

Phase 1: Parish Leadership Inter-Parish Reflections Report

Bring completed copy to the Inter-Parish Leadership Vicariate Meeting

Also e-mail a copy to the Office of Pastoral Planning: eneu@richmonddiocese.org. A copy of this form can be downloaded from the Diocesan website, at: www.richmonddiocese.org/PlanningGuidelines.pdf

1. Parish Name: St. Michael Catholic Church
2. City(s) where located: Glen Allen
3. Local Planning Area: 12

4. Name of Person completing this report: Bonnie Campbell
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5. What does your parish do especially well that could be offered to assist other parishes?
Christ Renews His Parish; Fundraising
6. What ministries need to be developed or further developed that could benefit from assistance from other parishes?
Youth Faith Formation
7. What are at least three ways in which you see your parish cooperating with neighboring parishes in the future?
 - a. Sharing of physical facilities
 - b. Combining specific ministries to leverage resources
 - c. forming a centralized parish council and operations committee to plan, create, implement and evaluate an integrated master plan for successfully realizing and interparish plan of the future.

8. Which two or three nearby parishes would be the most likely for your parish to work more closely with in the future? Why?
 - a. Not known at this time. Would need to do a SWAT analysis of geographically close parishes to see where strengths and weakness are best aligned. This would optimize use of resources and maximize potential synergy among various parishes.

Why? _____
 - b. _____

Why? _____

9. Given that most parishes in the future will be sharing priests with neighboring parishes, do you have any specific recommendations concerning the assignment of priests in your area?
Establish prioritized parameters for assignments which minimally would include 1) each parish would have a pastor (remote or on-site; shared or not shared), 2)length of assignment 3) priest preferences, 4) age and parish experience for priests being considered, 5)current size of parish and projected future growth, with largest parish housing an on-site priest/pastor, 6)financial status of the parish, 7)for aprishes without an on-site priest , give preference for an on-site permanent deacon, 8) geographical location of parishes)

10. As the Local Planning Committee begins its work to draft a preliminary plan for the parishes in your planning area, are there any other thoughts, ideas or suggestions that you would like the Commission to be aware of or any special ministries in your parish that should be considered?

See attached document

St Michael Catholic Church – Strategic Planning

In response to the diocese's call for parishes to participate in creating our future, St. Michael Catholic Church pastor, staff, finance council members, and parish council members discussed the Reality Statement and Reflection Questions. All parishioners were invited to a Town Hall meeting where they discussed the Statement and Questions and gave their input. The following information is a compilation of the resulting input offered in faith by St. Michael parish to the diocese during this challenging time. St. Michael parishioners love their parish. In the fifteen year history of the parish, a vibrant flourishing faith community with a unique profile has been formed. Parishioners not only want to maintain this uniqueness but build upon it. They understand that inter-parish collaborative efforts sometimes will require relinquishing some of the authority and responsibility traditionally borne solely by St. Michael parish. This may not be easy at times as their 'ownership' may seem to be slipping away. Even so, they come to the table full of excitement, commitment and faith. They know the Holy Spirit has brought them to the place and feeling His presence, they stand together to realize His plan.

OVERARCHING THEMES / ACTIVITIES

Church leadership at all levels should intensify efforts to 'fix the problem' of too few priests. Don't assume the problem will continue; don't let the situation become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Let the current efforts of inter-parish collaboration be realized ALONG with an increase in vocations. Activities such as allowing priests to marry, ordaining women (as deacons and priests), recruiting retired priests, Anglican/Episcopal priests, other U.S. priests and foreign priests are the obvious oft-stated activities to pursue. Additionally, the diocese and each parish should intensify recruiting/prayer for new vocations. Total stewardship should be a way of life for all parishioners.

DIOCESAN LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS

Integrated parishes require more complicated operational/administrative structures. Without the proper support/resources, poorly managed structures, reporting, etc. could actually exacerbate the already declining situation. Parishioners, experiencing the fallout of ill-advised planning and implementation could become further alienated towards their beloved church. They are still reeling from continuing sex abuse scandals, financial scandals, etc. How many Catholics have already been lost? How many more will be lost?

This is a large undertaking that requires professionals of the highest caliber to create, implement, coordinate, monitor & evaluate a Master Plan at all levels within the diocese (diocese, local planning area group, parish). Current staff members need to be supported especially if their responsibilities are upgraded. Needs Assessments must be done.

Parishioners must be 'in the loop' constantly; assessing their needs, monitoring their reactions, responding to situations as they arise in a timely manner.

Resource Allocation studies are critical. Identifying Best Practices in Processes and Procedures while effectively and efficiently utilizing scarce financial, human, material and system resources is considered mandatory.

The diocese must make available to all levels, those resources required for realizing a successful model of inter-parish collaboration and cooperation. The diocese should clearly identify and share what the model 'looks like' to all parishioners.

LOCAL PLANNING AREA (LPA) AND PARISH LEVELS CONSIDERATIONS

Each parish must take ownership of its own parish and Master Plan. There need to be administrative structures set up so that there is a strong administrative/lay leadership to manage/guide the parish. The pastor's main responsibilities are for spiritual and pastoral care rather than administrative. It is not reasonable to continue to add more parishes and responsibilities to a priest's responsibilities without the concomitant reassignment of authority/responsibility that can be handled by lay personnel. "Best Use" principles depict a priest doing those things that only a priest can do (by church definition) such as reconciliation and Liturgy of the Eucharist. The priest should assess how much additional time he has for spiritual and pastoral care roles. The need to balance the needs of the pastor and the needs of the parishioners is critical. Our priests are already 'stretched too far'. To then make them 'sacramental machines' adds insult to injury. We must feed the spiritual needs of everyone to the extent possible. Each parish should create a list of its activities – liturgy, sacraments, formation, outreach, counseling, etc. Identify those activities that could be successfully combined either partially or totally with other parishes (ex. guest speakers, regional schools, music, theater, youth religious education, etc.). Identify those activities that are best kept at the parish level (ex. bereavement).

As well, the parish should assess its ministries in terms of their strengths/success. Look for opportunities of joining one parish's strong ministry with another parish's need-to-strengthen ministry; effectiveness results. Look for opportunities where joining ministries reduces the need for resources (human, financial, etc.); efficiency results.

Parishes should form working groups within their LPA to create joint schedules for liturgies, sacraments and other celebrations. There should be a LPA parish council and operations committee. The responsibilities for these two groups should be well-defined. They are charged with the responsibility of the smooth transition and then successful maintenance of the inter-parish collaborative model.

A partial list of responsibilities for the LPA parish council would be to liaise with the parish level parish councils and coordinate parish council activities at the LPA.

Each parish and LPA should have a detailed Master Plan of activities that includes implementation and monitoring & evaluation of the Plan. There should be a detailed Communications element to the Plan. Consider those activities/items necessary to a successful inter-parish collaborative model. For example, parish bulletins, a LPA bulletin, WEB sites, calendars, ministry and event planning, teleconferencing, simulcast masses, etc.

Setting of calendars for each parish should consider both LPA and parish levels' activities. For example, setting rotating mass schedules at different locations to maximize number of parishioners experiencing celebrations with a priest in attendance and minimize travel time for the priests making the circuits.

Same considerations of calendars for sacraments and other celebrations – rotate/stagger schedules, use deacons when possible, combine parishes' celebrations, increase use of Lay Presiders, etc.

When identifying strengths/need-to-improve in areas/ministries, consider those areas thought to be underserved. For example, if diversity needs to be strengthened across all/most LPA parishes, then this is an opportunity to enhance services for all parishes AND share the expenses. For example, multi-lingual liturgies/celebrations, Signing opportunities, ministries for the Special Needs parishioners are to be considered. Look to twinning with other Christian churches as a way to enhance resources. There are unlimited ways to be creative, increase services and maximize resources.

NEEDED RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

As previously stated, the inter-related parish model results in more complicated work structures. These work structures require additional resources. Resources include financial, material, system and human elements.

For purposes of this report, only the human resources requirements were considered but needless to say, the financial, material and system requirements must also be addressed by all levels in the planning stage and as the Master Plan is developed/implemented.

There should be a full time LPA coordinator who has training/expertise in planning, operations, and administration. This position is the 'hub' of all integrated activities within the LPA.

As parishes redefine what's done, at what level, by whom, etc., there should be constant emphasis on Best Practices and proper Resource Allocation. Current staff members who absorb new/additional responsibilities need to have the requisite skills/training to ensure success, otherwise, they will be set-up to fail. Identify training needs of current staff and then perform the training. As new staff members are hired, ensure they also have the requisite skills/training to be successful. Use consultants as needed to fill 'gaps'. Tap professional skills in parishioners' volunteer efforts.

Utilize the youth; many times their skills go unnoticed. Tap religious members in the community. Utilize religion teachers in the community catholic schools. Continue to expand on the role of the deacons. Use guest speakers such as Fr. Pat, Fr Mark, Fr Renninger, etc. Enhance the Lay Presider's formation, education and use.

SUMMARY

Going through the efforts to-date, it becomes evident how much work needs to be done! But, this very work will bring forth endless opportunities to enrich our parishes.

We can be better stewards of our limited resources while strengthening our parish community faith and building new relationships with other parishes. We will better appreciate who we are in terms of our individual parishes; we will broaden our horizons and understand more clearly how we fit into the larger faith community. We will redefine 'community' as we continue to build His Kingdom.

Brainstorm Record-St. Michael Catholic Church

IN WHAT WAYS CAN MY PARISH SUPPORT OTHERS PARISHES IN MY LOCAL PLANNING AREA IN WORD (FORMATION) WORSHIP, COMMUNITY AND SERVICE (HUMAN CONCERN)

Centralized HUB Parish

Twin Parishes

Share Staff, resources, equipment, CRHP, FIRE etc

Summarize Ministries – Diocesan Level

Human concerns – Diocesan Level

Consolidate Sacraments at one Parish

-St. Mike's does Baptism

-St. Mary's does Confirmation etc

Centralized Church Bulletin

LPA – One Parish council

Centralized Regional Retreat Centers, Schools

Mass schedule stage so priest can serve – multiple locations – consolidate stage masses away parishes

Teleconference / simulcast mass - several parishes

Retired Priest come in just to say mass

HOW COULD THE PARISHES ADJUST MASS SCHEDULES, BAPTISM, RECONCILIATION, EUCHARIST, ANOINTING OF THE SICK, WEDDINGS, FUNERALS AND OTHER CELEBRATION TO MAKE BETTER USE OF THE LITURGICAL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE AREA

Staging of masses

Simulcast

Central Rectory

Communication – carefully common schedules of masses

Use retired Priest

Twin Parishes

Share Deacons

Be sensitive to established identities of each Parish dedicated funds.

Use Catholic VA to comm. to others.

HOW WOULD YOU MAINTAIN A STRONG CONNECTION TO YOUR LOCAL PARISH COMMUNITY WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT YOU ARE BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN A LARGER MORE DIVERSE FAITH COMMUNITY

Centralize , CHRP , K of C

Look for the “Best Practice” in all areas of operation and Ministry and adopt them across the board

Look outside for Best practices in areas that are lacking like YOUTH

Language class for Parish to promote diversity

Multi Lingual Liturgy – Translate the liturgy and prayers.

Join Parish council across all parish

Redefine Parish that may be Centralized

Youth program

Share your abilities, give your time, activities like breakfast, or spaghetti for communities that are in need

Christmas time, make baskets with food and toys for this communities with the help of all the parish

Use the big facilities that we have

GIVEN THAT YOU WILL LIKELY BE SHARING A PRIEST WITH OTHERS, WHAT KIND OF ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WILL YOU NEED

Redefine Parish Priest CEO - be supported by more Deacons

More paid staff / lay

Paid volunteer coordinator

Expand staff and look for roles that are better with a dedicated person

Central Rectory

HOW WILL SHARING HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES BETWEEN PARISHES ENRICH YOUR PARISH

Working together with common goals

More efficient

-Combine R.Ed

-Merged building

-Merged Bulleting

More community prayer