

# Pastoral Planning Update

Due to the changing demographics in the Catholic population and the fact that there will be 50% fewer active Priests in the Camden Diocese, it is necessary to plan for our future. Bishop Galante's vision of "vibrant and dynamic" parishes is moving forward. He is giving great importance to planning based on recommendations by regions in the Deaneries. We are in Camden West Deanery.

## **CAMDEN WEST DEANERY CONSISTS OF:**

- Region 3: St. Aloysius, St. John, Transfiguration & Immaculate Heart of Mary
- Region 4: St. Veronica, St. Peter, St. Cecilia, St. Stephen
- Region 5: Holy Maternity, St. Maurice, St. Mary and St. Anne

*Parish representatives broke into 3 work groups to analyze the following for each region:*

- Parish Data reports, Mass count information & general population
- Parish Facilities information on all buildings and grounds of each parish.
- Parish Financial information on all parishes.

*At the Regional meetings, representative came with their findings and made recommendations. A Regional meeting was held last week which will be followed by two Deanery meetings after Easter. The reports are to be submitted to the Diocesan planning office by May 15.*

## **Some suggested models for restructuring the Diocese are as follows:**

**MERGER MODEL:** In areas where there are many parishes, merging is an advisable option: A merged parish results when a parish or parishes are closed and a new parish is formed. In a merger, both the assets and liabilities of participating parishes are united and one pastor is assigned. A new pastoral council is created with representation from all former parishes.

**CLUSTER MODEL:** This model links two or three parishes into clusters. A pastor is given the responsibility for all parishes and new staff will be needed. A reasonable sacramental, liturgical and pastoral work load and travel schedule for the pastor is essential. Parish organizations and activities of the cluster are combined whenever possible. Someone else has to assume the pastoral care of the parish in all areas except those entrusted solely to a priest. The pastor would celebrate no more than 3 Sunday liturgies on a weekend. Pastoral councils remain with the parish, but the councils meet at the same time and location to make it manageable for the pastor.

**PRIEST TEAM MODEL:** This model allows for the pastoral care of several parishes by a team of priests with one priest assigned as the moderator of the team. This model requires a high degree of organization and communication. Additional training would probably be needed as not every priest could or would want to be assigned to a team.

**ONE PRIEST/ONE PARISH MODEL:** This model is possible only in a large parish or in a geographically isolated location. The pastor of such a large parish will have to hire a sizable ministerial staff and support staff. Although a large parish that is rich in human and material resources will be able to support the staff needed, it would also have significant responsibilities to share the wealth with poor and needing parishes.

***Please pray for all those working with the planning process!***