

Possible Models for Planning Group Configuration and Staffing

The following are examples of parish configuration and staffing. They are illustrative rather than exhaustive and are meant to stimulate discussion and creativity.

Parish Configuration

Cluster

Two or more parishes are served by a single pastor, pastoral administrator, or pastoral team, but each parish retains its own identity according to both church and civil law. Ministry programs and staffing can be autonomous within each parish or may involve partnerships with other members of the cluster. Typically clusters move toward a more integrated ministry. Two examples of clusters in the Diocese of Rochester are Holy Rosary/Most Precious Blood in Rochester and St. John, Port Byron/St. Joseph, Weedsport/St. Patrick, Cato.

Under diocesan guidelines, parishes joined in a cluster may operate with a joint pastoral council with at least some members of each parish represented. Although each parish must have its own separate finance council, the councils may at times be assembled as a group to discuss common concerns and issues.

Based on the past five years of experience with pastoral planning and re-configuration, Bishop Clark has developed some new expectations with regard to clusters. First, at the close of "Pastoral Planning in the New Millennium: Phase Two", no cluster in the Diocese of Rochester will be comprised of more than three parishes. Second, because a cluster of two or three parishes is not the norm in canon law, any cluster should be moving toward becoming a single parish, possibly with multiple worship and ministry sites.

Single Parish with multiple worship and ministry sites

Typically this would result from the combination of two or more parishes into a single parish. While the physical facilities of the previous parishes could be used as worship and/or ministry sites, there would be only one parish and a single faith community. This type of transition may work best when the resulting single parish takes a new name and is led by a new pastor, pastoral administrator, or ministry team. A worship site may be converted into an educational ministry site, a social justice ministry site, or sold to another worthy organization. All Saints parish in Corning and Good Shepherd parish in southern Cayuga are single parishes with multiple worship and ministry sites.

Single Parish

This is the traditional configuration. A parish is founded to respond to a growing Catholic population in a specific geographic area. It develops a faith community, generates the resources to build facilities and develop programs, and continues to serve a stable or growing population. Some single, free standing parishes, however, include areas or parishioners which were formerly part of other parishes which have been closed. This often happens in areas where several parishes exist in close proximity.

The parishes were originally founded to serve different nationalities or in areas with high population density. Population declines have resulted in declining members and the inability to support the facilities and ministry required for a vital parish. Such parishes are often consolidated with close-by parishes in order to make better use of resources and provide higher quality ministry and services. Excess facilities may be sold. St. Mary Our Mother in Horseheads and St. Columba in Caledonia are single parishes.

Oratory

An Oratory is a building designated for divine worship for the benefit of some community or group. Other members of the faithful can also come to it. Some examples of oratories in the Diocese of Rochester are the Abbey of the Genesee, the Mercy and Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouses, and the Newman Center at SUNY Brockport.

Mission

A mission church is erected to serve a large community of faithful which, however, is not large enough to be a free standing parish. A mission will often not have resident pastoral leadership but will depend on the mother parish at least in the early years. This is often a process for establishing a new parish in an area of high population growth. St. Ann in Owasco is a mission of Sacred Heart, Auburn.

Multiple Parishes with specialized worship and ministry sites

Multiple parishes partnering together to make best use of worship and ministry sites. This often happens with schools but can also focus on adult education sites, social life sites, and specialized or highly attended liturgies. In 1999 the six parishes of the Tioga planning group formed a Regional Center so they could collaborate on adult faith formation and lay leadership training.

Single Parish with multiple faith communities

A single parish could include responsibility and pastoral care for more than one faith community. When a hospital, college campus, or prison is reasonably close to a parish, the chaplain for that faith community could be assigned to the pastoral leadership team of the parish so that the pastoral care of that faith community would be seen as part of the ministry of the parish. The resulting synergy would enrich the spiritual life of the parish, deepen the parish's engagement with the heretofore external faith community, enrich the diversity of parish staff, and increase the involvement of parish volunteers in the life of the faith community. In addition, the "external" faith community would be more effectively integrated into the Diocesan church.

Cluster with multiple faith communities

The same model as above except that a cluster would assume responsibility for the faith community with the chaplain being assigned to the pastoral staff of the cluster.

Multiple Parishes with multiple faith communities

A group of autonomous parishes could develop a partnership to provide pastoral care to a faith community in addition to the parochial communities. This could be a prison, jail, college, hospital, or a ministry serving a specialized population. Examples of the latter

are developmentally disabled, migrant workers, non-English speakers, physically disabled. These tend to be special partnerships in which the parishes share the financial support of the ministry to a faith community. The ministry may be operated out of a single parish or guided by a group representative of all parishes. In the Finger Lakes and Wayne county area, several parishes work together to provide support to the local migrant ministry.

Ministry Programs

Joint programs

Any ministry program can be operated as a joint program by two or more parishes rather than be done individually. For example, instead of three parishes having three separate RCIA processes, they could operate and support a single one, possibly operating in a single site. This is different from joint staffing described below. Monroe County Catholic Schools is a program jointly sponsored by all Monroe County parishes.

Joint staff

Two or more parishes could hire a single staff person who would coordinate programs in multiple parishes. A single staff person could be responsible for coordinating a separate RCIA process in each parish. What tends to work most effectively is having one person lead a single program which serves two or more parishes. Obviously this requires understanding and cooperation on the part of the parishes.

Autonomous programs and staff

Some parishes may have the financial resources to provide all the staffing and ministry programs required for their faith communities without collaborating with other parishes in staffing and programming. Because of the increasing cost of ministry programs and the increasing expectations for both quantity and quality of these programs, fewer and fewer parishes find it possible and cost effective to do everything by themselves.

Staff Positions in the Diocese of Rochester

Thirty years ago, a typical parish had a pastor and one or more assistant pastors (now called “parochial vicars”) along with a parish secretary and bookkeeper, often the same person. Today the typical parish has a priest pastor and a staff composed of permanent deacons, women religious, and lay people. The resulting patterns of parish staffing are highly diverse and reflect the needs and circumstances of specific parishes and faith communities. Some parishes make use of retired priests and women religious to provide important services to the faith community. These are often individual, informal arrangements between a parish and the retirees. For this reason, retired priests and women religious are not formally included in this listing of pastoral staff. The following are some of the positions and types of people found in today’s parish.

Priest Pastor

A priest appointed by the Bishop to be accountable to him for the pastoral care of a parish. Under Canon Law only a priest can be designated the “Pastor” of a parish. For more detail about the responsibilities of a Pastor, please refer to the appendix “*Role of Priests and Pastors: Canon Law.*”

Priest Administrator

A priest appointed by the Bishop to serve as administrator of a parish. This appointment has less stability than that of a Pastor appointment.

Permanent Deacon

We have had Permanent Deacons in the Diocese since 1982. Although they may serve in various capacities in a parish, a Permanent Deacon is trained and ordained for service to the Diocese of Rochester. Deacons are ministers of Word, Sacrament, and Charity. They proclaim the Gospel and preach. Deacons preside at baptisms, wakes, funerals, and communion services. They witness marriages, assist at Mass, lead Benediction and prayer services. At the core of their ministry, Deacons are ministers of charity and justice. It is normative in our Diocese for a Deacon to spend on average ten hours a week volunteering in a ministry of service. As the number of priests has declined, however, more and more parishes are using deacons for general pastoral care and for assisting the increasingly over worked priest pastors. Many deacons have also become full-time ministers at diocesan, parish, and institutional levels.

Pastoral Administrator

The Bishop has appointed people who are not priests to be accountable to him for the pastoral care of a parish in accord with Canon 517.2. Pastoral Administrators serve as pastors in every way except they do not celebrate the sacraments which are reserved to those who are ordained. If judged qualified, a deacon could be appointed a Pastoral Administrator and thus could celebrate some sacraments: Baptism and Matrimony. Qualified women religious and qualified lay men and women can also be appointed Pastoral Administrators. When a parish is led by a Pastoral Administrator, a priest is appointed by the Bishop as Sacramental Minister to celebrate the sacraments, especially Eucharist. The Pastoral Administrator, however, is not accountable to the

Sacramental Minister but rather to the Bishop through a Priest Moderator. The Sacramental Minister, working in collaboration with the Pastoral Administrator, is also accountable to the Bishop.

Sacramental Minister

A priest assigned by the Bishop to provide sacramental ministry for a parish led by a Pastoral Administrator. This is most often a part time assignment given to retired priests or those who are performing full time jobs within the Diocese, either in the Pastoral Center or in a parish. In some cases a Sacramental Minister is assigned full-time to a parish.

Parochial Vicar

A priest appointed by the Bishop to assist a Pastor in the pastoral care of a parish.

Priest Moderator

A Priest Moderator provides supervision of the pastoral care given by the Pastoral Administrator. He is accountable to the Bishop and collaborates with the Pastoral Administrator.

Team Ministry

A team of people appointed by the Bishop to provide pastoral care to a parish, a group of parishes, a cluster, etc. A ministry team is usually composed of one or more priests, deacons, women religious, and lay people, each of whom has the educational and experience qualifications for pastoral care. The best of such teams function in a self directed manner without one person being the leader with others as followers. All exercise leadership and decisions represent an empowered consensus of all team members. Each parish, however, must have a canonically appointed pastor or pastoral administrator.

Pastoral Associate and Pastoral Minister

The Pastoral Associate has a major leadership role in the collaborative effort of building Christian community in a parish including overseeing a variety of aspects of parish life, such as liturgy, pastoral care, RCIA and other sacramental preparation, adult faith formation, preaching (where appropriate), evangelization, and social ministry. A Pastoral Associate will have a master's degree in pastoral ministry, theology or comparable field and appropriate experience. Pastoral Ministers also provide service in many of these areas but generally have less educational preparation and experience and work under the supervision of a Pastor, Pastoral Administrator, or Pastoral Associate. Staff classified as Pastoral Associate or Pastoral Minister may function under a number of different job titles, for example, Director of Social Ministry, Director or Minister of Evangelization, etc.

Catechetical Leader

Catechetical Leaders provide religious education programming for both adults and children in a parish. Their responsibilities may include religious education for school aged children, sacramental preparation, parent education, catechist formation,

children's catechumenate, family faith formation, adult education and RCIA. Responsibilities vary depending on educational and experiential backgrounds and job descriptions. Five positions are designated as catechetical leaders: Director of Religious Education I and II, Religious Education Coordinator, and Religious Education Administrator I and II. Catholic school principals are considered Catechetical Leaders within their schools. Directors of Christian Formation are considered Catechetical Leaders.

Youth Ministry Coordinator

A Youth Ministry Coordinator implements a parish's commitment to ministry by, with, and for youth. A typical youth ministry program includes catechesis, evangelization, social action, community building, spirituality, liturgy, guidance, enablement, and advocacy focused on students in grades 7 through 12.

Business Manager

A Business Manager enables the administration of a parish's human, financial, and capital resources. Job responsibilities can include involvement in planning, finance, human resources, staff supervision, facility management, legal services, communications, purchasing, and development.

Other

There are a number of other pastoral staff in parishes today, such as Catholic School Principals, Parish Visitors, Liturgy Coordinators/Directors, and Music Directors/Musicians. In addition, there are a number of Support Staff positions.