

Called to Be Church  
Pastoral Planning  
Saratoga Planning Group #2

Meeting Date: January 23, 2007

Location: St. Mary's Crescent

Facilitator: Kevin Harrigan

Participants:

**St. Mary's Crescent Team:** Rev. Tom Hayes Pastor, Andy Grebe, Normie Tibi, Tim Mack, Kathy Crouth, Chris Conroy, Jessica Mack, Laurie O'Brien

**Corpus Christi Team:** Darrel LaVigne, Kelly Millington, Susan Wieczynski RSM, Debbie Botch, Jack Sweeney, Mike Hetz

**St. Edward's Team:** Rev. Pat Butler, Pastor, Bob Daly, Rich Evans, Maggie Hume, Joe Berger, Sue Karpovich

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

- Facilitator (Kevin) called the meeting to order at about 7:00 PM and gave the group a brief background on himself and his role as facilitator.
- Kevin distributed the What does It Mean to Fulfill the Mission of Jesus handout. The handout contained the summary notes from the three parish October and November Local Planning Group (LPG) meetings on mission and ministry. We will keep this handout and use it as a reference and resource as we discuss the future topics.
- Kevin explained the goal of the Called to Be Church 18 month process was to become Church in better ways in the context of the clergy projected to be available in the future.
- As we begin the process the Kevin made a point to emphasize the importance for us to establish a good working relationship with each other from the outset. We need to be encouraging openness, honesty and mutual respect.
- Kevin outlined the agenda for the night with a goal to end at about 9:00 PM.
- After breaking up into 4 small groups each participant was given the opportunity to introduce themselves and tell the group a little about their background, parish involvement and the gifts they brought to our LPG.

### **Called to Prayer**

- Fr. Hayes lead us in the hymn "All are Welcome"
- Fr. Butler read the scripture passage from Luke, chapter 9:18-20
- Small groups were asked to reflect on several questions related to the reading
- After a short period of reflection the small groups shared their thoughts and responses with each other.

### **Charge to Local Planning Group by Bishop Hubbard (Commission and Method)**

- Kevin reviewed the Bishop's Commission to the 39 LPG's and the Method to be used to accomplish the charge with all the participants. This included the expectation that each LPG will be submitting recommendations to the Bishop in June 2008. Discussion, questions and clarification followed.

Called to Be Church  
Pastoral Planning  
Saratoga Planning Group #2

- The Circular process handout was distributed and used to help further explain the Called To Be Church process to the participants. The information flow will start at each LPG discussing a specific topic each month and following an agenda prepared by the Pastoral Planning Office. Information / preliminary recommendations coming from the meeting will then be shared with each respective parish in the LPG (via any of the many suggested means .... i.e. bulletins, town meetings, homilies, council meetings). The following month each of the 17 Deaneries in the Diocese will take up the same topic in a one hour facilitated meeting to review what came out of the LPG meetings and discuss implications for the Deanery as a whole. Feed back from the Deanery meeting will be reviewed back with each LPG at the start of their next meeting and prior to moving to the next topic. This will give the LPG an opportunity to further refine and/or develop recommendations. A point was made that it will be important that all three parishes share consistent information coming out of the LPG meetings with their respective parishes.
- LPG meeting dates were set through June 2007 as follows:

February 27<sup>th</sup>-Corpus Christi

March 26<sup>th</sup>-St. Edwards

April 30<sup>th</sup> -St. Mary's (was TBA at meeting and since set)

May 29<sup>th</sup>-Corpus Christi

June 19<sup>th</sup>-St. Edward's

All meetings to begin at 7:00 PM and run approximately until 9:00 PM

### **Vision, Dreams, Expectations (What do we want to accomplish?)-Brainstorming Session**

- Per Kevin, by 2015 it is projected by Diocese that there will be three priests assigned to cover the three parishes of St. Mary's Crescent, St. Edward's and Corpus Christi. Kevin observed in other LPG's the number of priests being available to serve was less than the number of parishes. Although we will have 3 priests assigned it is doubtful that our current pastor in residence model will continue for each parish. It is more likely to have a scenario like one active priest and two retired priests covering our parishes. Retired priests will generally be available to cover weekend masses but not so for other activities traditional covered by our pastor model active priests (i.e. weddings, funerals, daily masses). We need to prepare for this time and think and plan for "Church" to mean a larger geographic area than our traditional one off parishes.
- It was observed that a deeper commitment will need to come from the laity with clergy and religious numbers being down. We will need to serve each other.
- Comment was made that this will be a major cultural shift for Catholics as for many years parishioners have been used to "being served" rather than "serving". To help make this shift, much adult lay education will be needed to prepare people for these leadership roles.
- A follow up comment added, that there will need to be a structure and financial commitment to support this education need, such as, lesson plans, classrooms, technology (on-line courses) and curriculum. Parishioners will need to feel empowered to step up to serve.
- One participant observed she had spent time in another non-Catholic Christian community where the church members had this "ready to serve each other" mentality. Why not here?

Called to Be Church  
Pastoral Planning  
Saratoga Planning Group #2

- A concern was shared that if all we accomplish by this process is to change the mass schedules then we will have failed.
- One participant with a municipal planning background observed that our LPG area is located in the middle of a rapidly growing geographic area. Despite the lower numbers of clergy / religious being available and in contrast with other contracting urban LPG's, our area is on the verge of even more growth. Particularly if the new AMD Chip factory is built in Malta. We probably will have parish populations of up to double the present size in the not too distant future. As we plan To Be Church we need to keep and consider the implications of this growth in mind.
- Another vision was shared for our parishioners to live their daily life in concert with the Word of God. This can be seen in many small faith sharing Christian groups and communities. There should be opportunities for small bible study/prayer groups where people can grow their faith. Many participants felt their own faith had been deepened by these types of experiences (including retreats).
- It will be important to share and communicate what is being discussed and planned with the parishioners at the respective parishes during the formal 18 month Pastoral Planning period. It was hoped that getting the word out will invoke confidence and interest in the process. Also for people to feel the energy and kindle a desire to be apart.
- Another vision shared was for our process to include an outreach to those parishioners who do not attend church very often or were totally un-churched.
- Another vision reminded us that we always want our children to be involved. Not only in education but also in our ministries. They are our future Church and we should plan accordingly.
- A hope was shared that this relationship with the three parishes working more closely together will continue beyond the 18 month planning period. That there will be a continuous sharing and reaching out to one another. Perhaps all three churches will eventually feed into one.

### **Best Practices**

Parishes shared a few thoughts on successful programs / ministries:

- Corpus Christi has an organized Parish Weekend Adult Retreat that is working well. They have a retreat team that organizes the event.
- All parishes have a Ministry Fair. St. Edward's organized a Fair recently and had 100 parishioners sign up for different ministries.
- All parishes have some type of formal or informal sister parish relationship with parish in another country.
- St. Mary's and Corpus Christi have successful Generations of Faith programs (called GIFT at St. Mary's).
- St. Edward's has a very active and large Faith Formation Program.
- Corpus Christi has seen growth in their Bible Study Group.

Called to Be Church  
Pastoral Planning  
Saratoga Planning Group #2

### **Parking Lot**

Kevin established a “parking lot” for subjects brought up but not part of today’s discussion. For this meeting the subjects included:

- Liturgy format reform
- Vatican II
- Further discussion on faith formation models being used within LPG

### **Closing**

- We closed our initial LPG meeting shortly after 9:00 PM by forming a circle, joining hands and together praying the Lord’s Prayer. This was followed by a blessing to the participants performed by Fr. Hayes.

### **NEXT MEETING:**

- Tuesday February 27, 2007 being hosted by Corpus Christi. Topic will be Evangelization.
- Materials to be distributed to parish core team members by each respective pastor.
- Materials are also available on diocese web page [www.rcda.org](http://www.rcda.org). Click on the Called to Be Church link and then on the Meeting Resources link.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Ameres  
Recording Secretary  
St. Mary’s, Crescent  
nameres@nycap.rr.com

Kevin Harrigan  
Facilitator  
kharr20@aol.com