

# Pastoral Planning Process Will Benefit from Pilot Program

As every parish throughout the Diocese of Scranton focuses their efforts on creating or refining their Parish Pastoral Council, the Office for Parish Life has begun a pilot program that is intended to eventually provide our parishes with a model to help guide their planning and collaboration.

The pilot is based on the goals expressed in the *Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines* for the Diocese, which explain that Parish Pastoral Council members should strive to “develop and focus on a mission embracing the total scope of the parish; engage in continuous pastoral planning; formulate policy after prayerful study and dialogue; and embody Servant Leadership.”

Further, the guidelines note that “working towards collaboration with other parishes is important to the living out of the mission when it enriches services and reflects good use of resources.”

“As we make the transition from parish consolidations to parish collaborations, it is important that we focus on the key elements of pastoral planning, and in particular how parishes can work together for the benefit of their parish communities,” said Catherine Butel, Diocesan Secretary for Parish Life.

The planning process for each parish has three primary purposes:

- Take a careful look at our present situation of parish and community life.
- Assess the implications of present realities and trends for the future.
- Develop a vision and pastoral plan that will enable us to be the Church which God calls us to be and wisely use the gifts and resources we have been given.

## ***Pilot Process Will Develop Model for All Parishes***

The pilot process involves nine parishes: St. Ignatius, Kingston; Holy Family, Sugar Notch; St. Vincent de Paul, Dingman’s Ferry; St. Patrick, Milford; St. Ann, Shohola; St. John Neumann, Lords Valley; Our Lady of the Snows, Clarks Summit; St. Gregory, Clarks Green; and Divine Mercy, Scranton. According to Mrs. Butel, the process is intended to empower Parish Pastoral Councils to engage in the pastoral planning process over the next 12 months and develop a 3-5 year parish pastoral plan covering the years 2014-2018 as well as plans for collaboration to create strong parish partnerships.

The process is grounded in Bishop Joseph C. Bambera’s vision for the Diocese as expressed in his Pastoral Letter, *Wounded and Loved: Regathering the Scattered*. In his letter, the Bishop emphasized that “We must adopt an effective pastoral planning process that puts evangelization squarely at its heart as the essential mission of the Church. The pastoral plan for each parish within a regional partnership needs to be a prayerful and participative process by which members acknowledge their purpose, their goals and their priorities, then devise accountable ways to ensure the realization of their pastoral plan. Consideration towards collaboration with other parishes is an important part of pastoral planning.”

The Office for Parish Life has been working with Rick Krivanka, a national pastoral planning consultant, to implement the process in the pilot parishes.

Mr. Krivanka served as director of the Pastoral Planning Office for the Diocese of Cleveland for over 32 years where he provided project management, consultation, training and facilitation services to diocesan and parish leaders as well as to religious communities and Catholic institutions in pastoral planning, organizational design, pastoral council development, leadership formation, staff development



**Nine parishes are participating in a pilot program that will eventually provide every parish with a model to help guide their Parish Pastoral Council as it proceeds with planning and collaboration. The Office for Parish Life has been working with Rick Krivanka, a national pastoral planning consultant, to implement the process in the pilot parishes. Recent workshops led by Mr. Krivanka were at St. Patrick in Milford (left) and Our Lady of the Snows in Clarks Summit (below).**

and team building, pastoral research, stewardship and spiritual growth. He also provided services in these areas for other dioceses, national organizations, non-profits and school districts.

In consultation with the Diocese of Scranton and its Office for Parish Life, through a series of workshops, Mr. Krivanka is coaching the pilot parishes with an approach called Appreciative Inquiry, a method centered in the art and practice of asking life-centered questions that can strengthen an organization’s ability to realize its full potential.

“The participants in this pilot process should feel free to offer ideas based on the planning framework,” he said. “We want to explore what is possible, what we can do even better. We welcome new and different ideas. Let’s be creative and innovative!”

Mrs. Butel said the insights gained during the pilot process will provide several benefits, including a pastoral planning “tool kit” tailored for our Diocese and a more systematic means to monitor and promote each parish’s progress regarding their pastoral plan.

The process is also designed to clarify expectations for collaboration among parishes and provide resources to help parishes reach those goals.

“Greater collaboration will strengthen and enhance the quality of ministry and service to people, and enable our parishes to wisely use resources without needless duplication,” Mrs. Butel explained.

She noted that the model(s) developed during this pilot period will then be available, with trained facilitators, to parishes throughout the Diocese.

The initial phase of the pilot workshops is already achieving positive results.

“This guidance will be very helpful in getting our Pastoral Plan in place,” said Debbie Lyons, secretary of the St. Ignatius Parish Pastoral Council. “We will begin to work on our plan right away and utilize the expertise that has been graciously offered to us.”

According to Mrs. Butel, the participants appreciate the knowledge and ideas that are being shared and the positive outlook that has characterized the gatherings. The emphasis on various approaches for listening to the entire parish in the planning process has been particularly helpful.



“These parish leaders are pioneering a pastoral planning process which will serve the whole Diocese,” she said. “Their commitment of time, energy and faith-filled vision is a great gift.”

## **Bishop Celebrating Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Mass**

The Diocese of Scranton will celebrate “Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month” with a special liturgy Sunday, March 10, at 10 a.m. in the Cathedral of Saint Peter, 315 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton. The Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L., Bishop of Scranton, will be the principal celebrant and homilist of the Mass.

On that day, we will gather to pray with our sisters and brothers who have developmental or intellectual disabilities, recognizing the many wonderful gifts they have to share with our parish communities. Our friends will actively participate in the liturgy as greeters, readers, altar servers, gift and banner bearers. CTV: Catholic Television will broadcast the Mass live.

For more information, please contact Sister Mary Beth Makuch, SS.C.M., at 207-2213, ext. 1101 or Sr-Mary-Beth-makuch@dioceseofscranton.org.