

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 # **6**

PARISHES: **St. Mary, Old Forge; St. Lawrence O’Toole, Old Forge; St. Michael, Old Forge**

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:

- The “recent transition into a link between the Churches of St. Lawrence and St. Mary, which came with ease and cooperation.”
- The obvious pride in the Polish heritage as expressed at St. Michael.

Recommendations

We have taken seriously your desire to be Model Two: Linked Parishes and understand that your rationale is based on the following factors:

- The current linkage between St. Lawrence and St. Mary.
- The preservation of the Polish heritage at St. Michael.

However, based on our study of your cluster reports, the challenges you identified on your Parish Summary Report Form, the goals of *Called to Holiness and Mission* as stated by Bishop Martino, our listening to you and our best thinking, we respectfully disagree with your suggestion:

Therefore, we recommend that as a cluster you enter into:

- Model One: Consolidated Parishes among St. Mary, Old Forge, St. Lawrence, Old Forge and St. Michael, Old Forge. We also recommend that the parish site be at St. Mary, pending the facility assessment results. There will be an additional worship site at St. Lawrence, Old Forge which will be reviewed after two years.

We further recommend that:

1. The rich ethnic heritage of the people in your area be honored and celebrated whenever appropriate.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Upon reception of the Bishop’s directives for your cluster, please establish a Cluster Implementation Team to design ways to fulfill their directives

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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. In addition, we considered:

1. The “environment of social and ethnic harmony” present in Old Forge.
2. The size of the three existing parish communities.
3. The quality of the current facilities.