

Diocese of Winona
Vision 2016 Parish Cluster Pastoral Planning Process
Meeting 1 Report

June 4th, 2015

Parish Cluster of St. Leo in Pipestone, St. Catherine in Luverne, St. Martin in Woodstock and St. Joseph in Jasper, MN

Introduction

In the first meeting of the Vision 2016 Parish Cluster Pastoral Planning Process, the key agenda items are designed for increasing parish leadership awareness and knowledge of partner parishes, and Vision 2016 Process and parameters. This will be a new parish cluster that includes four parishes, three of which already operate as a Tri-parish (St. Leo, St. Martin and St. Joseph) and share a pastor, and St. Catherine, which has been paired with St. Mary in Ellsworth. St. Leo and St. Martin have been recommended for oratory status, as has St. Mary, which is not included in this recommended cluster. It should be noted that St. Catherine and St. Mary have requested that their cluster remain as is, due in large part to the geographic distance that would need to be traveled to attend mass.

Key Outcomes

- A. Reviewed overall process parameters, the Parish Cluster Report from TeamWorks International, Inc. and the Communications Toolkit
- B. Developed a listing of Key Concerns/Fears, Hopes, Strengths and Stories

Key Next Steps

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| 1. Meeting 1 Report development and distribution | Msgr. Kosse and Fr. Jennings, Christine Wroblewski (TWI) |
| 2. Meeting 2 – schedule of dates, times, and locations | Msgr. Kosse and Fr. Jennings, Leandra (DOW), Connie (TWI) |
| 3. Begin Due Diligence/Inventories,
prepare for liturgy schedule discussion | Administrator, parish leaders, and volunteers |
| 4. Respond to questions regarding oratories | Msgr. Colletti |

Outstanding Questions:

- Can you re-think the cluster configuration given the great distance across this cluster? Service to all who need it will be hard for one priest to do, especially in the winter.
- Can St. Mary (currently not in this cluster, but paired with St. Catherine) remain in a cluster with St. Catherine?

Vision 2016 Parish Cluster Pastoral Planning Process

Meeting 1: Key Concerns and Strengths

May 27th, 2015

Parish Cluster of St. Leo in Pipestone, St. Catherine in Luverne, St. Martin in Woodstock and St. Joseph in Jasper, MN

<p>Key Themes of Strengths & Hopes <i>drafted by facilitator for report</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Close, family feeling b. We have a core group of active volunteers c. Strong connection to our churches and the people in them d. Passion for our churches and faith e. Care for elderly and infirm is strong 	<p>Key Themes of Concerns <i>drafted by facilitator for report</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The large distance across this proposed cluster will make it hard on our priest, volunteers and parishioners to serve all who need and want to be served. b. That we will lose parishioners/members (possibly to other denominations in our area) c. That information be communicated more/better because information has not been forthcoming here. Sense of being misled. d. Financial viability of oratories.
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combining forces of our ministries • Friendly parishes • We have lots of volunteers who visit the sick and elderly (in nursing homes and their homes) • Our parishes are like family, have most of our friends through church • We have great faith and hearts • We have lots of talent that we are willing to share • Dedicated parishioners • Our community organizations are very strong (such as Knights of Columbus) – St. Leo, St. Catherine and St. Joseph noted • Our Tri-Parish has strong faith formation leaders and programs • Our facilities are in good shape (all of our churches) • We are experienced (aka “old”) – Woodstock • We have strong core values and money • Strong # of volunteers who work hard • Strong Bible Study and Faith Formation – St. Leo • Regular attendance at mass – St. Martin • Have a core group of singers – St. Martin • Have a core group of quilters – St. Martin • Have a core group of Bible Study attendees – St. Martin • Our numbers are growing and multigenerational – St. Leo • Have more youth offerings – St. Leo • Majority of youth participate in Bible Study – St. Leo • Lots of babies at Sunday morning mass – St. Leo • Good size facilities • Good working relationships already for Faith Formation, DREs across parishes 	<p>Concerns/Fears</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That we will lose people to other denominations and/or another Diocese • Limitation of masses/schedule, especially Saturday • How will our priests handle servicing such a large geography with so many nursing homes and care facilities? • Obligation of ministries/care/committees will be difficult across large distance (especially in harsh winter months) • That we have a very large distance/territory to cover and is it a challenges for priests and those wishing to attend mass. • What will happen to our Hispanic ministry? • Lack of substitute priests • Ability to have more priests. Can the Catholic Church get creative? • That there will be a drop-off in giving • Where will people from New Life Treatment Center attend mass? • Where will elderly attend mass if mass not close to home? • What happens in the next round if the priest shortage worsens? • The sadness in dismantling our churches • That the Diocese didn’t address challenges earlier so we could have made different decisions in our parishes. • If we have only 1 priest, what will happen to religious counseling, pastoral care, and care for the sick/dying over such as large distance? Is it possible? Will a priest be available? • Anger and a sense of feeling lied to after a big investment in planning time. No mention of oratories two years ago during planning. • That parishioners in our oratories will choose other churches to attend • Those parishioners in our oratories will stop attending church at all. • Since our churches provide some financial stability in our communities and

- We are multi-generational – St. Catherine
- Have and awesome choir with lots of youth involvement – St. Catherine
- Nice facility (church, school, rectory) - St. Catherine
- Amazing fellowship (Palm Sunday and every Sunday) – St. Joseph
- Strong faith in God
- Ability to worship together
- Strong social care ministries
- Strong pastoral councils
- Great speakers and dinner (2 to 4 times per year) – St. Leo

Hopes

- To create options for “odd time” masses for those who have to travel long distances (Sunday evenings?)
- Hope it all works
- That we get along and do what’s best for our churches and have a priest available
- That we collaborate
- We hope we didn’t waste \$ on refurbishing our church, new shingles and furnace (St. Martin)
- Hope not to close
- That there are offerings for older members who can’t work so many hours for fall dinner
- That we have a smooth transition and that we all work together
- Perhaps hold hands and Our Father to build community
- That we will have strong faith formation
- That we have enough priests
- That the Bishop can/will make time to speak here
- That our population increases
- That we increase our lay ministers and that we get more information on developing a lay ministry program
- That we are able to have teleconference masses (to bridge distance).
- That we don’t lose parishioners
- That we can come together to support our new cluster
- That we can make our cluster work financially
- That people will continue to attend mass and fill our churches
- That we have fairness in our mass schedule/times (rotating?)
- That the draft cluster doesn’t stay as recommended (and instead is based on the original recommendation from taskforce)
- That we raised up from the ashes of anger, grieving, disappointment and frustration
- That all members work together
- That all geographic/people needs are met

vibrancy, what will happen to our communities without a church?

- Can an oratory be financially viable?
- Worried about the anger and hurt being felt by many of our parishioners
- Feel there was a lack of honesty by the Diocese about the process
- Effects on our communities as a result of loss of churches
- That St. Mary in Ellsworth wasn’t included in this process/cluster
- Will we still have a tax-exempt status if we rent out our facilities, houses, etc. for other purposes?
- That people will go to churches that the Diocese has not intended
- Cost of keeping oratory churches open
- Where will the funds from oratory churches go?
- Loss of income to support parishes
- Upkeep of cemeteries
- Priest load
- That people will lose their faith over this change
- What will happen to our staff as a result of this change? Will they lose their jobs?
- Impact of oratory status on future/potential memorial bequests and trusts
- That we will always have correct mass times and locations posted on all church sites for us and travelers to our area
- That SW MN seems to have taken most of the losses in this change

- That oratory members are welcome in our new parishes
- That our parishioners feel more tied to their faith than buildings
- That we get/develop additional lay ministers to assist with pastoral care
- That we hold social masses/tours/pilgrimage where all members across all churches are invited to our oratory churches to learn more about them and celebrate them
- Keep heart of mission sharing and the Gospel

- Parish Stories:**
- St. Catherine has been around since 1880 and is the only Catholic Church in Rock County.
 - St. Martin was the first Catholic Church in Pipestone County (is 132 years old) and has had hand-carved light fixtures in the church since the 1940s. The light fixtures were carved as a way to save \$.
 - St. Martin has awesome Fall Dinners.
 - A long time ago, St. Martin had lots of nuns.
 - At St. Catherine, Fr. Tom is an awesome priest.
 - St. Catherine serves beer and wine the Fall Dinner! Has great fish fries.
 - The crying room at St. Catherine’s is known.
 - Have 3 or 4 nuns from St. Catherine.
 - St. Leo is known for its fish fries.
 - St. Catherine and St. Mary have “produced” Fr. Dobbs, Joshua Groeneweg and another – strong vocational church.
 - Fr. Parrott has relatives here – St. Catherine.
 - St. Catherine has a strong Hispanic community.
 - St. Martin has beautiful sainted glass windows.
 - St. Joseph building was re-oriented in the 1970s to connect the church center and create a more welcoming space.
 - St. Joseph’s after-mass social hour is very well known and has a such a strong tradition that one parishioner ran home to get goodies when the original host was unable to provide.
 - St. Leo’s is our adopted family, with members who welcomed us into the community and help take care of our children.

Additional Notes from Observers

Strengths	Concerns/Fears/Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We welcome Hispanics – Pipestone every Sunday. • Faith Formation – very effective and includes Hispanics. • Ushers, collections, lectors. • We have the Vets Home, nursing home and hospice, Poplar Creek, etc. • At St. Catherine, we have a rectory and chapel. • Hold no loans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much windshield/drive time to attend mass • Will each parish have a faith formation director, office manager, those who minister to elderly, grieving, etc? • That we are too far from Winona for the Diocese to understand our problem/concerns. • That we are confused about why this is happening. • Why don’t we/can’t we have deacons to help? • What will happen in winter when the roads are bad?

Hopes

- That the Diocese, Catholic Church will think outside of the box to address priest shortage (bring back priests who left priesthood to marry and ask them to minister to our churches, women priests).
- Demand, not hope, that you allow our voices be heard.
- Transportation for all who need it in all parishes.
- That the Seminarians realize they are dealing with people – down to earth. We need Seminarians who can relate to all people and not just Theology.
- That we are listened to.
- That we are more welcoming.
- The hope for a miracle.
- To keep our Saturday night and Sunday mass at St. Catherine because otherwise we will lose a lot of Catholics.
- We hope the priest who comes next will be as wonderful as Fr. Tom.

- Written/Typed Sheet: Regarding procedure to distribute funds of parishes becoming oratories:
 - What part will parishioners have in determining distribution of those funds?
 - Where will dollars go after sale of property and expenses are deducted?
- Written/Typed Sheet: What types of services and support will members of combined parish expect to have?
 - Visiting sick and shut ins
 - Wakes and funerals
 - Preparation for sacraments, Baptism, etc.
 - Is each parish expected to provide these services from community agencies outside of parish staff?
- Written/Typed Sheet: What is the Diocese Staff's Vision for the Catholic Church's future? There seems to be no plan to build a community for members of the Catholic Church, so why should anyone join the Catholic Church in the rural areas? If there is such a shortage of priests for parishes in rural areas, why should we evangelize? How does the Diocese have staff/resources to build Church Communities in Africa?

Stories

- People came back to our church because we were cared for by Fr. Marty.
- At St. Catherine, there are a lot of young couples and many children coming to church.