



January, 2016

Dear friends in Christ,

We owe an enormous debt to the Catholic clergy, religious and laypeople who established our local church 165 years ago, and to all those who succeeded them in faith and service. Often with few resources, the Church has grown over the years in a way that the native peoples and settlers of the territory could have scarcely imagined.

We now have 174 parishes and missions serving more than 600,000 Catholic people. With growth has come the need for planning: planning for parishes and missions where the Eucharist will continue to be celebrated, the faith will be passed on and the poor loved. Our planning must include the need for vocations to the priesthood, Catholic schools and pastoral ministries that will serve the diverse needs of our people now and in the future.

Populations shift, needs change and vocations must always be encouraged and nurtured. As a result, each succeeding generation of Catholics in Western Washington has engaged in some form of planning. All of us have benefited from their foresight, and especially from their trust in the Lord. We not only stand on their shoulders, we literally worship in the churches they built, learn in the schools they established, find healing in the hospitals they opened and on and on and on. Now it is our time to plan for the future of this archdiocese with the same faith, hope and trust in the Lord that marked our earliest years.

Like the good stewards about whom Jesus spoke in his parables, we are called now to look at the mission of the Church — our mission — and along with it, the current and projected population trends in Western Washington. As a result, we are undertaking a pastoral planning process and beginning to ask questions about the needs of our people and parishes: Where do our people live, and where will they live in the next 50 years? Do we have adequate parishes, missions and facilities to serve them and to give them a place to live their call as baptized Catholics? Considering the shortage of priests, how can we best ensure that Masses will be available to all without having to travel many miles?

In the days and months ahead, we will be asking Catholic parishioners to participate in pastoral planning. We will look at the current situation of our clergy, and how they would be best distributed. We also will look at ways we can join together as an archdiocese to create a spiritual culture where vocations are naturally and enthusiastically prayed for and encouraged — especially vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We also are strengthening our Deacon Formation Program and the way we form the laity for the important ministry they undertake.

Those who went before us planned well and handed on to us a Church that is strong and filled with faith and love. We also must exercise stewardship to bless future generations. As this process goes forward, I will keep you informed.

The most important thing to remember is that we will trust in the providence of God. God in his goodness will lead us precisely where he wants us to be, just as he has always done.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ 
J. Peter Sartain

North Seattle Deanery Long Range

Healthy vibrant parishes/schools carrying out the mission of Jesus
with 1-3 less priests in 2-10 years.

Mission Territory

- How do we best reach all of the souls in this part of the Diocese?

Pastoral Care

- How do we best care for those who are already coming?

Financial Viability

- How do we best steward and allocate all of our resources to provide for evangelization and pastoral care for the next 20 years?

Clergy Distribution

- How do we best share the gifts of our priests and deacons given the pastoral needs and their projected availability in the future?

Primary Drivers for Suggestions:

1. Combine or close for geographic proximity
2. Eliminate low attending masses
3. Share debt or finances for capital repairs
4. Eliminate under-performing schools (Name the factors: attendance is in a decline trend; financially unstable, parish unwilling/unable to support; facilities in adequate or in need of costly repair; parents unsupportive; problems with curriculum or personnel; other __)
5. Accommodate non-English masses
6. Create a critical mass of lay/deacon coordinators who could mentor/support one another in service to the Church and in partnership with priestly leadership.
7. Create a partnership between parishes that currently excel in different areas
8. Create a partnership between stronger and more challenged parishes
9. Provide mass and services in areas that are meeting a significant need and create a stronger focus on reaching out to specific populations (e.g. the elderly, young families, young adults)
10. Provide mass and services in areas that are expected to grow demographically and create a focus on reaching out to new populations
11. Combine parishes/schools to offer these opportunities: *A, B, C, _____;*
_____; _____

Outcomes from North Seattle Pastoral Planning Meeting 2/29/16

Most Common Solutions:

(parentheses indicate number of tables who responded with the same or similar idea)

- **Sharing and combining parish resources, staff and programs (15)**
 - Sharing youth ministers/youth ministry programs (8)
 - Combine RCIA, music directors, groundskeepers, other staff (7)
 - Shared leadership between parishes (6)
 - Cluster sacramental preparation and Faith Formation classes (5)

- **Adapting Mass Times (12)**
 - Consolidate Mass times within geographic area (10)
 - Adjust Masses to meet demand for certain area or cultural community (2)
 - Rotating Mass times (1)

- **Recruit Priests and Deacons (6)**
 - From other dioceses or countries (4)
 - Encourage more deacons to assist priests (3)

- **Pastoral Coordinator Model (6)**
 - Consider the Pastoral Coordinator + Parish Priest model (6)

- **Consider Collaboration in Schools (5)**
 - Combine school by grade range, middle school in one building, Jr. High in another (1)
 - This would make it more difficult for families with multiple children in different age ranges (1)
 - Important to protect parishes with schools (1)
 - Sharing resources between schools (1)
 - Consolidating schools that are struggling (1)

Unique Solutions:

- Start with a “sister parish” relationship before making a formal collaboration or consolidation
- Two parishes merging to create one new parish
- Utilizing Cabrini Training, NET Ministry, etc. for training new
- Re-investigate SCAP program (sacramental celebration in absence of a priest)
- Push to promote vocations in the home and in schools
- Create a retirement home for retired senior priests in the North Seattle Deanery

General Thoughts and Feelings:

- Importance of protected, healthy, strong pastors
- Need for healthy, vibrant school in every parish (or cluster)
- People are drawn towards certain parishes, pastors or people, no matter where they are geographically
 - If you have strong leaders, people will come fill your pews
- Importance of transparency and communication
 - Communicate early and often – over-communicate if needed
 - Difficult decisions must be made promptly and thoughtfully
 - Get people used to the idea now before decisions are made
 - Find out what’s important to your parish now
- Concerns over parishioners’ reluctance to make a change
 - How do we get people to change churches if they won’t change pews?
 - How do we collaborate while being sensitive to cultural communities?
 - How to preserve the unique culture of each parish even in collaboration?
- Financial concerns
 - If your churches are combined, which church do you support financially?
 - Different collection envelopes for different parishioners?
- Parish boundaries are somewhat irrelevant
- Diversity of women in leadership roles
- How do we reach out to young people and make them stay in our churches?
 - Evangelize changing populations
 - What do evangelical churches do to engage youth?
 - Keep in touch with people who move from parish to parish
- Should we worry about existing parish communities that won’t survive?
- Demographic trends
 - General population increase
 - Economic and cultural diversity increase as you go farther North
 - Increased pressure on housing affordability
 - Educational costs going up, family sizes going down