

# **THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING**

December 31, 2013 Report

Pastoral Partnership Parishes:

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

## **Worship**

What are we already doing together?

1. Cluster Mass each August for the Feast of Assumption of Mary.
2. Baptismal water exchanging rite on Pentecost
3. Joint Communal Penance Services

What do we plan to do when we have only one priest?

1. The above worship activities will continue with the approval of the pastor.
2. A new Mass schedule has been discussed in great depth. We have agreed on two options that may be workable. We have attached the proposed options to the end of this report. However, the final schedule would be subject to the approval of the pastor. (Addendum I)
3. There will need to be at least five Masses each weekend, with at least one Mass at each site. (Addendum II)
4. Deacons will assume responsibility for baptisms, weddings and funerals.
5. A definite plan was not developed to address a single priest's endurance capabilities or churches' seating limitations for Christmas, Holy Week and Easter services. It was recognized that the existing eight Christmas Masses and over a dozen Holy Week and Easter Services will not be sustainable. The committee discussed researching the possibility of rotating some of the Christmas, Holy Week and Easter services between parishes.

## **Faith Formation**

What are we already doing together?

1. We are partnering with several other local parishes with our combined RCIA program, Pre-Cana workshops and our JustFaith social justice program.

2. We encourage partner parish participation in all of our adult faith formation programs, including Fall and Lenten Bible study, missions, yearly combined retreats, video presentations (recently Father Robert Barron's "Catholicism" video series), monthly "Catholicism on Tap" presentations, special speakers on current moral issues, and in-service training for lectors, commentators and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.
3. Coordinate First Communion and First Reconciliation schedules
4. Catechetical Leaders of PSR Programs meet regularly to share ideas, discuss updated materials and plan workshops/courses for Catechist Certification.

What do we plan to do when we have only one priest?

1. The above faith formation programs will continue under present lay leadership with the approval of the pastor.
2. We recommend that when there is only one priest, that St. Francis parish and St. Rose parish each have two weekday Masses before school hours for their PSR programs. St. Felicitas parish does not have a weekday morning PSR program . Their PSR program is presented on Sunday morning.
3. We recommend that one deacon or pastoral associate/parish life coordinator be assigned to each parish to aid in Parish Life Formation.
4. We plan to pursue a joint program of religious formation for students not attending Mater Dei High School with our parish ministry teams.
5. We plan to form a committee of parents, catechists and DREs from the three parishes to foster greater communication and cooperation within and among our three parish schools of religion.
6. We plan to explore together possibilities of enhanced cooperation /combining of the CYM programs in our parishes.

## **Outreach**

What are we already doing together?

1. We offer our combined parishes Just Faith social justice leadership program annually.
2. We coordinate collections of goods for the Breese Food Bank and St. Vincent de Paul's Food Bank in Germantown and Thrift Store in East. St. Louis.
3. We regularly prepare casseroles for Cosgrove's Kitchen in East St. Louis.

4. We adopt Holy Angels Shelter, Hispanic and other low income families for Christmas gifts each year.
5. We recruit volunteers for Meals on Wheels, the St Vincent de Paul Thrift Store in East St. Louis, Community Link special projects and Nursing Home Ministry.
6. We encourage involvement in CRS Operation Rice Bowl and the Catholics Confront Global Poverty advocacy program.
7. We support Poverty Service's Prison Literacy Program with a collection at our combined parish liturgy for the Feast of the Assumption each year.
8. We co-sponsor Respect Life activities throughout the year, including collections for the Highland Pregnancy Care Center and Fontebella Maternity House.

What do we plan to do when we have only one priest?

1. Our lay leadership will continue with the above outreach programs with the pastor's approval.
2. Our pastoral leadership teams plan to meet together with Mr. Bob Rapp (our combined parishes' part-time Hispanic Minister) and members of the local Hispanic community to seek greater cooperation and mutual understanding in 2014.

## **Administration**

What are we already doing together?

1. We are meeting regularly as a Partnership Leadership Group.
2. We are utilizing a webpage to communicate Partnership events and news
3. We are advertising each others' activities and events in separate bulletins
4. We are exploring a method of calculating a fair and accurate formula for sharing joint costs (i.e. salary, retirement, housing, etc)
5. We envision that the priest will need assistance in administration of the three parishes. We are exploring the need for a shared lay person to handle administrative duties.
6. Secretaries meet regularly to discuss best practices, cross training and standardization of practices

7. We are developing a directory of key individuals in each parish and a strategic plan document to serve as guidance when there is only one priest.

What do we plan to do when we have only one priest?

1. Continue to meet regularly as a Partnership Leadership Group to discuss ongoing changes and new issues as they occur.
2. Replace retiring/resigning staff with shared staff as needed
3. Determine need for hiring a shared lay person to handle administrative duties, if not already in place
4. Consider combining parish groups (i.e. CYM, Sodalties, etc.)
5. Establish a joint finance committee (not replacing each parish finance council) to assist in addressing common needs of the group.

Signatures:

Pastors / Administrators / Parish Life Coordinators:

Rev. Edward G. Schaefer    Fr. Daniel Friedman    Sister Diane Bussey  
SSND

Trustees / Deacons/ Lay Parish Leaders:

Dorena Huelmann  
Barry Kampal    Geraldyn Krup  
John Ketterer    Dan Potthast  
Robert Stutley    Allen Thole  
Shm Bick    Ann [unclear]  
Norbert W. Papeus    Eleanor Joss  
Marge McQuade    Kathleen L. Mills

Signatures continued on next page

Trustees / Deacons/ Lay Parish Leaders (continued):

Cennie Barozowski    Rev. Stephen Ambachon    Adelf C

Michel E. Buelin    Rev. Christie Zittchen    Tony E

Donald Jayce    Nancy Huelsmann    J. G. L

Donna Beck    [Signature]    Steven Moore

Mary Jane    John Schlimme    Lynn Haukap

Eugene Rehkempa    M. J. Collins    self & wife

Meredith Noel    Paul De    Nancy Schlinger

Christina M. Schully    Frieda Schuch

Lora Bernhoff    Michael Helmer

Christa Hame    Curt Stieker

Mary Essempres    Jim Buehn

Leiter Justina Schaefer, ASE

Addendum I:

*Possible Mass schedules when there is only one priest:*

Option A:

<b>St. Francis</b>	<b>St. Rose</b>	<b>St. Felicitas</b>
11:00 am Sunday	9:30 am Sunday	8:00 am Sunday
7:30 pm Saturday	4:00 pm Saturday	

Option B:

<b>St. Francis</b>	<b>St. Rose</b>	<b>St. Felicitas</b>
7:30 am Sunday	10:30 am Sunday	
9:00 am Sunday	4:00 pm Saturday	7:30 pm Saturday

NOTE:

As we indicated in the report we previously filed with Msgr. McEvilly (Addendum II), once this Parish Partnership has just one priest and St. Rose and Aviston have just two Masses each weekend, both parishes will not have enough seating capacity for existing weekly Mass attendees. St. Felicitas (Beaver Prairie) has sufficient seating capacity for its own membership, but does not have sufficient capacity to handle the overflow from the other two parishes. Thirty (30) current weekend Mass attendees at St. Francis Aviston (4%) will be forced to attend Mass elsewhere; and sixty (60) weekend Mass attendees at St. Rose Parish (10%) will be forced to attend Mass elsewhere. That means these 90 parishioners will be less involved in their parish as a result of this new parish partnership. This will negatively impact the faith and financial structure of these parishes as well as the faith of the impacted parishioners. The above figures do not take into account the fact that all three parishes are currently experiencing growth. For these reasons we have serious concerns about the viability of this Parish Partnership Plan.

Addendum II

TO: The Reverend Monsignor John W. McEvilly, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia,  
 Chairman, *ex officio*  
 FROM: The Clinton County North Central Vicariate PROPOSED THREE PARISH PARTNERSHIP of  
 St. Francis, Aviston / St. Rose, St. Rose / St. Felicitas, Beaver Prairie  
 DATE: September 27, 2013

After numerous Parish Council and Parish Partnership committee meetings with in-depth analysis of statistical data and potential options and capabilities of each parish in this Diocese proposed plan of Parish Partnership, it is apparent that a partnership of these three parishes is physically impossible. Once only one priest is available to serve this proposed three parish partnership, hundreds of current weekly Mass attending parishioners will not physically be able to attend weekend Mass in any of the three parishes. Within months thereafter the likelihood of complete financial failure and faith community dissolution of each parish becomes insurmountable.

**CURRENT FACTS:**

Parish	Building Capacity	Weekly Mass Attendance (without Easter and Christmas)	Annual Mass Sacraments in Funerals & Weddings	Total Parishioners (which becomes a factor at 9 Easter & Christmas services)
St. Francis Aviston	355	740	15 – 3 (Mixed)	1,700
Weddings			7	
Funerals				
St. Rose St. Rose	275	610	12 – 2 (Mixed)	1,122
Weddings			7	
Funerals				
St. Felicitas Beaver Prairie	230	115	7	168
Weddings			2	
Funerals				
Totals	860	1,486	35 – 5 (Mixed)	2,990
			<u>16</u>	
			51	

**FACTOR #1: WEEKEND WEDDING AND FUNERAL MASSES**

Currently the three parishes have a total of 51 weekend Masses associated with funerals and weddings. So once there is one priest assigned to this proposed Parish Partnership, there would likely be a wedding or funeral Mass every weekend of the year. After much discussion, the Parish Partnership committee decided it would be devastating to these faith communities eliminate all weekend wedding and funeral Masses altogether...but we could limit the mixed weddings (between a Catholic and non-Catholic) to have a wedding service offered by a deacon instead of a priest. This policy would reduce the number of weekend wedding and funeral Masses to about 46 per year between the three parishes of the partnership. Although this policy somewhat enables one priest to meet the annual weekend wedding

Addendum II

and funeral Mass needs of the partnership, the exact number of weddings and funerals in the future and when the funerals will occur is unknown. For these reasons we have to assume that once this proposed Parish Partnership has one priest that there will very likely be a wedding or funeral Mass each weekend of the year.

**FACTOR #2: THE NUMBER OF WEEKEND MASSES ONE PRIEST CAN PHYSICALLY OFFER**  
(especially since our two assigned priests are close to retirement)

The Diocese prefers three to four Masses per weekend per priest. We know that once we have one priest to serve the three parishes, one weekend Mass will be a wedding or funeral Mass. Those wedding or funeral Masses do not constitute weekly Sunday Mass obligation for parishioner attendance. For these reasons we had to assume that our one priest would have to offer at least 4 additional weekend Masses each week. Despite their age, our current assigned pastors agreed to commit to offering the 5 weekend Masses (4 Masses plus 1 wedding or funeral Mass) each week. Unfortunately the current statistics show that the large number of existing weekly parish Mass attendees of these parishes exceed existing church’s physical capacity even if the single priest would offer 5 Masses per weekend. A 6<sup>th</sup> weekly Mass would have to be offered each weekend to meet current weekly Mass attendance and parish seating capacity. But even the 6<sup>th</sup> Mass would be very tight because we are only using average attendance figures, and there are these variables which will make even a 6<sup>th</sup> weekly Mass inadequate:

- a) About one-third of the weekend Masses have higher attendance;
- b) We are assuming all weekly Mass attending parishioners will somehow divide equally between the Mass times to maximize church capacity;
- c) Easter and Christmas, but even special event Masses would be impossible.

Putting aside 1 weekend wedding or funeral Mass each week of the year, here are some likely scenarios and statistics to illustrate the overcapacity condition if just one priest offers 4 Masses per weekend (2 Masses somehow divided among the three partnering parishes):

**PLAN A:** If just St. Francis and St. Rose Parish each have 2 Masses each weekend:

	seating capacity	weekly attendance	net result
<b>St. Francis Aviston</b>	355		
X's 2 Masses	710	740	(-30)
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<b>St. Rose St. Rose</b>	275		
X's 2 Masses	550	610	(-60)
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<b>Total weekly lack of capacity</b>	1,260	1,350	(-90)



Addendum II

**PLAN B:** If St. Francis, St. Rose and St. Felicitas Parishes Partner and St. Felicitas closes:

	seating capacity	weekly attendance	net result
<b>St. Francis Aviston</b>	355		
X's 2 Masses	710	740	(-30)
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<b>St. Rose St. Rose</b>	275		
X's 2 Masses	550	610	(-60)
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<b>St. Felicitas Beaver Prairie</b>	0	115	
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Total weekly lack of capacity	1,260	1,486	(-205)

The bottom line is that there is not enough church seating capacity at St. Francis and St. Rose to enable existing weekly Mass attendees to fit into 2 weekly Masses at St. Francis and St. Rose...much less add 115 additional attendees from St. Felicitas should St. Felicitas close and become chapel status.

**There is no viable plan that we can propose that will enable these three parishes to partner with just one priest available.** The limited physical capacity of the existing parish buildings limits attendance and forces additional Mass times beyond the physical endurance capabilities of one priest. In addition forcing hundreds of existing attendees of these parishes to other area churches will eventually reduce the parish attendance by at least 15% (assuming the parishioners all perfectly divide and attend scheduled weekend Masses and can make attendance at their appointed Mass fit in their schedule 52 weeks a year). This scheduling is not realistic at all. Given the physical limitations of these three Parish Church capacities, if the Diocese forces these three parishes to partner, it will only be a matter of time (within months) that all three parishes will begin to financially and spiritually begin to fall apart as faith communities.

Has the Diocese reviewed other Parish Partnerships in terms of the number of weekly Mass attendees and the physical seating capacity of the partnering churches? Are there other Parish Partnerships that have large seating capacity churches with low weekly Mass attendance? If so might those parishes easily survive with less weekend Masses to enable the priest to have a Mass or two at Parishes like ours?

Right now all three of these parishes are very viable, growing, spiritual and financially sound faith communities. All three get along well, and are genuinely concerned for the welfare of each other's faith community. The priests currently serving these parishes are so committed to these parishes that even though 2 of the priests are close to retirement they would be willing to offer 5 Masses per week to help keep these faith communities alive. Unfortunately due to the physical capacity limitations of these small churches, this proposed parish partnering is not possible with just St. Francis Aviston and St. Rose St. Rose...and becomes insurmountable once St. Felicitas Beaver Prairie is added. The fact is the Diocese "cannot fit 10 pounds of sugar into a 5 pound bag." Are there other Diocese Parish Partnerships that might easily "fit 5 pounds of sugar into a 10 pound bag?"