

Monroe-Clinton Planning Group

Pastoral Plan 2006-2014/Updated January 2011

Introduction

The parishes of the Monroe-Clinton Planning Group (Blessed Sacrament, Saint Boniface and Saint Mary) propose the following **revised** pastoral plan in accord with Phase Two of Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium. The plan is presented in two sections: *configuration of parishes* and *ministerial collaboration*.

The plan will be implemented in June 2011, when the number of priests assigned to Blessed Sacrament, St. Boniface and St. Mary is reduced from three to two. However, steps to be taken in the meantime are also indicated below. The plan should remain in effect until 2014.

Configuration of Parishes

When this pastoral plan is implemented, Blessed Sacrament and Saint Boniface will become a two-parish cluster and Saint Mary will remain a single parish. All *three worship and ministry sites* will remain open and functioning. The three parishes will share the services of two priests.

There will be *two pastoral leaders* (one for Blessed Sacrament/Saint Boniface and one for Saint Mary's). Anne-Marie Brogan is already serving as pastoral administrator of Saint Mary's. It is the strong desire of Saint Boniface and Blessed Sacrament that both priests as well as pastoral administrators be considered for the leadership of Blessed Sacrament/Saint Boniface. We ask diocesan leadership to reach out to the most qualified candidates who could serve our unique communities at this important time in our history. We look forward to a leader who will bring our parishes together and will work with St. Mary's to create a strong Catholic community in the southeast part of the City of Rochester. St. Mary's supports the desire of Blessed Sacrament and Saint Boniface that the most qualified candidate be appointed by Bishop Clark. They also affirm that, once the two priests are appointed, Saint Mary's needs to receive a sufficient portion of the priests' services to meet the liturgical and sacramental needs of the people of Saint Mary's, estimated to be approximately two thirds of the time of a full-time equivalent priest.

There will be *two pastoral councils* (one for Blessed Sacrament/Saint Boniface, one for Saint Mary). For the immediate future there will be *three finance councils* (one for each parish).

Mass Schedule

During the 2010-2011 year, a revised weekend Mass schedule utilizing the services of two, rather than three priests, was developed. The process included the recommendations of an ad hoc Mass schedule committee (including representatives from all three parishes) and input from the three pastoral councils, the three parish staffs, and parishioners at large. After reviewing all input, the Monroe-Clinton Strategic Leadership Committee plus the three pastoral council chairpersons chose the following schedule:

Saturday

4:00 Saint Mary's
5:00 Saint Boniface

Sunday

9:00 Saint Boniface
10:00 Blessed Sacrament
10:30 Saint Mary's
12:15 Blessed Sacrament

The new weekend Mass schedule will go into effect the weekend of June 11/12, 2011 and be re-evaluated sometime after at least six months of use.

Interim Next Steps

Pastoral Councils

Since Fall 2006, the three pastoral councils have met on the same day each month, making needed joint meetings easier to schedule. They are meeting as one group twice a year to discuss mutual concerns, to exchange information, and to build up the spirit of community among our parishes. By June 2011, the pastoral councils of Saint Boniface and Blessed Sacrament will have developed a covenant for the new Blessed Sacrament/St. Boniface pastoral council set to be created when the two parishes are clustered.

Finances

The three finance councils have met once, and the business managers of the three parishes continue to meet as need warrants.

An ad hoc financial group, including the business managers and finance council representatives from the three parishes, has met to assess the financial status of the three parishes, to project financial implications of the parish reconfiguration and revised weekend Mass times scheduled to take effect in June 2011, to assess the usage and cost of facilities, and to offer recommendations for ways the parishes can work together to use resources most effectively.

The January 26, 2010 report from the ad hoc financial group stated that the three parishes are financially viable over the near term but only because each has an endowment that can address unforeseen capital needs for buildings and cover operating deficits. Operating deficits, not counting building capital projects or investment income, are primarily caused by a decrease in regular church attendance. Opportunities identified include the following:

- optimize the performance of the parish portfolios
- seek ways to minimize the financial/attendance effect of staffing and Mass changes
- continue to rent out excess (unneeded) space
- seek ways to collectively reduce or improve the efficiency of administrative/maintenance overhead operations.

Whether through an ad hoc group or something more stably constituted, the three parishes will continue to share financial information and work together to address financial issues.

Liturgy/music

Key liturgy and music people from the three parishes have met to seek opportunities for joint liturgical celebrations for the partner parishes and to be the vehicle for appreciating the “liturgical cultures” of the parishes. A shared, three-parish liturgy committee will be created by June 2011 when two priests are appointed so that liturgical issues can be worked out. This committee will not replace parish liturgy committees.

Getting to Know Each Other Better

Parish Pastoral Councils, the Strategic Leadership Committee, and staff members have created opportunities for the interaction of the parishioners from each church. They have instituted a

communication coordinator for these joint ventures so that each pastoral leader and parish is kept informed of the activities. The goal is to have at least one social and one liturgical event each year.

Ministerial Collaboration

The three parishes of the Monroe-Clinton Planning Group are committed to providing the best possible pastoral care for all in our parish boundaries and all who identify with our diverse communities. We have already jointly hired a Director of Faith Formation and a Director of Youth Ministry. There is also collaboration on ministry with senior parishioners, young adult ministry, and pastoral care of the sick. Additional shared staff and ministries will be developed as these make sense, in order to strengthen ministries and use resources wisely.

Social Outreach

All three parishes of the Monroe-Clinton Planning Group have extensive, and often unique, involvements in social outreach in the name of the gospel. In the future at least one representative (preferably the chair of a social ministry group) from each of the three parishes will meet together to update the inventory of individual parish involvements, assess the current needs of these ministries in southeast Rochester, create a list of those involvements that overlap and those that are unique, and make recommendations to the Strategic Leadership Committee for next steps. We acknowledge that this will have to be coordinated with the work of the Rochester-wide Urban Ministry Initiative.

Faith Formation/Sacramental Preparation

The parishes of Blessed Sacrament, Saint Boniface, and Saint Mary's have jointly hired a Director of Faith Formation whose responsibility includes collaborating with the parish staffs to provide quality Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation for families with children and for adults who are desirous of deepening their knowledge and spirituality. The work of the Director is supported by a Faith Formation Advisory Committee with members from all three parishes. Programs developed reflect the needs of our parishioners and follow guidelines established by the Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis and our Faith Formation Advisory Committee.

Ongoing conversation needs to include:

- Assessing the Sunday Mass schedule and its impact on programming times
- Staff configuration and space concerns (including accessible space)
- Financial resources to provide quality programming for growing in an understanding of our faith as well as spiritual programs of retreat and prayer opportunities.

Long-term initiatives in the area of Faith Formation and Sacramental Preparation include:

- Joint programming of Marriage Preparation and follow-up with couples who are newly married
- Spirituality of our parishioners (youth and adults)
- Life-long Faith Formation. How do we challenge and stretch all of our parishioners (especially our adults who no longer have children of catechetical age) to continue to grow in their relationship with God and the Church? A survey was distributed in the summer of 2010 to address these needs and a plan was developed by the Advisory Committee.
- Baptismal Preparation for parents of infants and young children
- Evangelization—The three parishes commit to working together and in support of one another in developing an awareness of the need for evangelization throughout the ministries.

Youth Ministry

Since hiring a Director of Youth Ministry three years ago, collaboration in the area of junior and senior high school programming has begun among Blessed Sacrament, Saint Boniface and Saint Mary with the establishment of Middle School and High School Youth Groups, service activities, social events, joint retreats, and other community-building events.

The Monroe-Clinton Youth Ministry Planning Team, formed in fall 2009, consists of the Youth Ministry Director, and an adult and two teens from each parish. The Team is accountable to the Strategic Leadership Committee. The Team will ensure that ministry needs are assessed in each parish community, and that programs are comprehensive in accord with *Renewing the Vision*, the USCCB's document on youth ministry. This group will also collaborate on the development and promotion of parish, planning group, urban and diocesan youth programs.

Young Adult Ministry

The parishes of Blessed Sacrament, Saint Boniface and Saint Mary acknowledge and appreciate the gifts and talents young adults bring to the local and universal Church. Due to a large young adult population, the three parishes understand the importance of providing a supportive community that meets the spiritual, social, service and educational needs of young adult Catholics between the ages of 20 and 40.

A *Monroe-Clinton Young Adult Ministry Council* was formed in the fall of 2009. Invitations are made to young adults from all three parishes for a commitment of one year. Careful attention will continue to be given when selecting young adults for this team to ensure that its membership reflects the diverse nature of the young adult population, e.g., married, single, new parents, etc.

The Council's primary responsibilities are to assist in creating a welcoming environment for young adults within the three parishes, developing and promoting programs, and encouraging involvement of young adults in parish life.

Senior Ministry

Each parish has separate groups of senior parishioners who set their own agendas for socializing, travel, prayer, and education. Over the last several years there has been collaboration among the groups for planning shared events and trips. The groups from Saint Mary's and Blessed Sacrament have staff coordination; the group from Saint Boniface has an all-volunteer organizational structure. We encourage these groups individually and collectively to continue to do what they are doing, and we stand ready to assist in supporting them in any way that is needed.

Ministry with the Sick, Homebound and Dying

Located within the boundaries of the parishes in our planning group are one hospital (Highland), four skilled nursing facilities (Blossom South, Episcopal Church Home, Kirkhaven Nursing Home, Saint John's Home), and other facilities regularly or periodically needing some forms of pastoral care (Saint John's Meadows, Southview Towers, Pinnacle Place and 125 Saint Paul Street). In addition, there are a large number of homebound persons in our parishes and parishioners who are in residence in assisted-living and skilled-nursing facilities around the county and beyond.

There will be meetings of the priests of Blessed Sacrament, Saint Boniface, and Saint Mary's and other staff persons and key volunteers who coordinate ministry with the sick and aging to accomplish the following:

- 1) to develop a coordinated plan for Masses and communal Anointing of the Sick for the four skilled nursing facilities; the plan will anticipate the change from three priests to two for such services, e.g., the frequency of services at each facility;
- 2) to develop coordinated plans (to include training and updating of extraordinary ministers of communion who will carry the bulk of this ministry) for regular visitation with Holy Communion of those in skilled-nursing facilities and those confined to their own homes;
- 3) to assess the pastoral needs of the other facilities in our planning group and develop strategies for meeting those needs;
- 4) to assess the pastoral needs of our parishioners in residence at facilities around the county/area and develop strategies to maintain our connections with them;
- 5) to develop protocols for coverage of ad hoc calls for the sacraments of penance, anointing and Eucharist/Viaticum when priests are on vacation or retreat or are otherwise unavailable; and
- 6) to develop a plan for the ongoing education for and communications with our parishioners about the *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* and our planning group's ministry with the sick and aging.

When this pastoral plan goes into effect (June 2011), all these areas will need to be re-evaluated in light of having two priests available for this ministry, rather than three. At some point along the way, the question may have to be answered whether the three parishes should hire a staff person to coordinate this ministry in the planning group, and/or whether a parish nurse and/or social worker may be needed.

Conclusion

The Monroe-Clinton Strategic Leadership Committee will monitor implementation of the pastoral plan and make any necessary adjustments as we progress.

This plan attempts to describe an uncertain future, with parishes reconfigured based on the reduction of available priests. However, our best hope is that this somewhat negative impetus will be overshadowed by enhanced communication, collaboration, and sharing of talents and resources among all the Baptized, particularly our parish leaders and staffs. We look to remain open to the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit who, through our faith, will bring our ministry to fruition beyond the scope of our limited vision.

Members of the Monroe-Clinton Strategic Leadership Committee

Blessed Sacrament

Sue Howard
 Rev. Robert Kennedy
 Kathy Shon
 Christine Sibilio

St. Boniface

Jeanie Bayer
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 Thomas Nicolay

St. Mary

Nancy Ashe – co-chair
 Anne-Marie Brogan
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