

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

CALLED TO HOLINESS AND MISSION: PASTORAL PLANNING IN THE DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

Preliminary Recommendations of the Planning Commission

COUNTY: Lackawanna

REGION: North

CLUSTER # 3

PARISHES: Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Scranton; St. John the Evangelist, Scranton; Nativity of Our Lord, Scranton; St. Mary of the Assumption, Scranton; Holy Name of Jesus, Scranton ; St. Francis, Scranton

Appreciation

We wish to thank you for the prayer, reflection and work which you have put into *Called to Holiness and Mission* to date. We appreciate the time and effort you have given to evaluating your parishes based on the Criteria established by the Planning Commission and making a Suggestion for your future.

Commendations

We commend you for:

- Your bold suggestions for the future.
- Providing two Model suggestions with pros and cons for each.
- Your identification of possible Church closures, which would save on priestly human resources.
- Recognizing the changing demographics in your area and offering suggestions for responding realistically to those changes.

Recommendations

After reflecting on Bishop Martino's Goals for **Called to Holiness and Mission**, your work evaluating the Criteria established by the Planning Commission, your Data Verification Forms and Parish Summary Form, we make the following recommendations:

We affirm your suggestion and recommend that as a cluster you enter into:

- Model One: Consolidated Parishes: A consolidation among St. Francis, Scranton; St. John the Evangelist, Scranton and Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. We also recommend that the parish site be at Sacred Hearts, pending the facility assessment results. There will be an additional worship site at St. Francis which will be reviewed after two years.
- Model One: Consolidated Parishes: A consolidation among Nativity, Scranton; Holy Name, Scranton and St. Mary, Scranton. We also recommend that the parish site be at Nativity, pending the facility assessment results. There will be an additional worship site at Holy Name which will be reviewed after two years.
- Model Three: Partnership Parishes. The two new parish communities will partner to share resources (e.g. combining both parish rectories and staffs into one unit, priests from both parishes living in one rectory, while the administrative office will be in the other rectory, CCD programs will be combined, staff being better utilized, sharing of RCIA and other adult education programs, etc.).

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We further recommend that:

1. You maximize financial opportunities and the disposition of the properties given your concern that “combining parishes with weaker balance sheets into one parish while parishes with stronger financial footing would be in the other”.
2. The rich ethnic heritage of the people in your area be honored and celebrated whenever appropriate.
3. A new Mass schedule be developed that reflects good stewardship of priestly resources and maximizes opportunities for larger assemblies to provide a more robust celebration of the liturgy.
4. You share our Preliminary Recommendations and rationale with each of your parish communities, and invite their questions and feedback on an ongoing basis now through September.
5. Upon reception of the Bishop’s directives for your cluster, please establish a Cluster Implementation Team to design ways to fulfill the directives

Rationale

We make these recommendations based on your own parish study and concepts found in the materials you provided. Our thinking is also based on your desire and ours to have a strong Catholic Presence in your area.