



ATTACHMENT F

THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING

RENEWING PASTORAL LIFE AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

After the PASTORAL PLAN has moved through each Phase and parish leadership and the parishioners themselves have reached something of a consensus, this ATTACHMENT F should be prepared by the parish leadership and sent to the Vicar General, who is, *ex Officio*, Chair of the Committee for Parish Renewal and Restructuring. This must be sent to the Vicar General no later than Friday, March 30, 2012. This will mark the end of Phase One.

Please review the sample cover letter below and use it as the basis of your letter to the Vicar General. It contains a summary of what the Diocese hopes will be the attitudes that guide this process in each parish.

Dear Father McEvelly,

In a spirit of honesty and openness, we and the members of our parish community have taken the time necessary to participate actively and frankly in the process that Bishop Braxton has mandated in the **PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING**. We realize that a process such as this was necessary if we are to embrace the next 125 years of our history in a way that forthrightly addresses the challenges the Diocese faces at this juncture. We have asked the Holy Spirit to guide us.

We resisted the easy temptations to simplify the process, to ignore the views of those with whom we might disagree, to disregard obvious dramatic changes in our diocese and in our parish in the last fifty years, or to selfishly think only of what we as an individual parish want or need. Instead we looked to the long-term good of the entire Diocese, the long-term good of all of our parishes, our parishioners, our priests, deacons, and religious. We thought about our children's children and what we should do now to bequeath them a vibrant and vital Local Church. We have also taken to heart the instruction in the Bishop's Pastoral Letter announcing this process: "The **PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING** will be more

fruitful if most of the decisions are made at the parish and cluster levels and then recommended to me for implementation... I urge the parishes and clusters to forthrightly face and address these hard decisions... It is preferable that our communities of faith make the difficult decisions at the local level. However, if they are not made, these decisions will need to be made at the level of the Vicar General and the Bishop.”

To the extent that we could, we put aside stereotypes such as “conservative” or “liberal,” “rural parish” or “urban parish,” “large parish” or “small parish,” and kept our focus on our fundamental identity as followers of Jesus Christ.

As members of His Body, the Church, we share with you and the members of the Committee for Parish Renewal and Restructuring our evaluation of our parish and our recommendations for the future of our parish.

We submit the results of our efforts to you confident that the Committee for Parish Renewal and Restructuring will listen attentively to our voices. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have. We realize that you are required to look at the “big picture” in a way in which we may not be able. We understand that this could mean that you will conclude that you must recommend to the Bishop a course of action different from the one we propose. This might happen for a number of reasons, such as our inadvertently overlooking important factors or the fact that we did not successfully move beyond the perspective of protecting “our parish” at all costs. We fully acknowledge that it does not help the process if we say, “Yes, we realize the Diocese needs to reduce the number of parishes serving our people. However, our parish can not be one of them.”

We understand that if the final recommendation proposed by the Committee for the Bishop is different from our own proposal, it will be shared with the parish leadership before a final decision is made.

We are grateful to you and to the Bishop for taking the initiative of inviting us to prepare realistically for the future.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The signatures and titles of the members of the Parish Leadership Group

CHECKLIST

1. We are enclosing our **PARISH PROFILE, ATTACHMENT B.**
2. We are enclosing the number of parishioners who participated in the town hall meeting(s).
3. We are enclosing our summary of the main points about which there was a consensus (or major division) concerning each of the ten criteria in the **PARISH EVALUATION INSTRUMENT, ATTACHMENT D - The Christian Faithful, Leadership, Active Involvement of the People, Worship and Spiritual Life, Education and Ongoing Formation (Parishes with schools: Please enclose ATTACHMENT E, SCHOOL EVALUATION INSTRUMENT),** Outreach, Finances, Facilities, Geographic Distance, and Participation in Cluster. We are also enclosing the individual responses to **ATTACHMENT D** from parish leaders, the Parish Leadership Group, and all the parishioners who participated in the town hall meeting(s).
4. We are enclosing our recommendations for making the strengths of our parish even stronger, in the light of the ten criteria.
5. We are enclosing our recommendations for addressing the weaknesses of our parish, to the extent possible, in the light of the ten criteria.
6. We are enclosing any recommendations we may have about reconfiguring our cluster and/or our deanery.
7. We are enclosing our recommendations for ways in which our parish can provide support to other parishes in the cluster, deanery, or beyond, in the light of the criteria.
8. We are enclosing our recommendations about the possible consolidation, merger, or suppression of our parish with one or more neighboring parishes, in the light of the criteria. We are including our recommended timetable for the process of consolidation, suggestions for disposition of buildings that will no longer be needed in the consolidated parish arrangement, and questions we have about how to proceed.