



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

**FORMAL RESPONSE
THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING**

**HIS EXCELLENCY,
THE MOST REVEREND EDWARD K. BRAXTON, PH.D., S.T.D.
BISHOP OF BELLEVILLE**

**APRIL 2, 2013
TUESDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER
THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**





“Are you willing? Am I willing? Are we all willing to be His witnesses? Are we willing to be witnesses of Jesus Christ as we work together for the revitalization of Common Meaning in our community of faith? Our celebration of the Chrism Mass and the Sacred Triduum, the Sundays of Easter, the Ascension of the Lord, and Pentecost revitalize our identity as baptized members of Christ’s Body sharing in the Priesthood of the Faithful. These celebrations deepen our gratitude for the Ministerial and Sacramental Priesthood exercised by the priests in our parishes who are essential in the formation of our Eucharistic communities. I hope they deepen our appreciation of the ministry of the Bishop in our midst as well. These days remind us that in washing the feet of the disciples at the Last Supper, Jesus Himself is calling us to be a community of “Foot Washers” relating to one another in all circumstances with patience and graciousness, acting always in good faith with an attitude of service, surrendering ourselves to Christ. Ultimately, when we surrender ourselves in faith to Christ in the Church, we are not giving up something. Rather, everything is being given to us. Through the mystery of the Word made flesh, Christ will manifest the shape of the Church to come through each of us to the extent that we work to live out our communion with each other.

Because of the wonder of the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension and the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, we know that Christ is with us. We feel His intimate warmth as He continues to breathe on us. We are His Spirit-filled witnesses in southern Illinois and beyond. He continues to need us.

He needs our eyes to continue to see.
He needs our ears to continue to hear.
He needs our mouths to continue to speak.
He needs our hands to continue to work.
He needs our feet to continue to walk.
He needs our bodies to continue to serve.
And He needs our hearts to continue to Love!”



+Edward K. Braxton
“We are His Witnesses”
Pentecost Sunday, 2006

THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

“Learn your Faith. Love your Faith. Live your Faith!”

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* Because of the complexity of this undertaking and limited editorial assistance, there may be some errors in this text. If you find a substantial error, please forward the error and your suggested correction, in writing, to Mrs. Judy Hoffmann, the Bishop’s Administrative Assistant.



DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

APRIL 2, 2013

TUESDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING: AN OVERVIEW

Today, the Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Bishop of Belleville, released his FORMAL RESPONSE to the information gathered from the parishes in THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING which he initiated in his Pastoral Letter of August 6, 2011. In consultation with the PASTORAL PLAN COMMITTEE* established for this purpose and with other representatives of the Diocese, the Bishop has formulated a comprehensive reorganization of the Catholic Church in southern Illinois in order to strengthen the Local Church and assist the people of God as we continue to learn our faith, love our faith, and live our faith in the years to come.

The Bishop's FORMAL RESPONSE contains a number of changes and pastoral initiatives that are being made for the good of the Body of Christ. The Bishop has sought to determine a pastorally effective course of action that respects the individual parish communities and seeks to bring about structural changes in the least disruptive manner. The Bishop's document does not contain a dramatic announcement of the names of specific parishes and schools and the dates on which they will be closed. He has deliberately avoided that approach in favor of a more organic, gradual, and dynamic process which continues to place great responsibilities in the hands of the People of God. However, no one should be misled by this approach. THE PASTORAL PLAN will have real consequences that will require real sacrifices on the part of all as it is implemented. The result will eventually be a reduction in the number of parishes and schools in the Diocese.

The Bishop's FORMAL RESPONSE includes: the reorganization of the Diocesan Structure; the reorganization of the Department Directors; the reorganization of the Deaneries into VICARIATES and the appointment of new Vicars Forane. Within the VICARIATES, the parish communities are linked together in new PARISH PARTNERSHIPS. His RESPONSE also includes the reorganization of the requirements for the viability of our Catholic Elementary Schools.

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The heart of THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING is the establishment of PARISH PARTNERSHIPS. PARISH PARTNERSHIPS will consist of joining parishes together, usually a larger parish with a smaller one (in a few cases, more than one). The central responsibility of these PARISH PARTNERSHIPS is to begin work immediately on a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL which will provide a practical arrangement for the parishes in question for the day when they will be served by only one priest. In most cases, it is not possible to be certain of that date. It may be in one, two, three, or more years. However, the projection of the probability of having only fifty active Diocesan Priests in the near future makes it clear that day is coming.

These PARISH PARTNERSHIPS can be arranged in four groups:

- a.) PARISH PARTNERSHIPS of parishes that already have acknowledged the need to merge into one parish and are directed to petition the Bishop to do so in the immediate future;
- b.) PARISH PARTNERSHIPS of parishes that are directed to develop new STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS that will need to be implemented in the near future;
- c.) PARISH PARTNERSHIPS of parishes that are directed to develop new STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS that take into account the probability of having only one priest, even though the implementation of these models will not take place for a number of years;
- d.) PARISH PARTNERSHIPS of parishes that already have been joined together to be served by only one priest and are directed to make every effort to bring these parishes together in even greater and more effective collaboration.

The leadership of every PARISH PARTNERSHIP is required to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL for the future, when there will be only one priest to serve several currently existing parish communities. The Bishop acknowledges that the work of developing STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS will vary in difficulty in different PARISH PARTNERSHIPS. In some cases, the process might be relatively easy. In other cases, it will be more challenging. In still other cases, the process may be quite difficult. And there may be a small number of cases where it seems almost impossible. Parish leaders are encouraged to contact the Vicar General or the Bishop himself, if they encounter seemingly insurmountable challenges.

Each PARISH PARTNERSHIP must submit by September 15, 2013, a 1-2 page report informing the Bishop of the progress being made by the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS to develop an appropriate STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL. Each PARISH PARTNERSHIP must also submit by December 31, 2013, a well-developed draft of its STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL detailing how the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS will be structured. This timeframe clearly does not mean that the new structure will take effect on that day. It means that it is imperative for all parishes to develop an actual plan of action by December 31, 2013 that is specific and clear so that it can be implemented

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when it is needed, even if the need does not arise in the immediate future. Obviously, if we are blessed with a growth in our Catholic population, an increase in vocations to the priesthood and an influx of *fidei donum* priests, the implementation of some PARISH PARTNERSHIPS' STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS may be delayed indefinitely.

Several possible STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS are immediately evident:

- a.) Two or more parishes petition to merge and become one parish with only one church building;
- b.) Two or more parishes petition to merge and become one parish with one primary church building while one or two of the former parish church buildings are granted chapel status for occasional use, at least for a time;
- c.) Two or more parishes remain free standing (without a merger), maintain both churches, and develop a structure within which they can realistically be served by one priest. This would include necessary changes in liturgical schedules (Sunday Mass, Holy Days, Holy Week) and joining many parish committees and activities together; or
- d.) Other STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS developed by PARISH PARTNERSHIPS and proposed to the Bishop for his consideration.

The PARISH PARTNERSHIPS are groups of two or three parishes, superseding the clusters. They will function in a manner similar to the clusters but they will require more intense and structured collaboration, driven by the realization that sooner or later they will be served by only one priest. With the creation of these PARISH PARTNERSHIPS, the superseded clusters are formally dissolved. Fruitful shared ministry between members of these former clusters may continue on a voluntary basis. However, participation in the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS is mandatory.

Commenting on his FORMAL RESPONSE Bishop Braxton said:

“As we turn to the work of implementing the different aspects of THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING, we do so in the midst of a Year of Faith marking the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This year of grace, one of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI's last gifts to the Church, opened on October 11, 2012. It will be closed by His Holiness, Pope Francis on the Feast of Christ the King, November 24, 2013, one of his first gifts to the Church. As I said in my Year of Faith Lecture at the Cathedral, March 17, 2013, the work of restructuring the Diocese will only become the work of renewal if we turn to Christ in the Scriptures, in the lives of the saints, in the Council documents, and in the pages of the Catechism. Prayerfully turning to these great resources in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament

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will open our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit who will renew us all – bishops, priests, deacons, religious, the Christian faithful, and our parish communities. And, if we embrace that renewal, that same Holy Spirit may grace us with an increase in vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate, and the religious life.

Therefore, during the months and years ahead, let us do everything in Christ. When we are having difficulties determining the best course of action, remember the Lord is near! When individuals and groups are expressing strong seemingly irreconcilable differences, remember the Lord is near! When there is sadness and frustration in the face of painful decisions, remember the Lord is near! When we begin to experience the ways in which our communities of faith are strengthened and renewed by our common generous embrace of THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING, let us rejoice! The Lord is near!”

*The members of THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE are:

**The Reverend Monsignor John W. McEvelly, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia,
Chairman, *ex officio***

The Very Reverend C. Raymond Schultz, Vicar Forane, Vice Chairman

The Reverend Monsignor John T. Myler, Vicar Forane

The Reverend Monsignor Daniel J. Jurek, Vicar Forane

The Very Reverend Henry J. Fischer, Vicar Forane (until his resignation for health reasons)

The Very Reverend Robert B. Flannery, Vicar Forane

The Very Reverend John C. Iffert, Vicar Forane

The Reverend Kenneth J. York, J.C.L., Chancellor for Canonical Affairs

Deacon Robert J. Lanter, Director of the Permanent Diaconate

Sister Catherine Wellinghoff, A.S.C., Parish Life Coordinator of St. Paul Parish, Johnston City

Mr. Thomas H. Posnanski, Director of Faith Formation, Director of Office of Catholic Education

Mr. James V. Mroczkowski, Director of Temporal Affairs, Chief Financial Officer

**Mr. David R. Spotanski, Chancellor for Administration and Pastoral Services (until his
departure from the Diocese)**

Ms. Kathy Mulvin, Diocesan Pastoral Council



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

April 2, 2013

Tuesday within the Octave of Easter

“A Time for Renewal”

*D*ear Priests, Deacons, Religious, Parish Life Coordinators, Principals and Department Directors:
Dear People of God:

*P*eace be with You! Jesus Christ is the reason why the Catholic Church exists and He is the reason why we are working to renew our Local Church through our PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING. Our primary goal is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and to do so more effectively. In order to achieve that goal we must help our people and each other to continue to learn our faith, love our faith, and live our faith. We will do this if each of our parishes, each of our communities, is nurturing vital, engaged Christians. Our PASTORAL PLAN becomes a program of renewal when we commit ourselves anew: to be people of genuine prayer, to be people eager to be evangelizers by professing our faith in Christ, to be people dedicated to studying the Word of God and spreading the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church, and to be people who are truly generous, giving of our time, talent, and treasure to our parishes and our Diocese for the sake of the Gospel. Eastertide is our time for renewal.

It is with this vision of our mission before me that I share with you this FORMAL RESPONSE to the work that has been going on since my August 6, 2011, Pastoral Letter, “EMBRACING THE FUTURE WITH HOPE,” which introduced THE PASTORAL PLAN.

In that letter I wrote that this long overdue effort “*will require parishes to make difficult decisions that may be painful. However, THE PASTORAL PLAN will be more fruitful if most of the decisions are made at the parish and cluster levels and then recommended to me for implementation. The challenges of the future are so great that real and difficult decisions must be made. I urge the parishes and clusters to face forthrightly and address these hard decisions...for the long-term good of the whole Diocese. This requires an unselfish spirit that looks beyond individual parish boundaries. All parishes are required to participate. Over time, every parish in the Diocese will be affected in some way by this undertaking.*”

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In his February 8, 2013, MEMORANDUM, Monsignor John W. McEvilly, Vicar General, Moderator of the Curia and Chairman of THE PASTORAL PLAN COMMITTEE, provided you with an update and overview of the work of THE COMMITTEE. This was done not only to inform you of the work being done, but also to assist you in anticipating the contents of this FORMAL RESPONSE to the process. As you review the materials in this document, you will note that, unlike many other diocesan plans, ours will be implemented in a dynamic, flexible, and gradual manner that seeks to take into account the practical and pastoral realities of our different parish communities. Because of this gradual and organic implementation, not every decision will be included here. Instead, you will receive periodic updates when specific pastoral arrangements are completed.

I am very grateful to the members of THE COMMITTEE and each of you who have demonstrated your dedication and commitment to your Catholic faith throughout this period of meeting, deliberating, collecting and collating data, and discerning the future of the Church in southern Illinois. Your generous, cooperative spirit has been deeply appreciated. I thank you in advance for your continued cooperation during the coming years of implementation. During the past months, I have spent many evenings alone in the Chancery reading over the many comments that you and your parishioners have submitted to the Diocese. These hours of study have made me acutely aware that stress, tension, and differences of opinion are inevitable in a consultation such as this. The strong feelings expressed in some of your observations underscore the fact that, in some cases, these tensions may become more acute because everyone will not be in agreement with every decision. I wish to assure you that every effort has been made to hear and appreciate the many different points of view expressed in each PARISH VIABILITY FORM.

After reviewing all of the materials from each parish, listening to the insights of the Vicar General, THE COMMITTEE, and others, I placed the difficult decisions that we must make as a Diocese before the Lord in prayer. I prayed to the Holy Spirit for guidance in my discernment. The serenity that I now experience gives me confidence that the decisions I have made are for the well-being of us all. I ask you to read the entire RESPONSE carefully. Reflect and pray about its contents. Discuss it with your Parish Leadership, and communicate its contents to your people in a positive manner.

The heart of THE PASTORAL PLAN is the establishment of PARISH PARTNERSHIPS. I instructed the Deans to call each Pastor, Administrator, and Parish Life Coordinator to give you personally a brief explanation of this change, because of the importance of this new structure. PARISH PARTNERSHIPS consist of joining parishes together, usually a larger parish with a smaller one (in a few cases, more than one). The central responsibility of these PARISH PARTNERSHIPS is to begin work immediately on a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL which will provide a practical arrangement for the parishes in question for the day when they will be served by only one priest. In most cases, it

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is not possible to be certain of that date. It may be in two, three, or more years, but that day is coming. This is all but certain. When it does, the well-developed, STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL, which each PARISH PARTNERSHIP is required to submit to the Vicar General's office, will take effect.

These PARISH PARTNERSHIPS can be arranged in four groups:

- a.) PARISH PARTNERSHIPS of parishes that already have acknowledged the need to merge into one parish and are directed to petition the Bishop to do so in the immediate future;
- b.) PARISH PARTNERSHIPS of parishes that are directed to develop a new STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL that will need to be implemented in the near future;
- c.) PARISH PARTNERSHIPS of parishes that are directed to develop a new STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL that takes into account the probability of having only one priest, even though the implementation of these models will not take place for a number of years;
- d.) PARISH PARTNERSHIPS of parishes that already have been joined together to be served by only one priest and are directed to make every effort to bring these parishes together in even greater and more effective collaboration.

The details of the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS, as well as the other aspects of THE PASTORAL PLAN, are elaborated in the FORMAL RESPONSE. These include: the Reorganization of the Diocesan Structure, the Reorganization of the Department Directors, the Reorganization of the Deaneries into VICARIATES, and requirements for the viability of our Catholic Elementary Schools. This RESPONSE contains a number of changes and pastoral initiatives that are being made for the good of the Body of Christ. It does not contain a dramatic, disturbing announcement of the names of specific parishes and schools and the dates on which they will be closed. I have deliberately avoided that approach in favor of a more organic, gradual, and dynamic process which continues to place great responsibilities in the hands of the People of God. However, you should not be misled by this. THE PASTORAL PLAN will have real consequences that will require real sacrifices on the part of all as it is implemented. The result will eventually be a reduction in the number of parishes and schools in the Diocese.

A central component of this PASTORAL PLAN is the need for everyone in the Diocese to make a renewed and sincere commitment to pray and work for vocations to the priesthood. On many occasions I have said that we are all called to be vocations directors. This is not a figure of speech. I am convinced that we can have no reason to hope for an increase in vocations to the priesthood unless each one of us makes a conscious effort to find ways to invite personally young men from our communities of faith to consider serving the Church as ministers of Word and Sacrament. Our personal prayerfulness, our dedication to the Church, our joyful commitment to Christ, and the pride we take in our day-to-day pastoral service are the best

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possible vocation inspirations. I share the view of many in the Diocese that there is a need to have a priest who can devote a considerable amount of his time to working effectively for vocations to the priesthood. However, I do not believe that a priest in this position will be effective unless each of us takes our personal responsibility to be vocation directors seriously and cooperates fully with him. At the same time, I have long sought to find a way of appointing a priest to focus his energy on this essential ministry. As a part of THE PASTORAL PLAN, it is my hope and my intention to appoint a priest as Vocation Director who will begin this work no later than September 2013.

There is no perfect plan for pastoral renewal and restructuring in the Diocese. THE PASTORAL PLAN that I place before you today, however, is the result of the input from parish leadership, individual parishioners, members of THE COMMITTEE, and others. I am very aware that the implementation of THE PASTORAL PLAN may lead to questions or concerns. The details of THE PASTORAL PLAN are not all carved in stone. Once you have studied THE PASTORAL PLAN, discussed it and prayed about it, you should feel free to share any questions you have with a member of THE COMMITTEE, with the Vicar General, or with me. All serious and well-grounded suggestions for modification will be considered. However, it will not be possible to consider simply maintaining the *status quo*.

Once the new VICARIATES are established and the new Vicars Forane have been appointed, Monsignor McEvelly and/or I will attend a meeting of each VICARIATE to reflect with you on the PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING and respond to questions you may have.

In “EMBRACING THE FUTURE WITH HOPE” I placed a particular emphasis on the importance of placing prayer at the heart of THE PASTORAL PLAN. If it is to bear fruit, personal and communal prayer must remain at the heart of this process as we go forward. Please continue to pray for everyone in our Diocese during this time of decision and transition. I invite you to return to ATTACHMENT G: PRAYER RESOURCES FOR THE PLANNING GATHERINGS, where you will find many prayers from which to choose. Once again, in addition to the Mass, our greatest prayer, and the Rosary, I recommend that you and your fellow parishioners continue to pray the remarkable Prayer for Divine Guidance by the Trappist mystic, Fr. Thomas Merton. We cannot succeed without prayer!

Appreciatively yours in Christ,



The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D.
Bishop of Belleville

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THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING

The Prayer for Divine Guidance

by

Father Thomas Merton, O.C.S.O.

“My Lord God:

We have no idea where we are going.

We do not see the road ahead of us.

We cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do we really know ourselves,

and the fact that we think we are following

your will does not mean

that we are actually doing so.

But we believe that our desire to please you

does in fact please you.

And we hope that we have that desire

in all that we are doing.

We hope that we will never do anything

apart from that desire.

And we know that if we do this

you will lead us by the right road

though we may know nothing about it.

Therefore will we trust you always

though we may seem to be lost

and in the shadow of death.

We will not fear,

for you are ever with us,

and you will never leave us

to face our perils alone.

Hear our prayer in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN”

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THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING

THE FORMAL RESPONSE OF THE MOST REVEREND EDWARD K. BRAXTON

I have accepted the following recommendations of THE COMMITTEE.

A. The Reorganization of the Diocesan Structure: the Department Directors

As THE COMMITTEE and the Cabinet reviewed the overall needs of the Diocese in the present and in the years ahead, it became clear that a certain amount of reorganization was needed at the Diocesan level. This included a restructuring of the Diocesan offices at the Chancery and at the Pastoral Center.

In ATTACHMENT A, you will find the diagram of “The New Diocesan Structure.” On the reverse side, you will find “The Former Diocesan Structure.” Note that formerly there were six Department Directors; now there are five. With the departure of Mr. David Spotanski, the position of Chancellor for Administration and Pastoral Services was eliminated. To the extent possible, the work of Development, Parish Services, and Communications has been taken over by other Diocesan offices.

Note also that the work schedule of the Director of Temporal Affairs, Mr. James V. Mroczkowski, Chief Finance Officer, has been reduced from five days per week to three. We are convinced that all essential financial work for the Diocese can be accomplished in this timeframe.

Both of these changes are a part of a restructuring of the Diocesan administration necessitated by changes in the financial resources and pastoral activities of the Diocese.

Additionally, three members of the Diocesan staff have accepted additional responsibilities: Mrs. Sue Huett has been appointed Director of Pastoral Services, Mr. Thomas Posnanski has been appointed Director of Faith Formation, and Mr. Gerry Hasenstab has been appointed Director of Social Outreach.

B. The Reorganization of the Diocesan Structure: the VICARIATES

THE COMMITTEE also concluded and recommended a restructuring of the present arrangement of Deaneries, which entails both the regrouping of the counties that constitute Deaneries and the reduction of the number of Deaneries, now to be called VICARIATES.

In ATTACHMENT B you will find a map indicating the counties that constitute the new VICARIATES. In ATTACHMENT B1 you will find a sheet comparing the VICARIATES with the

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former Deaneries, including an indication of the number of parishes in each. Formerly, there were six Deaneries. Now there are five VICARIATES. The titles Deanery and Dean are replaced by the titles VICARIATE and Vicar Forane.

There have been many requests over the years for a reorganization of the former Deaneries. While some suggestions and recommendations contradicted each other, it is hoped that the new organization of the VICARIATES will be pastorally beneficial.

N.B. The Vicar Forane is now expected to follow more closely the description of this position found in the Code of Canon Law. Additionally, he is now asked to visit each parish in his VICARIATE once a year and to review carefully the parish sacramental and financial records.

The new VICARIATES established by THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING will become effective May 1, 2013. The terms of those currently serving as Deans will come to an end on June 30, 2013. Additionally, after that date, where necessary, elections should take place for members of the Presbyteral Council who have been displaced by the change in the boundaries of the former Deaneries.

I will appoint Vicars Forane for each of the five new VICARIATES. This is the process to be followed: The priests of each new VICARIATE should meet as soon as possible, but no later than June 1, 2013, to surface a *terna* of three priests for my consideration. The priest who chairs the meeting should forward the names to me immediately after the meeting. If there is a former Dean residing in the new VICARIATE, he should call and chair the meeting. If there are two former Deans residing in the new VICARIATE, the senior priest by ordination date should call and chair the meeting. If there is no former Dean residing in the VICARIATE, the senior Pastor by ordination date should call and chair the meeting. (N.B. Currently, in the new VICARIATES, there is one Dean residing in the NORTH CENTRAL; there are two residing in the METRO EAST and two in the WEST; there are none residing in the SOUTH and EAST.)

The names of current Deans may be included in the *terna*. While the names on the *terna* will be given serious consideration, there is no mandate for the Diocesan Bishop to choose one of these candidates.

C. The Reorganization of the Diocesan Structure: the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS

In ATTACHMENT C you will find the list of the new PARISH PARTNERSHIPS in each VICARIATE. It goes without saying that we must all continue to pray and work, in a serious manner, for vocations to the priesthood. We must not create a self-fulfilling prophecy. At the same time,

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we must execute THE PASTORAL PLAN based upon the number of priests we can realistically expect to be available. THE COMMITTEE has projected that in the not too distant future, the Diocese may have no more than fifty active incardinated priests in full-time ministry.

Therefore, I have accepted the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE that the present configuration of “clusters” needed restructuring. A primary goal of this restructuring is, in most cases, to join together a larger parish with a smaller parish in PARISH PARTNERSHIPS. (In a few cases, the larger parish will be joined with two or more smaller parishes.) This new structure will take on a greater importance in the years ahead because, in the coming years, most of these PARISH PARTNERSHIPS may well be served by only one Priest.

Please see **ATTACHMENT C** for a more detailed explanation of PARISH PARTNERSHIPS. (Please note that this new structure of PARISH PARTNERSHIPS does not preclude the continuation of existing successful cluster collaborations.)

D. The Future of Catholic Elementary Schools

I have accepted THE COMMITTEE’S recommendations for minimum requirements for a Catholic Elementary School to be deemed as academically and fiscally viable. If a school does not meet these requirements, the leadership of the parish and school must begin to take steps toward closing the school or merging with a neighboring school.

These requirements include:

- 1.) All Catholic Elementary Schools in the Diocese of Belleville must be able to sustain a minimum enrollment of 50 students in grades K-8 in order to remain viable. If they do not currently have that minimum number, they will be given one year to reach that number in order to continue operating. Currently, there are three such schools.
- 2.) Parishes in the Diocese of Belleville with Catholic Elementary Schools and those that send students to neighboring Catholic Elementary Schools are to provide a maximum level of financial support to their parish schools of not more than 40% of parish income. The 40% of parish income is to include all types of support, including utilities and maintenance. Those parishes that are currently supporting their Catholic Elementary Schools at a higher level of financial support will have up to three years to make the adjustments necessary to comply with this requirement. This affects twenty-two schools.

This requirement, consistent with national standards, is deemed necessary to

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prevent a parish from devoting so much of its income to the support of the school that the parish is not able to provide funds for other important activities that are essential for a parish to be truly viable.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Belleville have an excellent tradition of developing the whole person through spiritual and academic formation based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The mission of Catholic schools provides a particular environment for the New Evangelization by presenting the Gospel anew within the school and parish communities. Therefore, it is imperative that all Catholic schools in the diocese actively address the challenges confronting their schools and parishes and develop plans to continue the tradition and work of Catholic education in a meaningful and thoughtful manner.

In light of the PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING, our Catholic Elementary Schools must respond to the following directives:

- 1.) **FINANCES:** Parish financial support obligations for Catholic Elementary Schools shall continue for the 2013-2014 school year. However, parishes with Catholic Elementary Schools shall develop plans to ensure that the schools receive no more than 40% of the parish's income.
- 2.) **ENROLLMENT:** Parishes with Catholic Elementary Schools that have experienced declines of 10% or more in enrollment during the past seven years and reside within eight miles of a neighboring Catholic Parish Elementary School shall engage in conversations with the nearby school(s) and explore alternative restructuring in order to share the resources of their parishes and schools.
- 3.) **STEWARDSHIP:** Where there are more than two schools in an area, these schools shall develop drafts of plans that will allow for improved stewardship for their schools and parishes. In most instances, the model of one parish maintaining a stand-alone Catholic school will probably not be viable in the future.
- 4.) **ALL SCHOOLS:** Schools shall attempt to achieve Diocesan standards regarding finances, enrollment, and stewardship by the start of the 2014-2015 school year. These standards include appropriate cost-per-pupil expenses and reasonable student-teacher ratios. It is also essential that all Catholic Elementary Schools in the Diocese continue to meet at least the minimum salary guidelines set by Diocesan Policy for all lay teacher salaries.

All Schools shall submit a specific plan to address the four directives listed above to the Office of the Vicar General and the Office of Education no later than December 31, 2013.

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While many Catholic Elementary Schools also provide pre-school programs, the pre-school students are not included in determining the minimum enrollment number to maintain a viable Catholic Elementary School. The development of pre-school programs connected with a Catholic Elementary School has helped encourage many potential students to enroll in Catholic Elementary Schools. At this time, however, there is not a reliable statistical finding to suggest that most, if not all, of the pre-school students will enroll in a school's kindergarten program to provide a reliable long-term enrollment projection for a Catholic Elementary School. It is also important to state that all pre-school programs are to be cost efficient and have balanced budgets.

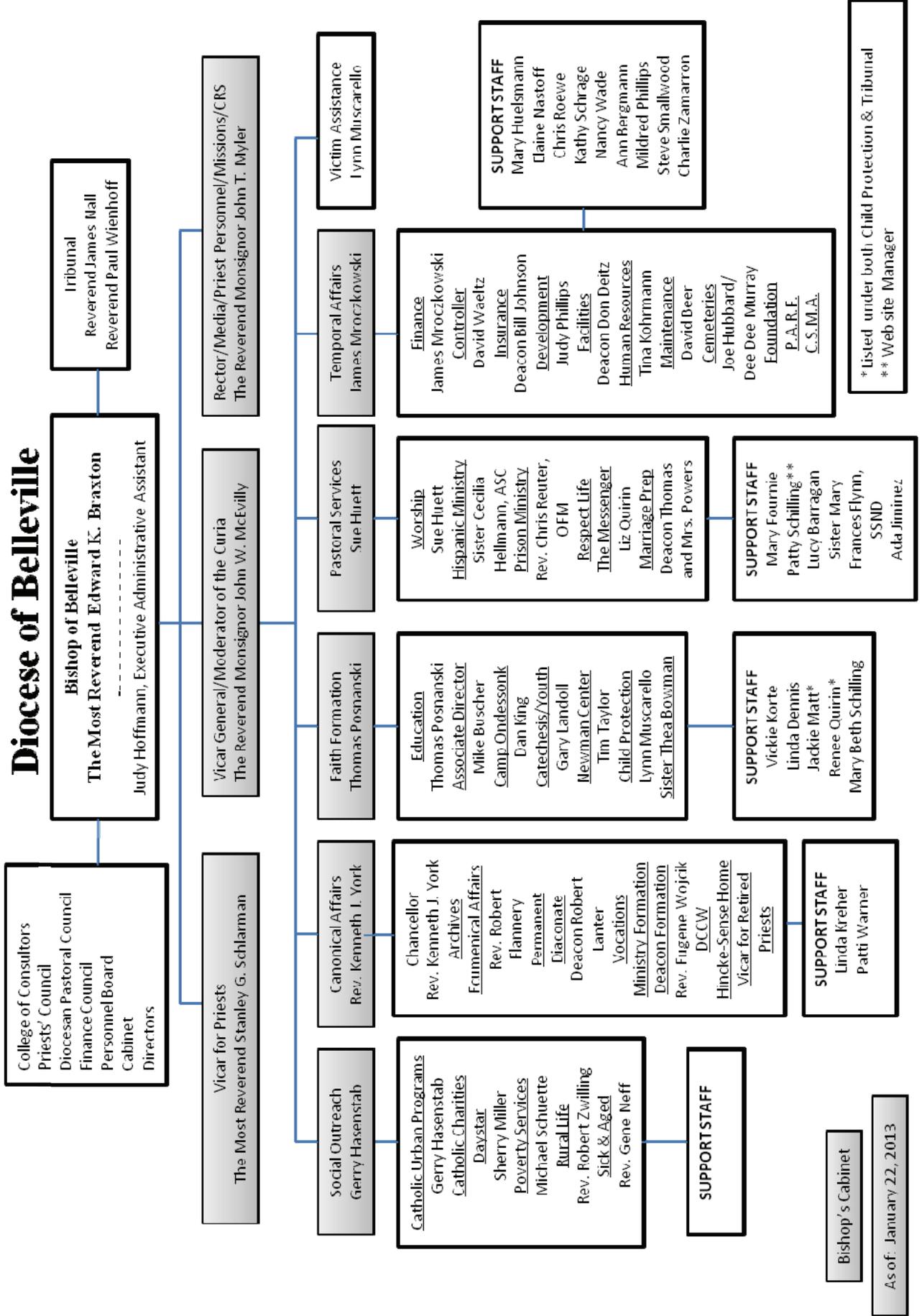
The parish financial assessments in support of Althoff Catholic High School, Gibault Catholic High School, and Mater Dei Catholic High School will continue in the same manner as is currently being implemented. With the establishing of the new VICARIATES, our Catholic Secondary Schools can no longer be thought of, strictly speaking, as "Deanery Schools." Now, there are two high schools in the Metro East VICARIATE and no high school in the West VICARIATE.

This may mean that the financial assessments will need to be reviewed and appropriately adjusted.





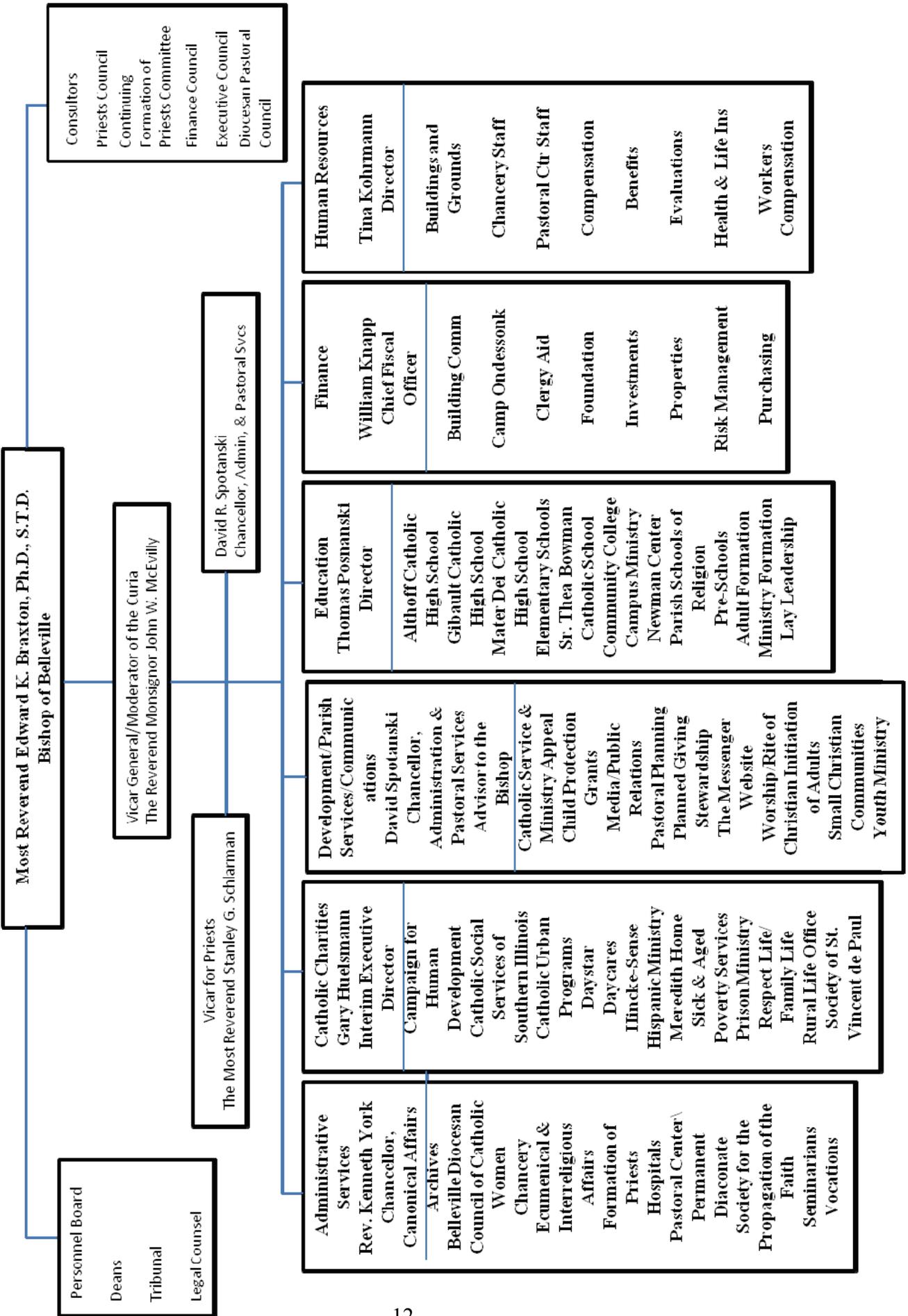
Diocese of Belleville

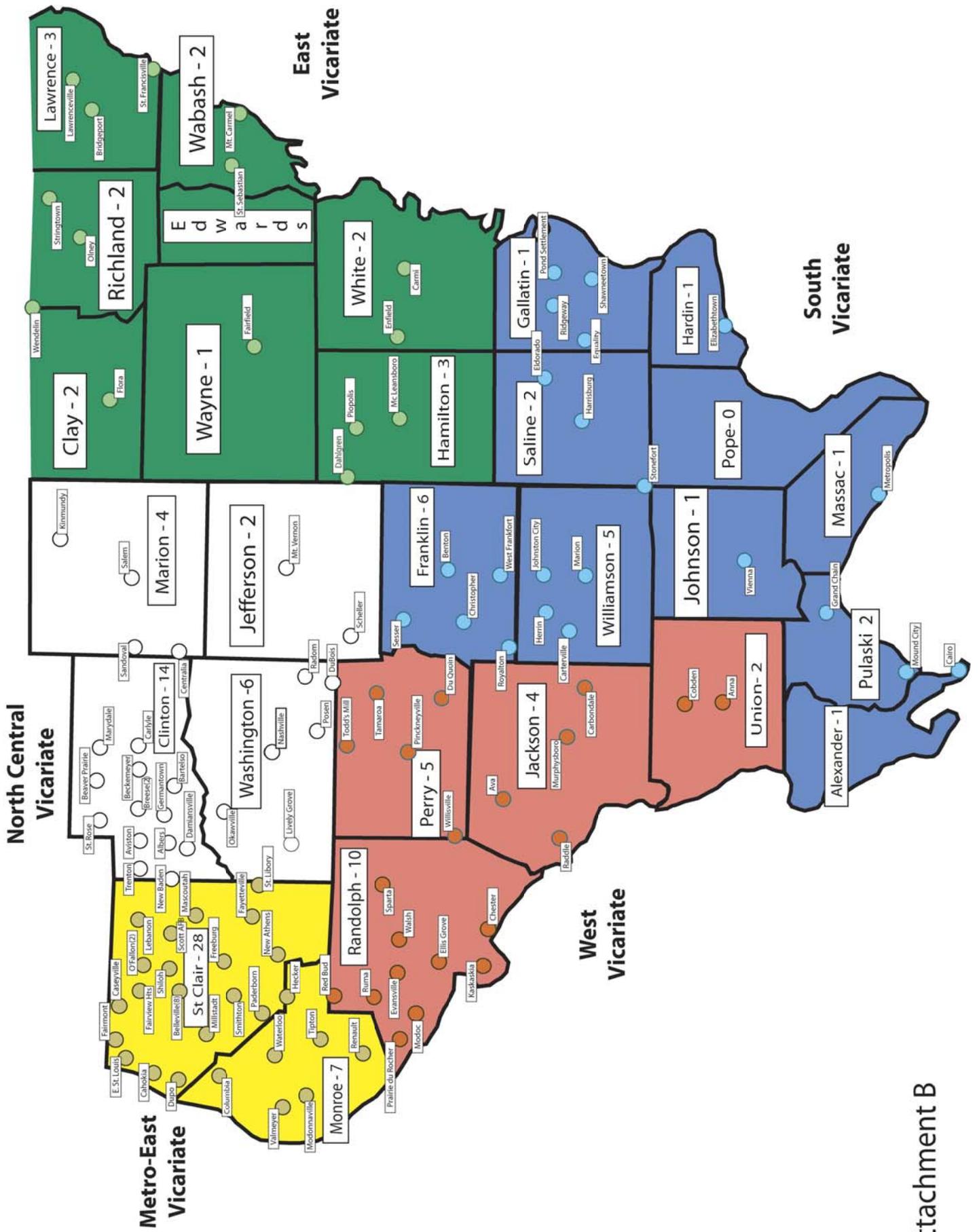


Bishop's Cabinet
As of: January 22, 2013

THE FORMER DIOCESAN STRUCTURE

Catholic Diocese of Belleville





THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING



ATTACHMENT B -1

THE NEW VICARIATES

NORTH CENTRAL

Clinton:	14
Marion:	2
Washington:	6
Jefferson:	2

METRO EAST

St. Clair:	28
Monroe:	7

WEST

Randolph:	10
Perry:	5
Jackson:	4
Union:	2

SOUTH

Franklin:	5
Williamson:	5
Johnson:	1
Alexander:	1
Pulaski:	2
Massac:	1
Saline:	2
Gallatin:	1
Pope:	0
Hardin:	1

EAST

Clay:	2
Richland:	2
Lawrence:	3
Wayne:	1
Edwards:	0
Wabash:	2
Hamilton:	3
White:	2
Marion:	2

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THE FORMER DEANERIES

NORTH CENTRAL

Clinton:	14
Marion:	2
Washington:	1

EAST ST. LOUIS DEANERY

BELLEVILLE DEANERY

St. Clair:	28
Washington:	1

WEST

Monroe:	7
Randolph:	10

SOUTH

Perry:	5
Franklin:	5
Jackson:	4
Williamson:	5
Union:	2
Johnson:	1
Alexander:	1
Pulaski:	2
Massac:	1
Washington:	4
Jefferson:	1

EAST

Pope:	0
Hardin:	1
Saline:	2
Gallatin:	1
Hamilton:	3
White:	2
Jefferson:	1
Wayne:	1
Edwards:	0
Wabash:	2
Clay:	2
Richland:	2
Lawrence:	3
Marion:	2

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The number to the right indicates the number of parishes located in each county.

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ATTACHMENT C

C.1: THE PARISH PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout the year of our 125th Anniversary celebration (2012), we looked for every opportunity to give thanks to God for blessings our people have received through the years in our parish communities. We have also recognized the unique contributions to our faith of each of our parishes by honoring parish representatives during the Jubilee Year. We are confident that the Holy Spirit will sustain us as we carry our faith in Christ into the decades ahead. As we renew and restructure our Diocese, we also renew our commitment to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout southern Illinois.

From the beginning, I have said that every parish would ultimately be affected by this work of renewal and restructuring. For this reason, I have asked all of our parish communities to be open to possible pastoral changes that ultimately require a spirit of sacrifice and a degree of flexibility on everyone's part.

The establishment of PARISH PARTNERSHIPS is the most significant example of this. These PARTNERSHIPS join two or more parishes together in a close relationship working for the long-term future of the communities of faith.

The primary reasons for the decision to develop this new structure were outlined by the Vicar General, Monsignor McEvilly, in his February 6, 2013, MEMORANDUM. The decision to move toward these new structures has been dictated by the very real challenges the Diocese must face forthrightly if we are to continue our mission effectively. These challenges will probably become more acute in the next ten years. The main challenges are well known:

- the impact of declining numbers of parishioners and declining financial support in many parishes during the past 20 years;
- the advanced age of many parishioners;
- declining number of elementary schools;
- the age and condition of parish facilities;
- the proximity of one declining parish to another;
- the need for a critical mass of parishioners to sustain viability;
- the long-term uncertainty of the availability of *fidei donum* priests;
- the number of priests eligible for retirement;
- the failing health of several priests;
- the small number of seminarians; and
- the unreasonableness of asking priests to serve three or more parishes for an extended period of time.

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In this context, we are working with a projection of about fifty active Diocesan priests serving full time in our parishes.

In the listing of PARISH PARTNERSHIPS that follows, most are described with the same general statement: “Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.” This is followed by a timeframe indicating that the draft of a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL (at least in draft form) is due by December 31, 2013. The implications of this may be different for each PARISH PARTNERSHIP.

In a few cases, the parishioners and the parish leadership see clearly the practical necessity for bringing their parishes together as soon as possible in order to make a stronger community of faith. They have already asked me to make the needed changes in a timely manner. In other cases, the parish leadership sees the pastoral and practical need for bringing their parishes together; however, they realize that many of the parishioners do not yet fully appreciate this need. There are other parishes where neither the parishioners nor the parish leadership see the immediate need for developing a close relationship with a nearby parish. However, in the coming years, the need may well become apparent. Because of these diverse parish situations, the work of individual PARISH PARTNERSHIPS will necessarily be on a flexible timetable so that the parishes can move toward new parish structures at an appropriate pace.

The PARISH PARTNERSHIPS are groups of two or three parishes, superseding the clusters. They will function in a manner similar to the clusters but they will require more intense and structured collaboration, driven by the realization that sooner or later they will be served by only one priest. With the creation of these PARISH PARTNERSHIPS, the superseded clusters are dissolved. Fruitful shared ministry between members of these former clusters may continue on a voluntary basis. **However, participation in the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS is mandatory.**

While PARISH PARTNERSHIPS bear some resemblance to the previous clusters, they are called to be more. Where clusters called for loose collaboration in ministry, PARISH PARTNERSHIPS should develop highly coordinated and shared ministries that make the most efficient use of resources, unite Catholics in an area to share a common mission, and promote evangelization. Ideally, PARISH PARTNERSHIPS should strive to develop innovative ministries, closely coordinated and served by one priest and the pastoral staff members, and accomplishing more than one parish could achieve alone. All PARISH PARTNERSHIPS should develop collaborations in ministry similar to the former clusters, but in deeper

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and more clearly focused ways. For example, they should work together to develop joint religious education and sacramental preparation programs; review and revise their Mass schedules in view of the eventuality of one priest celebrating all Masses; look for ways to bring parish pastoral councils, finance councils, and parish committees into close working relationships (avoiding unnecessary duplication); and join together in community outreach activities.

In order to accomplish this, it will be necessary for the leadership of PARISH PARTNERSHIPS to develop a schedule of regular meetings. It is primarily at these meetings that the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS should be decided upon and developed as fully as possible. If a PARISH PARTNERSHIP is having difficulty developing a model, the leadership should send questions and concerns, in writing, to the Vicar General by June 30, 2013. Each PARISH PARTNERSHIP must submit a 1-2 page report on the progress being made in developing an appropriate model no later than September 15, 2013. This will facilitate the process of developing the final draft by December 31, 2013.

The PARISH PARTNERSHIPS can be divided primarily into three groups intended to address specific pastoral situations:

- 1.) In dialogue with parish leadership, I have directed several PARISH PARTNERSHIPS to begin working immediately on a plan for bringing two or three parishes together as one, within a timeframe of one year or less. This is possible because of the maturity of the discussion in the parishes in question and the urgency of the need.
- 2.) When one of the priests departs from one of the parishes in question (due to transfer, retirement, failing health, or the recall of a *fidei donum* missionary priest), he will not be replaced. The pastors and the parish leaderships are being asked to begin work NOW on a proposal for the manner in which one priest will serve more than one parish community. This includes the possibility of merging one or more parishes. (This also applies to the situation of a Parish Life Coordinator who departs from a parish, when he or she is not likely to be replaced.)
- 3.) There are other cases of parishes that were joined together at an earlier date and are being served already by only one priest. These parishes must review the present arrangement. How well is it working? What can the leadership do to bring these parishes together in even greater and more effective collaboration? In some cases, should these parishes merge together as one community of faith?

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The leadership of every PARISH PARTNERSHIP is required to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL for the future, when there will be only one priest to serve several currently existing parish communities. I am aware that the work of developing a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL will vary in difficulty in different PARISH PARTNERSHIPS . In some cases, the process might be relatively easy. In other cases, it will be more challenging. In still other cases, the process may be quite difficult. And there may be a few cases where it seems almost impossible. Parishes should not hesitate to contact me or the Vicar General if they encounter seemingly insurmountable problems.

The timeframe, indicating that a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL detailing how the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS will be structured must be submitted by December 31, 2013, clearly does not mean that the new structure necessarily takes effect on that day. It means that there is a real need to develop an actual model or plan of action that is specific and clear so that it can be implemented when it is needed, even if the need does not arise for five years or more. Obviously, if we are blessed with a growth in our Catholic population, an increase in vocations to the priesthood, and an influx of *fidei donum* priests, the implementation of some PARISH PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS may be delayed indefinitely.

Several possible STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS are immediately evident:

- a.) Two or more parishes petition to merge and become one parish with only one church building;
- b.) Two or more parishes petition to merge and become one parish with one primary church building while one or two of the former parish church buildings are granted chapel status for occasional use, at least for a time;
- c.) Two or more parishes remain free standing (without a merger), maintain both churches, and develop a structure within which they can realistically be served by one priest. This would have to include necessary changes in liturgical schedules (Sunday Mass, Holy Days, Holy Week) and joining many parish committees and activities together;
- d.) Other STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS * developed BY PARISH PARTNERSHIPS and proposed to the Bishop for his consideration.

*For example, a model might be developed in which a Parochial Vicar is desirable but not available. In this case, a Permanent Deacon or a Lay Pastoral Associate might be able to provide needed pastoral services.

I have been asked about the possibility of a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL that involved appointing a Parish Life Coordinator to a parish formerly served by a residential Pastor and then asking a retired priest or even a priest from out of town to celebrate the Sunday Masses. While this might be a

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possibility on a temporary basis, it does not seem wise as a long-term solution. There are financial as well as pastoral considerations. A parish, by its nature, is a Eucharistic community. It is intrinsic to the nature of a parish and the ministry of the priest celebrant for him to be the one who forms the Eucharistic community by his daily pastoral service. Otherwise, the priesthood can be reduced to a “mere” ritual or cultic presence. Careful attention should be given to the content and the intent of canon 517§2:

“If, because of a shortage of priests, the Diocesan Bishop has judged that a deacon, or some other person who is not a priest, or a community of persons, should be entrusted with a share in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish, he is to appoint some priest who, with the powers and faculties of a parish priest, will direct the pastoral care.”

I do not think that canon 517§2 envisions a “canonical Pastor” who has little or no direct involvement with his parish. Nor do I think it encourages the Diocesan Bishop to appoint a “sacramental minister” with little or no contact with the Christian faithful of the parish beyond the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. I am certain the canon does not intend to support the perception of some of the faithful that “the Parish Life Coordinator” is “really the pastor.” Acknowledging the reality of these very real pastoral concerns does not, in any way, diminish the great appreciation that we all have for the generous and faith-filled service that our Parish Life Coordinators are providing to the Diocese.

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS may, in some cases, significantly increase the pastoral ministry of a priest serving two or more parishes. In some dioceses the priests in these circumstances are given additional compensation for this additional ministry. I intend to ask the committee of the Presbyteral Council that is already reviewing the salaries of priests to examine this question and make recommendations to me.

The timetable for fully developing and implementing the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL will vary from PARISH PARTNERSHIP to PARISH PARTNERSHIP. However, the parishes involved must be actively engaged now in developing the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL. The Vicars Forane, the Vicar General, and I will assist the parishes in this process if it is needed. As I have said on several occasions, the goal is for the parishes in question to petition me for the type of restructuring that the parish leadership considers most suitable. Should it happen that I am forced to conclude that parishes should be merged even though the faith communities have not petitioned for this change, the parishes in question will be informed by a personal letter from me of that decision, prior to any public announcement. In this circumstance, the Vicar General or I will meet with the parish leadership and members of the Christian faithful to hear and understand the views of the community before announcing a final decision.

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When, inevitably, some PARISH PARTNERSHIPS discern the necessity of closing parishes or schools, parish and school leadership will often need special resources to help them guide the people through a process which is never easy.

One of many useful resources available is the book, A Struggle for Holy Ground: Reconciliation and the Rites of Parish Closure (Liturgical Press, 2004), by Father Michael Weldon, O.F.M.

I recommend that all parishes obtain a copy. Parish leaders should become familiar with its contents, even if your parish is not facing the imminent need to consider merging with a neighboring community of faith.

If one or more parishes in a PARISH PARTNERSHIP are to be suppressed, how does this happen?

When the decision for a parish to be suppressed is reached, the details are worked out in dialogue with the Vicar General and the Bishop. Then the Diocese provides the parish in question with special forms that are used to petition the Bishop asking him to suppress the parish, merge it with a neighboring parish, reduce it to the status of a chapel, or some other canonical arrangement.

When two or more parishes are merged together, who determines the name of the new parish community?

In this situation, the faith communities in question are invited to suggest three names to the Bishop for his consideration, who makes the final decision. The Bishop may also propose a name for the new community of faith.

In some cases, when two parishes are joined together, both names are maintained in the new arrangement. Thus, St. Charles Lewanga Parish is merged with St. Andrew Kim Taegon Parish. The new name might be St. Charles Lewanga-St. Andrew Kim Taegon Parish. Or, the two parishes could be called by the name of the larger, smaller, older, or younger parish. In many cases, however, it seems wiser to select a completely new name as a sign of a new beginning which does not favor one parish over the other. When this is done, it is important to make sure that some images associated with the original parish names are integrated in a prominent way in the new home church with a new name.

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The Requirements of the Catholic Church Concerning Erecting, Suppressing, or Altering Parishes:

The decision on the part of the Diocesan Bishop to change significantly the structure of parishes in his Diocese is a serious one for which the Church provides specific directives and guidelines. Though we often speak of “opening,” “merging,” and “closing” parishes, the Church’s official language uses the terms “erect,” “suppress,” and “alter.” It is important for you to be aware of what the Church teaches about this in the Code of Canon Law.

Canon 515 §1. A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (*Parochus*) as its proper pastor (*pastor*) under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. It is only for the Diocesan Bishop to **erect, suppress, or alter** parishes. He is neither to erect, suppress, nor alter notably parishes, unless he has heard the Presbyteral Council.

§3. A legitimately erected parish possesses juridic personality by the law itself.

All three of these points in Canon 515 have significant implications that must be observed carefully in the implementation of THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING. In every case in which a parish is suppressed, the Bishop is required by canon law “to hear the Presbyteral Council” before he makes the final decision. This “hearing” of the Council does not mean submitting the proposal to a vote or seeking the approval of the body. However, it does mean that he must be attentive to any questions or concerns raised by the Council.

In cases in which a parish in question does not petition the Bishop to be suppressed or altered, the Bishop will listen attentively to representatives from the parish in question before initiating an action that is not accepted or properly understood by a significant number of the faithful.

Each PARISH PARTNERSHIP must submit a 1-2 page report on the progress being made in developing an appropriate model no later than September 15, 2013.

A written draft of the actual STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL must be submitted in writing to the Vicar General’s office no later than December 31, 2013.

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C. 2: THE LIST OF PARISH PARTNERSHIPS

METRO EAST VICARIATE

Formerly: St. Clair County (Belleville Deanery and East St. Louis Deanery)

NEW VICARIATE TO INCLUDE COUNTIES OF: **St. Clair and Monroe**

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS:

The Cathedral of St. Peter / St. Mary

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

Blessed Sacrament / Our Lady Queen of Peace

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Henry / St. Augustine

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Luke / St. Teresa of the Child Jesus

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be become one parish and be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

The four PARISH PARTNERSHIPS listed above are directed to develop a model for the restructuring of their schools within the same timeframe.

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Holy Childhood, Mascoutah / St. Pancratius, Fayetteville / St. Liborius, St. Libory

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will become two parishes able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Clare of Assisi, O'Fallon / Corpus Christi, Shiloh

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Nicholas, O'Fallon / St. Joseph, Lebanon

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Joseph, Freeburg / St. Agatha, New Athens

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

They are also directed to develop a model for the restructuring of their schools within the same timeframe.

St. John the Baptist, Smithton / St. Michael, Paderborn / St. Augustine, Hecker

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to become two parishes served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

SS. Peter and Paul, Waterloo / Immaculate Conception, Madonnaville

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs Immaculate Conception Parish in Madonnaville to petition the Diocese for suppression and merger with SS. Peter and Paul Parish.

Timeframe: The merger will take place as soon as possible, but no later than May 1, 2014. A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due, as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, 2013.

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St. Patrick, Tipton / St. Mary, Valmeyer / Our Lady of Good Counsel, Renault

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to become one or two parishes to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. James, Millstadt / Holy Family, Cahokia

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

Immaculate Conception, Columbia / Sacred Heart, Dupo

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Augustine of Hippo, East St. Louis / Immaculate Conception, (Lithuanian) East St. Louis

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest. He further directs Immaculate Conception Lithuanian Parish to petition the Diocese for suppression and request the status of chapel, while retaining its historic identity as a center for Lithuanian Catholics.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

Holy Trinity, Fairview Heights / St. Stephen, Caseyville / Holy Rosary, Fairmont City

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be served by two priests, one of whom is fluent in Spanish.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

<u>Total Number of Parish Partnerships</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Total Number of Parishes</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Total Number of Priests Currently Serving in the Above Parishes</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>Total Number of Priests Projected to be Serving in the Above Parishes</u>	<u>15</u>

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NORTH CENTRAL VICARIATE

Formerly: Clinton County and Marion County (North Central Deanery)

NEW VICARIATE TO INCLUDE COUNTIES OF: **Clinton, Marion, Washington, and Jefferson**

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS:

St. Dominic, Breese / St. Augustine, Breese

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, including the exploration of the possibility of becoming one parish.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. George, New Baden / St. Mary, Trenton

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Boniface, Germantown / St. Cecilia, Bartelso

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Mary, Carlyle / St. Anthony, Beckemeyer / St. Teresa, Marydale

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, with the possibility of becoming two parishes.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

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St. Francis, Aviston / St. Rose, St. Rose / St. Felicitas, Beaver Prairie

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, with the possibility of becoming two parishes.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Bernard, Albers / St. Damian, Damiansville

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to continue their STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL of two parishes served by one priest making every effort to bring these parishes together in even greater collaboration.

Timeframe: A report on new initiatives to achieve this is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Mary, Centralia / St. Lawrence, Sandoval

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, with the possibility of becoming one parish.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Theresa of Avila, Salem / St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Kinmundy

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, with the possibility of becoming one parish.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Ann, Nashville / Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Posen

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, with the possibility of becoming one parish.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Barbara, Okawville / St. Anthony, Lively Grove

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

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St. Charles Borromeo, DuBois / St. Michael, Radom

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Mary, Mt. Vernon / St. Barbara, Scheller

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

<u>Total Number of Parish Partnerships</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Total Number of Parishes</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Total Number of Priests Currently Serving in the Above Parishes</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Total Number of Priests Projected to be Serving in the Above Parishes</u>	<u>12</u>

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THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING

WEST VICARIATE

Formerly: Randolph and Monroe Counties (West Deanery)

NEW VICARIATE TO INCLUDE COUNTIES OF: **Randolph, Perry, Jackson, and Union**

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS:

Mary Help of Christians, Chester / St. Mary Divine Maternity, Ellis Grove

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Boniface, Evansville / St. Pius V, Walsh / Our Lady of Lourdes, Sparta / St. Joseph, Willisville

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which these four parishes become two parishes served by one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. John the Baptist, Red Bud / St. Patrick, Ruma / Adorers of the Blood of Christ Convent / Ruma / St. Joseph, Prairie du Rocher / St. Leo, Modoc

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs St. Leo Parish in Modoc to petition the Diocese for suppression and merge with either St. Patrick Parish or St. Joseph Parish.

Timeframe: A draft of a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL for the merger is due, as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, 2013. The merger will become effective, as soon as possible, but no later than May 1, 2014. The Bishop also directs the remaining parishes and the convent to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only two priests.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL for this arrangement is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Bruno, Pinckneyville / St. Mary Magdalen, Todds Mill

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, with the possibility of becoming one parish.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

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Sacred Heart, DuQuoin / Immaculate Conception, Tamaroa

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, with the possibility of becoming one parish.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Francis Xavier, Carbondale / Newman Center, Carbondale

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs the parish and the Newman Center to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Andrew, Murphysboro / St. Elizabeth, Ava / St. Ann, Raddle

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to become two parishes served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Mary, Anna / St. Joseph, Cobden

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

Total Number of Parish Partnerships	8
Total Number of Parishes	14
Total Number of Priests Currently Serving in the Above Parishes	15
Total Number of Priests Projected to be Serving in the Above Parishes	9

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SOUTH VICARIATE

Formerly: Washington, Jefferson, Perry, Franklin, Jackson, Williamson, Union, Johnson, Alexander, Pulaski, and Massac (South Deanery)

NEW VICARIATE TO INCLUDE COUNTIES OF: **Franklin, Williamson, Johnson, Alexander, Pulaski, Massac, Saline, Gallatin, Pope, and Hardin**

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS:

St. Joseph, Benton / St. Andrew, Christopher / St. Mary, Sesser

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. John the Baptist, West Frankfort / St. Aloysius-Sacred Heart, Royalton-Zeigler

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to continue their STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL of two parishes served by one priest, making every effort to bring these parishes together in even greater collaboration.

Timeframe: A report on new initiatives to achieve this is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Joseph, Marion / St. Paul, Johnston City

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to continue their STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL of two parishes served by one priest, making every effort to bring the parishes together in even greater collaboration.

Timeframe: A report on new initiatives to achieve this is due by December 31, 2013.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Herrin / Holy Spirit Church, Carterville

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

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St. Paul, Vienna / St. Francis de Sales, Stonefort

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to continue a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL of two parishes served by one priest, making every effort to bring the parishes in even greater collaboration.

Timeframe: A report on new initiatives to achieve this is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Mary, Eldorado / St. Mary, Harrisburg / St. Joseph, Elizabethtown

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will come together and be able to be served effectively by only one priest with a view to reducing the number of parishes.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, Ridgway

(Formerly the now suppressed parishes of St. Joseph, Ridgway; St. Mary, Shawneetown; St. Joseph, Equality; St. Patrick, Pond Settlement.) Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs this parish, on the completion of the new church, to continue the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL of one parish and three chapels (for the present) served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A report on how this arrangement is working and the efforts being made to unite the communities as one parish is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Rose of Lima, Metropolis / St. Patrick, Cairo / St. Mary, Mound City / St. Catherine of Alexandria, Grand Chain

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs St. Patrick, Cairo / St. Mary, Mound City / St. Catherine of Alexandria, Grand Chain to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be served by only one priest. They have been directed to petition the Diocese for the suppression of two of the parishes and petition to merge with the remaining parish. The same priest will also serve St. Rose of Lima Parish.

Timeframe: A draft of a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL for the merger is due, as soon as possible, but no later than December 31, 2013. The merger will become effective as soon as possible, no later than May 1, 2014.

<u>Total Number of Parish Partnerships</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Total Number of Parishes</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Total Number of Priests Currently Serving in the Above Parishes</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Total Number of Priests Projected to be Serving in the Above Parishes</u>	<u>8</u>

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EAST VICARIATE

Formerly: Marion, Clay, Richland, Lawrence, Jefferson, Wayne, Edward, Wabash, Hamilton, White, Saline, Gallatin, Pope, and Hardin (East Deanery)

NEW VICARIATE TO INCLUDE COUNTIES OF: **Clay, Richland, Lawrence, Wayne, Edward, Wabash, Hamilton, and White**

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS:

St. Edward, Fairfield / St. Stephen, Flora

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Joseph, Olney / Holy Cross, Wendelin / St. Joseph, Stringtown

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Lawrence, Lawrenceville / Immaculate Conception, Bridgeport / St. Francis Xavier, St. Francisville

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest. They have been directed to petition the Diocese for the suppression of Immaculate Conception and St. Francis Xavier Parishes and petition to merge with St. Lawrence Parish.

Timeframe: A draft of a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL for the merger is due as soon as possible but no later than December 31, 2013. The merger will become effective, as soon as possible, or no later than May 1, 2014.

St. Mary, Mount Carmel / St. Sebastian, St. Sebastian

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

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St. John Nepomucene, Dahlgren / St. Clement, McLeansboro / St. John the Baptist, Piopolis

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to continue the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL of three parishes served by only one priest making every effort to bring the parishes together in even greater collaboration.

Timeframe: A report on new initiatives to achieve this is due by December 31, 2013.

St. Polycarp, Carmi / St. Patrick, Enfield

Upon the recommendation of THE COMMITTEE, the Bishop directs these parishes to begin working together NOW to develop a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by which they will be able to be served by only one priest, making every effort to bring the parishes together in even greater collaboration.

Timeframe: A draft of the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL is due by December 31, 2013.

<u>Total Number of Parish Partnerships</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Total Number of Parishes</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Total Number of Priests Currently Serving in the Above Parishes</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Total Number of Priests Projected to be Serving in the Above Parishes</u>	<u>6</u>

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C. 3: THE PARISHIONERS

Will the process of restructuring our parishes cause us to lose a number of parishioners?

When two or more parishes merge, the parishioners, who constitute an individual parish's juridic personality, are to be strongly urged to join the new parish family. In this way, they will be able to continue to grow in their Christian faith with a minimum of disruption. We are all aware that in the United States many Catholics live within the boundaries of one parish, where they may or may not be registered, and they worship at one or more other parishes. When a diocese undergoes a restructuring which results in the closure of some parishes, there is understandable sadness and frustration. Some individuals may feel alienated and indicate an unwillingness to join the new parish or go so far as to say, "If I can't have my parish, I will leave the Church!" "Since the Church has abandoned my community, I will abandon the Church." Indeed, some individuals have made such statements to me.

In these circumstances, the Priests, Deacons, Parish Life Coordinators and all members of the parish staff must be patient, compassionate, and understanding. If the parish staff members keep their parishioners informed at every step in the process and present the changes in parish structure in a positive manner, this will lessen the chances of extreme reaction.

How should we effectively communicate THE PASTORAL PLAN to the Christian faithful?

I would offer the following suggestions for communicating THE PASTORAL PLAN to the Christian faithful in a positive and effective manner. You and the parish leadership must bring an attitude of prayer and spiritual openness to this new endeavor and convey that same spirit to your people. Pastors, Administrators, Parish Life Coordinators, Parish Pastoral Council members, Finance Council members, Trustees, and others who led the initial consultation, should study THE PASTORAL PLAN carefully so that they understand it well and can anticipate the questions that are likely to arise. Work out a timetable for when you will introduce this information to the parish family. Explain to the parishioners that this effort is the result of broad consultation and that it has built-in flexibility so that each parish can take ownership of the process and take responsibility for shaping its future. Remind them that sometimes individual faith communities are called to make sacrifices for the good and the vitality of the entire Local Church. This may be especially true of a Mission Diocese like Belleville.

Once you have conveyed this positive spirit to your people with an article in the bulletin, remarks from the pulpit, comments at parish meetings, informal observations when you are with parishioners, begin to share the contents of THE PASTORAL PLAN with them. However, do not overwhelm them with

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too much material at one time. While I recommend that you put the entire document on your parish website, I do not recommend initially distributing copies of all of the contents. Instead, share with them my Pastoral Letter, “A Time for Renewal,” and the Official Statement: Overview. Be sure to give them the opportunity to ask questions (perhaps after Mass or at a parish-wide meeting).

Human nature being what it is, many Catholics may be primarily interested in the answers to only two questions: Is our parish going to be closed? Is our school going to be closed? Explain to them up front that THE PASTORAL PLAN does not contain a list of parishes or schools that are closing. Inform them that what it does contain is the new structure called PARISH PARTNERSHIPS. This may be the topic to which you give the most attention. Make sure they understand that THE PASTORAL PLAN will have an impact on every parish in the Diocese. It is not something happening to their parish in isolation.

Use the information in this FORMAL RESPONSE to make sure they understand the idea of a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL that will prepare them for the day when one priest will serve several parishes, which may or may not result in the merger of parishes at some point in the future. Urge them to work and pray for vocations to the priesthood. These efforts will lessen the likelihood of alienating or losing parishioners.

The time to offer the entire text of THE PASTORAL PLAN to your parishioners is after you have introduced its key ideas to them and explained them carefully in your bulletin and pulpit announcements and provided them the opportunities to ask questions. For those who express an interest in reading the entire document, I would urge you to provide an opportunity for them to discuss the text with you. Keep in mind that the more your parishioners know about THE PASTORAL PLAN and the better they understand it increases the likelihood that they will accept it as something that will be beneficial for their communities of faith and for the Diocese.

Please keep in mind that the ultimate goal of THE PASTORAL PLAN is the renewal and rebuilding of Catholic life in our parishes. As a resource, I recommend The Story of a Catholic Parish Rebuilt: Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, Making Church Better, (Ave Maria Press, 2013) by Father Michael White and Thomas Corcoran.



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C.4: THE ASSETS & PARISH BUILDINGS

When mergers take place there are inevitable questions concerning the future of parish assets and buildings. The answers to many of these questions are found in canon law (cf. canons 120-122).

If a parish is closed, will its savings go to the Diocese?

No, they do not. If the parish is indebted to the Diocese, those debts are paid from parish funds, with the remainder of the savings going to the parish with which they are joined.

If a parish is closed and it has additional financial obligations, are these obligations forgiven by the Diocese or are they absorbed by the parish to which they are joined?

These obligations are not forgiven. Just as the financial resources of the parish are transferred to the new parish, so also are the obligations to the Diocese or other lending institutions transferred to the new parish.

Parishes may have a number of buildings, including the church, rectory, school, convent, gymnasium, parish hall, etc. What becomes of these buildings?

This is one of the most challenging questions that arise up during Diocesan restructuring. The location, condition, and assessed value of the buildings play a key role in determining the answer. In some cases, one or more buildings from the former parish may become part of the new parish (e.g., a parish hall, a gymnasium, or an office). In other cases, buildings may be sold, leased, or rented (with due attention given to the sacred nature of a church building and the spiritual significance of its furnishings).

A building that could not be sold has sometimes been given outright to the community for an appropriate use. In certain circumstances, an old unsalable building has been demolished. (This is sometimes costly.) Sometimes a parish has had to hold on to buildings, “keeping them in mothballs,” while determining what to do with them.

Once it becomes clear that the best course of action for a parish is merging with a neighbor, the parish leadership should make aggressive inquiries in the community to determine what possible means of disposing of the buildings are viable.

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These are difficult questions which, in some cases, have no easy answers. However, we are not the first Diocese to face these questions, nor are we the last. We cannot allow these uncertainties to paralyze us. We cannot say, “Because there are risks involved in the restructuring process, we should not undertake it, or that we should simply maintain the *status quo* and see what happens.”

When necessary, the timeframes for implementing the STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL can be adjusted to help build consensus and to allow time for examining and answering challenging questions that may arise.



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C.5: THE CEMETERIES

Many of our parishes maintain their own cemeteries and have done so for generations. How will they be affected if their parish is merged with a neighboring parish?

It is paramount for all parish leadership to make it unambiguously clear that the Catholic Church maintains the highest regard for the places where the Christian faithful are buried, awaiting the coming of Christ at the end of time. THE PASTORAL PLAN will not disturb the burial places of those who have gone before us in any way. No cemetery will be sold. No graves will be disturbed. The funds, which the faithful have generously set aside for the care of their parish cemeteries, are restricted funds. Neither parishes nor the Diocese has the authority to use these funds for any other purpose.

If a parish is merged with a neighboring parish, is its cemetery fund merged with the cemetery of the other parish?

No, it is not. The two cemetery funds remain separate and distinct.

Can the same members of the former parish who oversaw the cemetery fund continue to do so?

Yes, if they are registered members of the new parish.

Since you have noted that all parishioners may not necessarily join the parish with which their parish merges, is it permissible for a group of parishioners to oversee a cemetery fund independent from any parish affiliation?

No, this is not possible, because the cemetery is not an independent, privately-owned entity. No matter how a Catholic cemetery in the Diocese has been erected (by charter, corporation, etc.) it still falls under the jurisdiction of the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Cemetery Office. All of our Catholic cemeteries are registered with the State of Illinois. They will maintain their current name without regard to any future affiliation with a different parish or with the Diocese. It is an intrinsic part of the work of the Church and the corporal work of mercy “to bury the dead.”

Mrs. Dee Dee Murray is available to answer questions you may have about Diocesan regulations in the office of the manager at Mount Carmel Cemetery (618) 397-0181 or by e-mail: mtcarmelcm@sbcglobal.net.

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D. PRAYERS FOR VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

In the September 13, 2006 letter from the Vocation Directors, I urged every parish to pray with renewed intensity for vocations to the priesthood. The letter contained many suggestions of things the parishes could do to support vocations. I regret very much that a number of parishes have not implemented any of those suggestions. The letter also contained the Diocesan Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood. I asked every parish to pray this prayer at least once a month and to pray a special petition for vocations to the priesthood at the weekend Masses.

Many parishes embraced this request and they have been praying these prayers faithfully. Many have conveniently placed the prayer on the inside of Liturgical books used for Mass. Other parishes prayed the prayers initially but have not continued to do so month after month. Still other parishes have composed their own prayers that do not focus specifically on the priesthood. Instead, they pray for the vocations of priests, religious sisters, brothers, deacons, those who are married, and those who are single. Some parishes, however, have not prayed any prayers for vocations to the priesthood at all.

With the implementation of THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING, I, once again, ask ALL PARISHES to pray the prayers that were sent to them in 2006. I am not in any way discouraging prayers for vocations as religious sisters, brothers, deacons, or the married state and the single life. I have always encouraged these prayers. I am asking, however, that these prayers be distinct from prayers for vocations to the priesthood. The reason for this is both the urgency for additional priests in our Diocese and the uniqueness of the priesthood. “There can be no Church without the Eucharist. And there can be no Eucharist without priests.” Our prayers will have a greater impact if our people pray the same prayer in every parish. In that way, we will be praying with one voice.

Below are excerpts from the September 2006 letter, which includes the two prayers:

“Preaching is an intense form of prayer. It is borne of a prayerful reflection on the Word of God. The Bishop asks that a homily specifically on the priesthood and on vocations to the priesthood should be preached in every parish twice a year, making use of appropriate scripture texts, e.g., The Feast of Christ the King at the end of the Liturgical Year and *Good Shepherd* Sunday (4th Sunday of Easter, designated by the Holy Father as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations).”

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Prayer of the Faithful: The Bishop asks that at every weekend liturgy the following petition specifically for vocations to the priesthood should be included:

“We pray that the Holy Spirit will call some of the young men from our parish community of faith to consider serving the Church in the Priesthood of Jesus Christ and that they will respond with generous hearts. We pray to the Lord.”

“The following *Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood* should be copied and distributed to everyone in the community. The Bishop asks that this prayer be prayed frequently. Specifically, he would like it to be prayed on the first weekend of every month at the end of all weekend Masses (after the closing prayer, and before the blessing).”

A PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Diocese of Belleville, Illinois

Leader: God is good.

Response: All the time!

Leader: All the time.

Response: God is good!

Let us pray:

Lord, Our God

we know that You are Goodness itself,

Throughout history you have called forth ministers of Word and Sacrament to lead, guide, and serve your people as priests.

We join with our Bishop in praying
for an increase in vocations to the priesthood in our Diocese.

We ask you, by the power of the Holy Spirit,
to stir up a desire in the hearts of young men in our parishes
to serve your Church in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.
Help them to hear and respond generously
to your call deep within their hearts.

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So they may join with those who
have built up your Church,
through their ministry as priests.

O God of Love and Mercy,
we pray that you will inspire our priests to continue
to share the joy and the happiness of their ministry at your Altar
and in the Christian community.
Prompt parents, grandparents, and teachers to realize that
sometimes you call future priests to your service through the
encouragement of those who see in them the qualities of a good priest.

We pray especially for our seminarians.
We ask you to help them to be
the best human beings,
the best Christians,
and the best priests they can be.
Graciously hear our prayer through the Intercession of Mary,
the Mother of priests
and in the name of Jesus who is Christ the Lord. **AMEN.**



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CONCLUSION: THE LORD IS NEAR!

“As we turn to the work of implementing the different aspects of THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING, we do so in the midst of a Year of Faith marking the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This year of grace, one of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI’s last gifts to the Church, opened on October 11, 2012. It will be closed by His Holiness, Pope Francis, on the Feast of Christ the King, November 24, 2013, one of his first gifts to the Church. As I said in my Year of Faith Lecture at the Cathedral, March 17, 2013, the work of restructuring the Diocese will only become the work of renewal if we turn to Christ in the Scriptures, in the lives of the saints, in the Council documents, and in the pages of the Catechism. Prayerfully turning to these great resources in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament will open our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit who will renew us all – bishops, priests, deacons, religious, the Christian faithful, and our parish communities. And, if we embrace that renewal, that same Holy Spirit may grace us with an increase in vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate, and the religious life.

Therefore, during the months and years ahead, let us do everything in Christ. When we are having difficulties determining the best course of action, remember the Lord is near! When individuals and groups are expressing strong seemingly irreconcilable differences, remember the Lord is near! When there is sadness and frustration in the face of painful decisions, remember the Lord is near! When we begin to experience the ways in which our communities of faith are strengthened and renewed by our common generous efforts, rejoice! The Lord is near!”

The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians (4: 4-9)

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near! Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

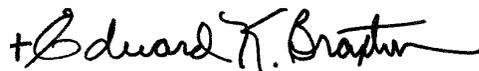
THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then, the God of peace will be with you!"

Given from the Diocesan Curia on the 2nd day of April, in the Year of Our Lord 2013, Tuesday within the Octave of the Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ.



The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D.
Eighth Bishop of Belleville



Easter

*Break the box and shed the nard;
Stoop not now to count the cost;
Hither bring pearl, opal, sard;
Reck not what the poor have lost;
Upon Christ throw all away:
Know ye, this is Easter Day.*

*Gather gladness from the skies;
Take a lesson from the ground;
Flowers do ope their heavenward eyes
And a Spring-time joy have found;
Earth throws Winter's robes away,
Decks herself for Easter Day.*

*Build His church and deck His shrine,
Empty though it be on earth;
Ye have kept your choicest wine—
Let it flow for heavenly mirth;
Pluck the harp and breathe the horn:
Know ye not 'tis Easter morn?*

*Beauty now for ashes wear,
Perfumes for the garb of woe,
Chaplets for dishevelled hair,
Dances for sad footsteps slow;
Open wide your hearts that they
Let in joy this Easter Day.*

*Seek God's house in happy throng;
Crowded let His table be;
Mingle praises, prayer and song,
Singing to the Trinity.
Henceforth let your souls always
Make each morn an Easter Day.*

- Father Gerard Manley Hopkins, S. J.



GO TELL HOW MUCH THE LORD HAS DONE FOR YOU 