

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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

Preliminary Recommendations of the Planning Commission

COUNTY: Luzerne

REGION: South

CLUSTER # 11

PARISHES: St. Martha, Fairmount Springs; St. Mary, Mocanaqua; Ascension, Mocanaqua; Corpus Christi, Glen Lyon

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 willingness to deal with serious questions based on geography and personal commitments.
- Your desire to be more collaborative and promote better parish life.
- Better use of financial resources.

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 as a cluster that you enter into:

- Model One: Consolidated Parish among St. Mary, Mocanaqua; Ascension, Mocanaqua; St. Martha, Fairmount Springs. We also recommend that the parish site be at St. Mary with an additional worship site at St. Martha, Fairmount Springs, pending the facility assessment results.
- Model Three: Partnership Parishes among Corpus Christi and the newly consolidated parish noted above for a three year time period.
- We also recommend Model One: Consolidated Parish – At the end of three years, the newly consolidated parish at the St. Mary site will consolidate with Corpus Christi. There will be one worship site in each of the three communities: Fairmount Springs, Mocanaqua and Newport Township, to be chosen based on the facility assessment results and geography. The worship sites will be reviewed in two years.

We further recommend that:

1. You develop a strong evangelization program to reach out to the unchurched moving into the area.
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.

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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. In addition, we considered:

1. The fact of geographic distances
2. Statistics and declining populations
3. Your rationale including:
 - The consolidation of programs and administrative responsibilities allows the Pastor to be involved more fully in pastoral ministry.
 - We are planning for the future reality of diminishing number of priests in the Diocese of Scranton by lessening the administrative and pastoral burdens of the priests.
 - Due to geographic and driving time considerations, four worship sites and two priests are needed in the Cluster. The current Mocanaqua-Fairmount Springs Parish community covers approximately 600 square miles. When Corpus Christi Parish is added, there is 18 miles between the farthest worship sites and 30 minutes driving time in good weather.
 - There is potential for parish growth amidst a growing population in outlying rural areas.
 - A greater potential exists for a better allocation of financial resources.
 - There is increased potential for expanding already existing parish ministries (youth, religious education, social justice concerns, outreach to elderly, grieving, and homebound).
 - Mutual pastoral coverage is available in the Cluster Partnership.