

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 # 7

PARISHES: Our Lady Help Christians, Dorrance; St. Jude, Mountain Top; St. Patrick, White Haven

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 share pastoral leadership and decrease the number of Masses.
- Your joint ministry programs.
- Your joint liturgical services.
- The outreach to 2/3 of the registered parishioners who are inactive.

Recommendations

We have taken seriously your desire to be in partnership based on your rationale to enhance ministries, offer retreats, combined liturgical experiences and joint programs.

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.

Given the various sizes of the parishes in your cluster, we recommend that you study the following options and in your response respond with **one** that will make better use of priestly presence in your cluster:

- Model Two: Linked Parishes with all three parishes St. Jude, Mountain Top; Our Lady Help of Christians, Dorrance and Saint Patrick, White Haven to be served by one pastor with assistants.
OR
- Model Four: In Solidum (Team) with all three parishes St. Jude, Mountain Top; Our Lady Help of Christians, Dorrance and Saint Patrick, White Haven to be served by a team of priests.
OR
- Model Two: Linked Parishes between St. Jude, Mountain Top, and Our Lady Help of Christians, Dorrance, while another Model Two: Linked Parishes between Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Freeland, and Saint Patrick, White Haven.

We further recommend that:

1. You activate the finance and pastoral councils to be more effective.
2. You explore the sharing of pastoral staff.

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3. The rich ethnic heritage of the people in your area be honored and celebrated whenever appropriate.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 the number of priests that will be available to serve individual parishes in the future.