

JOURNEY IN FAITH & GRACE

GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL CLUSTERS

1. The number of parishes in each regional cluster will vary from vicariate to vicariate. Where there are few parishes in a cluster, they might all be participants in the same restructuring proposal. For example, if there are three parishes in a cluster they may choose to merge and to become one parish. Where there are many parishes in a cluster, there may be several restructuring proposals within the cluster. For example, if there are 10 parishes within a cluster, 4 parishes may form a single merged parish, another 2 may merge to form one parish, 2 may link and share the same pastor, and 2 may remain single parishes with their own pastor. Ultimately, the restructuring proposal should provide the best solution for the entire geographic area of the cluster while being appropriate for the number of priests who will be available.
2. Each cluster meeting should have a period of prayer. A shared meal or time of socialization might also be considered. Remember that there are five months set aside for cluster deliberations. It might be best to meet fairly frequently and to proceed somewhat slowly in order to allow participants enough time for the gathering of information and the sharing and evaluating of ideas.
3. Members of the cluster should become familiar with each of the parishes in the cluster. Vicariate information that was included in each pastor's green folder should be shared with the members of the cluster (Parish Financial Analysis, Households & Weekend Attendance 1990-2004, Weekend Mass Information, Catholic Elementary Schools Enrollment.) Statistics from the 2005 fiscal year will be distributed as soon as they are ready.
4. Cluster members should review the bases for diocesan decision-making that are found in the planning booklet: Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Core Values, Guidelines for the Restructuring of Parishes, and the Criteria for Vibrant Parishes and Schools.
5. Review also the projected number of active diocesan priests for the year 2015 (planning booklet p. 21.) Estimate the approximate number that would be available for the cluster.
6. Review "Models of Restructuring and Leadership" (planning booklet pp. 22-23.)
7. Members of the cluster should engage in "An Exercise in Planning" found on pages 30-31 of the planning booklet. This will involve a sharing of ideas that would have been raised at the parish level about the reconfiguration of parishes and schools. During these discussions, it will be important to keep in mind that restructuring must serve the greater good of the diocese as a whole.
8. The following worksheets are provided to help the cluster evaluate parish restructuring proposals:
Models for Restructuring: Pros & Cons
Evaluating Restructuring Proposals
9. It is possible that the cluster might come up with more than one possible form of restructuring that would meet diocesan criteria. More than one possible scenario could be sent to the Vicariate Council.
10. The Regional Cluster proposals should be sent to the Vicar no later than July 31, 2006. The Vicariate process is scheduled to begin August 1, 2006.
11. A form to be used to submit proposals to the Vicariate Council is provided.