

## 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 # 12

PARISHES: Holy Family, Sugar Notch; St. Charles Borromeo, Sugar Notch; St. Leo, Ashley; Exaltation Holy Cross, Hanover Twp. (Buttonwood)

#### **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 great effort in studying your geographic and pastoral needs.
- Your suggestion to do joint purchasing and share resources.
- Your hopeful look toward the future.
- The establishment of a permanent collaborative cluster committee.

#### **Recommendations**

We have taken seriously your desire for Model Three with a Model One Consolidation supported by your rationale for many cooperative, collaborative and coordinated ministry efforts. We also realize that St. Leo has recently consolidated.

However, based on our study of your Cluster Reports, the challenges you identified on your Parish Summary, 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 part of your suggestion.

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

- Model One: Consolidated Parish between Holy Family, Sugar Notch and St. Charles Borromeo, Sugar Notch. We also recommend that the parish site be at Holy Family, pending the facility assessment results.
- Model Three: Partnership Parishes among the consolidated Sugar Notch parishes, the Exultation of the Holy Cross, Hanover Township and the recently consolidated St. Leo, Ashley.
- We also recommend Model Two: Linked Parishes – Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Hanover Township linked to the newly consolidated parish in Sugar Notch.

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.

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4. 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 small and declining demographics at Exaltation of the Holy Cross.
2. The diminishing number of priests.