Jude's

*St Michael's & St Ann's

*Immaculate Conception, St Jude's and other parishes (from other LPAs) in Louisa area due to growth

*Caroline county and Fredericksburg area consolidation – all parishes (from other LPAs) Priest support from Dioces of Arlington

*St Mary's, St Michael's and OLL – with 2 priests

*cluster parishes with schools

*St. Michael, St. Anne, and new central Goochland/Western Hanover/Eastern Louisa parish

7-Additional comments/considerations on clustering

*closing parishes should be a last resort

*parishes with schools need a resident priest

*be sensitive to ministering to Hispanic population

*deacons need to take on more responsibility

*Vietnamese parish – limited possibilities on clustering ? pastor can do masses in Vietnamese & English

*critical element is mass scheduling

*if a church does not have a resident priest, then it should have a resident full time deacon

*can the Sunday mass obligation be changed to a Monday schedule?

8-Wrap-Up

*reviewed the time line –Phase 2 – in the “Guideline” resource. Next meeting (February) will be 1st blush on how to go forward. Next decide if another meeting is needed before initial draft plan is produced. Initial draft plan is created/shared with parishes for input. Parish input brought to LPA 12 group; comments consolidated into draft plan for May submission to Commission.

9-Evaluation of meeting:

*need decaf coffee and/or hot tea

*good session and input

*need to circulate updated data before the February meeting

*good exercise at addressing issues and staying focused

*openness and sensitivity to parishioners

*good to see the priests acting as parishioners