

## **Example Areas of Planning as a Parish Partnership To Strengthen Parish Ministries and Pastoral Care**

These are examples of areas for planning and pastoral care by a parish partnership. Each partnership will need to discern specific priorities based on their parish pastoral planning.

- **Evangelization and re-evangelization**
  - Engage all of the parishes in bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and helping all people to come to an encounter with the living Christ. This means connecting the Gospel message by word and the testimony of life with the culture of our time and engaging the lives of people who are practicing Catholics, no longer active Catholics/Christians, and to those who have never been Christian. Evangelization is the Church's essential mission.
- **Improve attendance and participation at the Sunday Eucharist**
  - Address ways to promote the foundational importance of the Sunday Eucharist in Catholic life and to increase attendance by people of all ages
- **Coordinate Mass schedules (daily, weekend, holyday, times of special need)**
  - Address the number of Sunday/Vigil Masses needed in the area given attendance at each Mass and church capacity as well as the Code of Canon Law (Ideally, no priest will be expected to regularly say more than three Masses of Sunday obligation, including Saturday Vigil Masses, each weekend.)
- **Coordinate the preparation and celebration of Sacramental ministries**
  - Plan ways to strengthen the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments and to coordinate inter-parish support for Sacramental ministry.
- **Share parish ministries and administration (faith formation and religious education, youth/young adults, seniors, RCIA, marriage enrichment, technology and administrative support, special maintenance services, etc.)**
  - Plan(s) for staffing that might include sharing certain roles or ministries among parishes, jointly hiring needed staff, and models adapted from other dioceses.
    - ❖ Utilize diocesan resources and 'best practices' regarding hiring, contracts, personnel practices and ongoing support.
  - New forms of inter-parish structures, cooperation and relationship building
    - ❖ Socials – getting to know each other better
    - ❖ Joint meetings of specific groups/councils/ministries
- **Share parish services related to community outreach, serving neighborhood needs and working for social justice**
  - Plan(s) for sharing certain staffing roles or ministries among parishes, jointly hiring needed staff, and models adapted from other dioceses.
- **Develop new staffing configurations that involve priests, deacons, lay ecclesial ministers, business managers, lay leaders**

(Over)

- **Coordinate institutional ministries (hospitals, nursing homes, prisons)**
  - Identify specific institutions and their locations, name the respective ministry responsibilities within each facility, and plan who will be responsible.
- **Address unique or changing population, language and cultural needs**
- **Strengthen the presence of a Catholic School**
  - Plan to support the availability of a Catholic school in the area using resources available from and current initiatives of the diocese
- **Promote life-giving ministry and living situations that foster priestly fellowship and mutual support**
- **Make wise use of facilities and buildings**
  - Obtain a professional assessment of the parish buildings in the partnership, address the ability to maintain buildings in a safe, sound condition, and determine which buildings will be needed and/or shared for the future ministry of parishes in the cluster.
  - Review new parish plans for major renovations or new construction with regard to both parish needs and the overall needs of the partnership.
  - Identify parish buildings that would no longer be used or able to be maintained.
    - ❖ Offer any suggestions for the future use of these buildings.
- **Assure sound finances**
  - Each parish is responsible for the administration of its own finances.
  - Address the ability of the parishes in the partnership to:
    - ❖ Provide for the full and accurate disclosure of financial information by each parish as needed by members of the partnership to accomplish their work
    - ❖ Cooperate in fairly sharing the payment of just salaries for shared staff persons and ministries proposed by the partnership, which would include benefit packages and pension obligations
    - ❖ Provide for overall building needs and related costs for utilities, daily and long-term maintenance of all buildings, property and liability insurance; property taxes; and diocesan assessments
  - Contact the Finance Office for assistance.
  - Create specific proposal(s) for how the parishes in the cluster would cooperate to strengthen financial stability as they look to the future.
- **Plan needed reconfiguration of parish structures and ministries to address these needs**
  - Plans for specific changes and proposed new developments regarding Sacramental and other parish ministries, community outreach, parish administration and staffing, institutional ministries, facilities and finances.

## Issues in Sustaining the Implementation of a Parish Partnership Plan

- **How will the partner parishes sustain a continuing relationship to facilitate:**
  - Ongoing communication and cooperation?
  - Coordinate shared activities?
  - Do further planning to address changing realities, pastoral needs and parish staffing with fewer priests?
  
- **How will parish leadership keep parishioners informed and engaged in implementing partnership plans?**
  - *Parish Partnership Corner* in parish bulletins;
  - Common link on parish websites;
  - Periodic updates in parish newsletters;
  - Comments made at parish meetings and gatherings.
  
- **What will be the desired interrelationship among parish leadership groups in the partnership** (parish staff, Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, ministry teams)?

This can be done in a manner selected by parish leaders with meetings as needed in one of the following structures:

- Joint meetings of pastors
- Joint meetings of parish staffs;
- Joint meetings of Parish Pastoral Councils / Finance Councils;
- Partnership Ministry Team for a specific shared priority composed of representatives from the parish staff, councils, parishioners;
- Shared Staff Person (part-time/full-time/paid/volunteer) to oversee a shared ministry priority  
– need to clarify lines of accountability;
- Partnership Coordinating Council/Team to oversee multiple ongoing efforts;
- Other new forms of models yet to be determined.