

Save the Date



IMPORTANT MEETING

Sunday, October 15, 2006
1-2:30 p.m. @ St. Francis Xavier
6:30-8:00 p.m. @ St. Theresa

The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the information presented at Masses on the weekend of September 31/October 1 and in this newsletter; to review the facts we must face together as we prepare for our future; to present in detail the various parish models that the pastoral planning committee will be considering during the next few months; and above all, to LISTEN to your concerns, to hear your suggestions, to give everyone the opportunity to offer their opinions as we move forward with this important task that has been entrusted to all of us.

All parishioners are welcome to attend either meeting in either location. Please come and join us. We need your voice, your support, and your enthusiasm as we plan our future together.



St. Francis & St. Theresa Pastoral Center
P.O. Box 746
Harvard, Massachusetts 01451

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November 14-15 @ St. Francis
November 15-18 @ St. Theresa

Sign up for your appointment
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*For I know well the plans I have for you,
plans for your future, plans for your welfare, not woe...
plans to give you a future full of hope. — Jeremiah 29:11*



PASTORAL PLANNING QUARTERLY

St. Francis Xavier/St. Theresa
fall 2006

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Our Faith, Our Future, Our Responsibility

BRINGING YOU UP TO DATE

In July, after becoming pastor of both parishes, Father Dennis invited three people from each parish to become part of a Pastoral Planning Committee (PPC) for Saint Francis Xavier Parish and Saint Theresa the Little Flower Parish. The six parishioners, who willingly accepted to serve on this committee, were chosen from the list of people nominated by parishioners from both parishes.

At that time, it was determined that the objective of the PPC would be to successfully create, receive approval for, and implement the short- and long-term plans that would address the needs of the two parishes as we move forward sharing one pastor. The committee is strongly committed to preparing a final plan which must embody the desired end result: a strong, vibrant Christian community, where the values of the Gospel are proclaimed and our Catholic faith tradition is celebrated.

A BUSY FIRST QUARTER

The Pastoral Planning Committee has had a busy first quarter. Specifically:

- The Committee has developed a timeline in order to present to each parish a long-range parish model proposal to vote on by May 2007. This timeline is found on pages 2-3.
- The approach of the PPC right from the start has been to encourage full participation in the planning process by the parishioners from both parishes. With this objective in mind, seven subcommittees were established at the end of the summer to begin gathering information needed for our future planning by assessing seven major areas of parish life as they exist at the present time in each parish. The chairpersons of these seven subcommittees were appointed in August by Father Dennis and the PPC.

The co-chairs (one from each parish) of these seven committees and a description of their area of responsibility are listed on page 6. Every committee has been given a list of initial questions. Some of the information that these committees will be providing

(continued on pg. 2)

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

As Jesus stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd pressed in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats moored by the side of the lake. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to pull out a short distance from the shore; then remaining seated, he continued to teach the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master we have been hard at it all night and caught nothing; but if you say so, I will lower the nets." Upon doing this they caught such a great number of fish that their nets were at the breaking point.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Pope John Paul II appealing to this passage from Luke's Gospel, invited all the baptized to "remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence." He called us to put out into the deep and to go forward in hope.

As your pastor, I invite you to do the same: to remember with gratitude all that has taken place in the life of our two parishes since they were founded over 50 years ago; to embrace with enthusiasm the challenge that is now before us; and to join together in the planning of our future together.

Successful implementation of whatever final plan is proposed requires strong leadership at all levels, commitment to the process on the part of everyone, consistency in communicating the progress being made, and accountability at all stages of the process. The PPC is deeply committed to all of these goals.

(Pastor's letter continued on pg. 2)

(Pastor's letter continued from pg.1)

I have complete confidence in the PPC members. Each one brings to the table a wealth of experience and a great love for their parish. I am also very grateful and deeply edified by the hard work being done by the chairpersons of our seven subcommittees and their committee members. Thank you all for your generosity in committing so much of your time and your talent to this important responsibility.

I ask all of you to please support our committees by your daily prayers. Beg the Spirit each day to enlighten our minds and strengthen our hearts for the work that lies ahead of us. I ask you to please read this first quarterly newsletter carefully and prayerfully. And finally I ask that you plan to attend one of the two meetings to be held on Sunday, October 15. Come and share your ideas and hear what others have to say as well. The work we will soon undertake is about all of us, and all of us are needed to make it work.

Father Dennis
Father Dennis

include Mass attendance, numbers of parishioners receiving various sacraments, enrollment in our religious education programs and space concerns for these programs, financial data, condition of our buildings and grounds, the potential expandability of each church, etc.

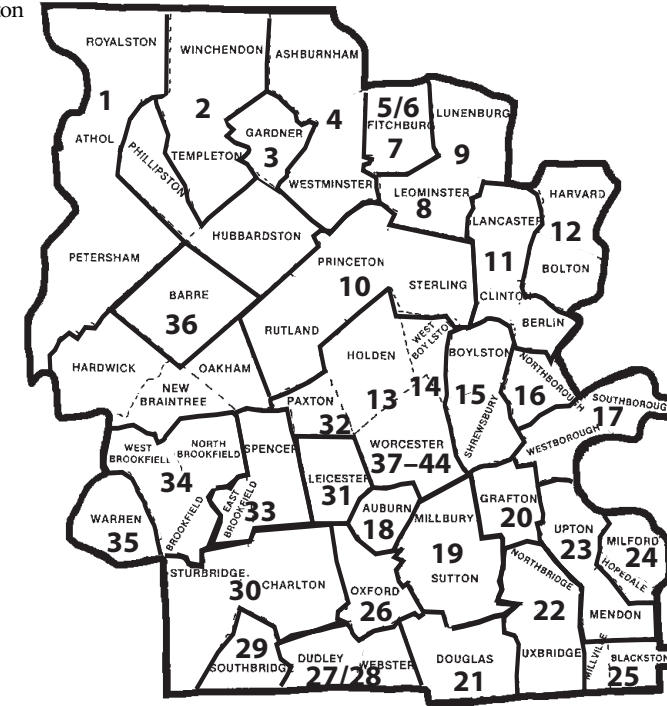
Some of the committees are now fully established and others are still looking for more members. Perhaps as you read about the work of each of these committees you may find an area where your time and talent could be contributed. If you do, please contact the chairperson of the committee from your parish as soon as possible. Contact information is listed on page 6. At any time during this planning process if you have questions, want to offer suggestions, or wish to share your thoughts and feelings you may contact any of these people or Father Dennis directly. What you have to say is important for us to hear.

- On August 23, the PPC had a very important meeting with Father

Michael Rose, the pastor of Saint Mary's Church in Shrewsbury, who currently serves as chairperson of the Diocesan Planning Committee. Father Rose explained that at the present time there are half as many priests serving the 126 parishes in Worcester County as there were in 1975. The Diocese of Worcester currently has 138 active priests. Only 29 of these priests are under the age of 50, 23 are over age 70 and will be eligible to retire by 2010. No one will be ordained to the priesthood next year for the Diocese of Worcester, and there are only 9 men preparing to become priests over the next eight years.

Therefore, it is highly unlikely that either parish will receive another priest in the foreseeable future. The diocese has developed 44 clusters as a means to manage the parishes in the Diocese and to plan for the future as the number of priests continues to drop.

Cluster Parishes



Cluster 1
Our Lady Immaculate, Athol
Our Lady Queen of Heaven Mission, Royalston
St. Francis of Assisi, Athol
St. Peter, Petersham

Cluster 2
St. Vincent de Paul, Baldwinville
Holy Cross, East Templeton
St. Martin, Otter River
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Winchendon

Cluster 3
Holy Spirit, Gardner
Our Lady of the Rosary, Gardner
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Gardner
St. Joseph, Gardner

Cluster 4
St. Denis, Ashburnham
St. Anne, S. Ashburnham
St. Edward the Confessor, Westminster

Cluster 5
Madonna of the Holy Rosary, Fitchburg
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Fitchburg
St. Joseph, Fitchburg

Cluster 6
Immaculate Conception, Fitchburg
St. Anthony di Padua, Fitchburg
St. Francis of Assisi, Fitchburg

Cluster 7
St. Bernard, Fitchburg
St. Camillus de Lellis, Fitchburg

Cluster 8
Holy Family of Nazareth, Leominster
St. Anna, Leominster
St. Cecilia, Leominster
St. Leo, Leominster

Cluster 9
Our Lady of the Lake, Leominster
St. Boniface, Lunenburg

Cluster 10
St. Patrick, Rutland
Prince of Peace, Princeton
St. Richard of Chichester, Sterling

Cluster 11
Immaculate Conception, Lancaster
Our Lady of Jasna Gora, Clinton
Our Lady of the Rosary, Clinton
St. John the Evangelist, Clinton
St. Joseph the Good Provider, Berlin

Cluster 12
St. Theresa, the Little Flower, Harvard
St. Francis Xavier, Bolton

Cluster 13
St. George, Worcester
St. Mary, Jefferson

Cluster 14
St. Christopher, Worcester
Our Lady of Good Counsel, W. Boylston

Cluster 15
St. Mary of the Hills, Boylston
St. Mary, Shrewsbury
St. Anne, Shrewsbury

Cluster 16
St. Rose of Lima, Northboro
St. Bernadette, Northboro

Cluster 17
St. Luke the Evangelist, Westboro
St. Matthew, Southboro
St. Anne, Southboro

Cluster 18
St. Joseph, Auburn
North American Martyrs, Auburn

Cluster 19
St. Brigid, Millbury
Our Lady of the Assumption, Millbury
St. Mark, Sutton

Cluster 20
St. Philip, Grafton
St. Mary, N. Grafton
St. James, S. Grafton

Cluster 21
St. Denis, Douglas
St. Anne, Manchaug

Cluster 22
St. Peter, Northbridge
St. Patrick, Whitinsville
St. Mary, Uxbridge
Good Shepherd, Linwood

Cluster 23
St. Michael the Archangel, Mendon
Holy Angels, Upton

Cluster 24
St. Mary the Assumption, Milford
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Milford
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Hopedale

Cluster 25
St. Paul, Blackstone
St. Theresa, Blackstone
St. Augustine, Millville

Cluster 26
St. Ann, N. Oxford
St. Roch, Oxford

Cluster 27
St. Joseph, Webster
St. Andrew Bobola, Dudley

Cluster 28
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Webster
St. Louis, Webster
St. Anthony of Padua, Dudley

Cluster 29
Notre Dame, Southbridge
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Southbridge
St. Hedwig, Southbridge
St. Mary, Southbridge

Cluster 30
St. Joseph, Charlton
St. Anne/St. Patrick, Sturbridge

Cluster 31
St. Joseph/St. Pius X, Leicester
St. Aloysius/St. Jude, Leicester

Cluster 32
St. Columba, Paxton
Christ the King, Worcester

Cluster 33
St. John the Baptist, E. Brookfield
Mary, Queen of the Rosary, Spencer

Cluster 34
St. Mary, Brookfield
St. Joseph, N. Brookfield
Sacred Heart of Jesus, W. Brookfield

Cluster 35
St. Paul, Warren
St. Stanislaus, W. Warren
St. Thomas Aquinas, W. Warren

Cluster 36
St. Joseph, Barre
St. Thomas-a-Becket, S. Barre
St. Augustine Mission, Barre
St. Aloysius, Gilbertville

Cluster 37
Our Lady of the Angels, Worcester
St. Charles Borromeo, Worcester

Cluster 38
Our Lady of the Rosary, Worcester
St. Bernard, Worcester
St. Joan of Arc, Worcester

Cluster 39
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Worcester
St. Margaret Mary, Worcester
St. Stephen, Worcester
Notre Dame/St. Joseph, Worcester

Cluster 40
Our Lady of Loreto, Worcester
Our Lady of Lourdes, Worcester

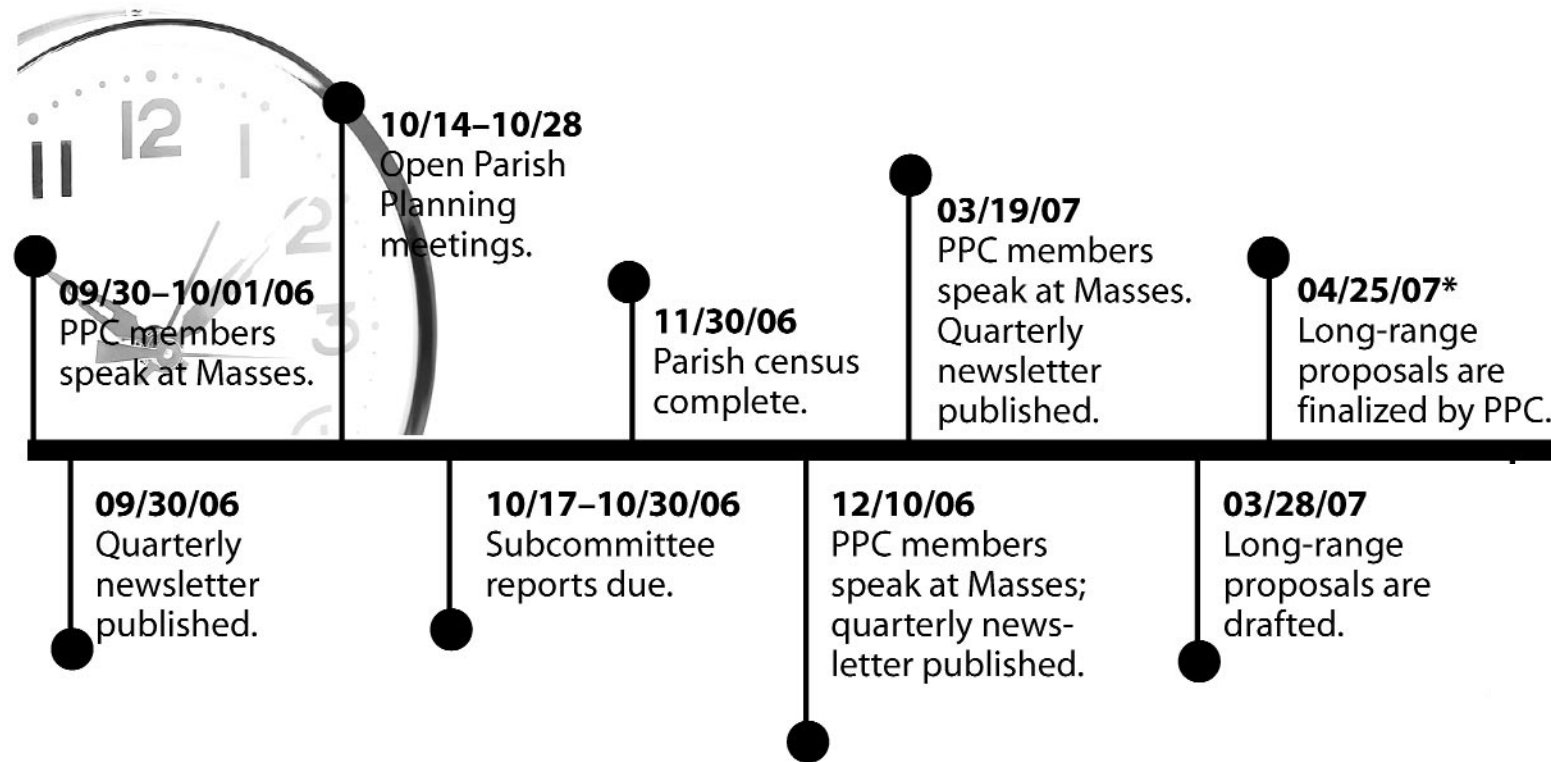
Cluster 41
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Worcester
St. Catherine of Sweden, Worcester

Cluster 42
St. John, Worcester
Ascension, Worcester
St. Casimir, Worcester
Our Lady of Vilna, Worcester
Our Lady of Czestochowa,

Cluster 43
St. Peter, Worcester
Holy Name of Jesus, Worcester
St. Andrew the Apostle, Worcester

Cluster 44
St. Paul Cathedral, Worcester
Blessed Sacrament, Worcester
Our Lady of Fatima, Worcester
Immaculate Conception, Worcester
Our Lady of Good Counsel, W. Boylston

PROPOSED PARISH TIMELINE



Note: * Long-range proposal to be finalized by April 25, 2007 will include the parish model we will follow, the proposals for the buildings and grounds, and the proposal for staffing.

** The interim long-range proposal: how we will function from approval of the long-range plan until implementation.

PPC MEMEBERS & SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS/EMAIL CONTACTS

Evangelization

Deb Wenger: dcwenger99@yahoo.com
Tom Starr: TMStarr@gmail.com

Evaluates how each parish welcomes new members. Responsible for doing a census in both parishes during the month of November. Ensures that all are welcome.

Liturgy

Steve Sonia: snsonia@erols.com
Mary Ann Zayka: craftermom0905@msn.com

Charged with evaluating all aspects of our liturgical life. Will also carefully examine and evaluate our worship space and make recommendations where improvement is needed.

Religious Education

Loretta DiPietro: dipietro@aol.com
Alice Gaffney: agaffney@comcast.net

Responsible for reviewing all of our faith formation programs, including sacramental preparation programs, religious ed classes, teacher training. Will also report on space needs.

Service

Maria Walton: PIEWALT@Yahoo.com
Sharon Shepela: sashepela@aol.com

Evaluate the parish's commitment to social charity and the works of justice and peace. Evaluate the efforts made by both parishes to respond to needs of the human family.

Pastoral Planning Committee

Father Dennis O'Brien
DJPaulinus@aol.com

Saint Francis Xavier Parish
Bob Alzapiedi
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Denny Mahoney
mahoneydp@comcast.net
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Saint Theresa Parish
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suzanne@tphazel.com

Mary Keville
marykeville@charter.net
mary.keville@umassmed.edu

Rich Walsh
richardwalsh@charter.net



Buildings & Grounds

Joe Theriault: Joseph.ralph@terriau.org
David Pelland: Dave@thepellands.com

Evaluate all buildings/properties owned by both parishes. Attempt to evaluate the potential for expansion of either or both churches. Develop ongoing maintenance plan.

Community Life

Carol Lee Tonge: 8whitelane@charter.net
Mary Jo White: maryjo.white@umassmed.edu

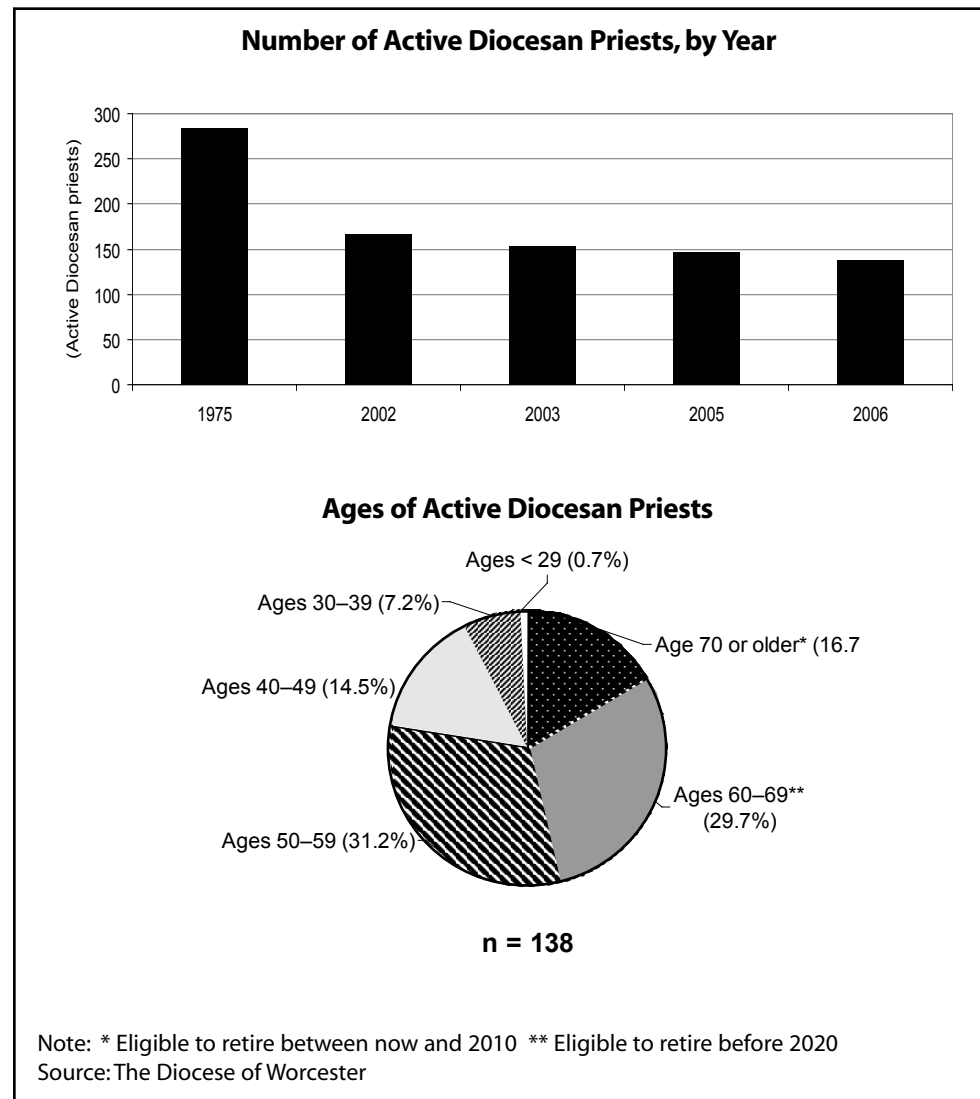
Will evaluate all aspects of our life together and the opportunities that we provide for people to get to know one another better and to feel they truly belong to the parish.

Plans the annual budget for each of the parishes; it oversees the management of the financial aspects of parish life. Reports annually to parishioners on parish resources.

Finance

Rick Walsh: richardwalsh@charter.net
Dan Gaffney: dgaffney@comcast.net

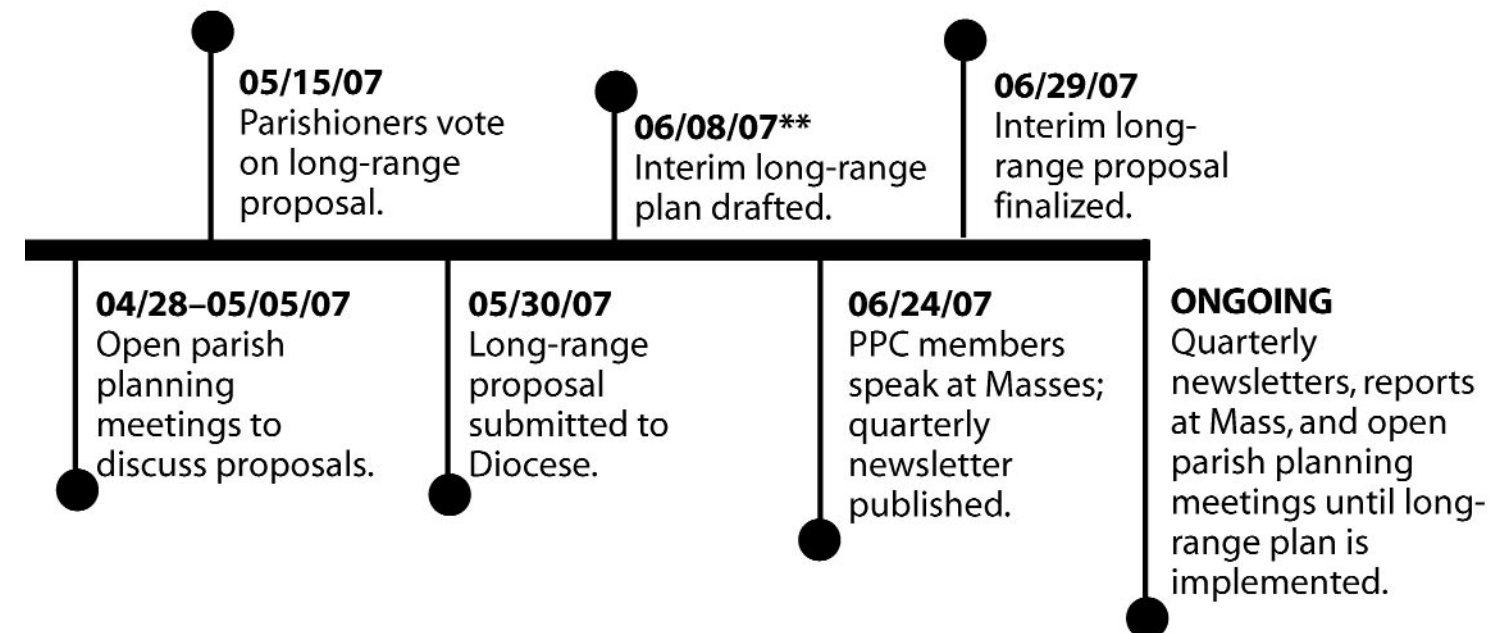
THE PROBLEM



More planning is needed at the diocesan level to ensure that the current number of clusters planned can be supported by the anticipated availability of priests. As a follow up to this meeting, we will ask for a meeting with the Bishop to review our work to date and to seek more information about the future plan for the Diocese.

- Lastly, the Committee developed a list of six alternative parish models. This list is a modification of planning information that was provided by the Diocese, and some of these models have already been implemented by other parishes already affected by the priest shortage. The centerfold of this newsletter describes these six models for you to review. The committee has also begun a list of pros and cons with regard to each model. These six models will be further explained and discussed at the parish meetings on October 15 in order to give parishioners the opportunity to give input with regard to each model.

Perhaps you can think up another model we could follow. Certainly all of us can find more pros and cons with regard to each model. This is what we hope to hear about and discuss at the parish meeting on October 15. Please be sure to come and voice your opinions.



Alternative Parish Model Approaches

— The Pros & Cons —

Model A — Multi-Parish Pastor
(One pastor for two parishes)

One priest is assigned to be the pastor of more than one parish. The parishes maintain their individual canonical status and are separate communities of faith. This model is sometimes called the "twinning" of parishes. Each parish may have its own separate staff, some staff positions can be shared, or all staff positions can be shared among the parishes in the cluster.

Diocesan examples: St. Pius X and St. Joseph, Leicester; St. Denis and St. Anne, Ashburnham

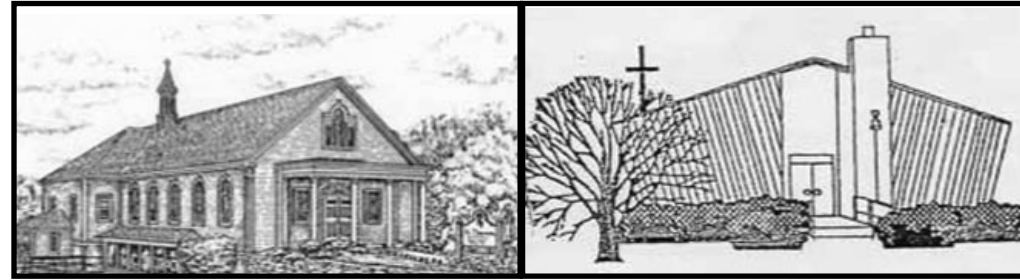
Model A: Multi-Parish Pastor	
Strengths	Weaknesses
No capital cost	Fewer Masses available with one priest
Maintains distinct communities	Overcrowding at Masses
	May result is loss of parishioners
	Space will be an issue for large celebrations (e.g., holidays)
	May require more lay staff
	Strain on priest
	Could impact finances

Model B — Multi-Parish Team
(Continue with two parishes, all staffed is shared and serve as a team with the pastor.)

Like Model A, the distinct parishes remain intact, but pastoral responsibility for two or more parishes is assigned to a team. The team may be one of priests (fewer in number than the number of parishes), deacons, religious, and laity. Each parish maintains its separate identity with its own parish council and other structures, but all the team members serve all the parishes. Sometimes one member of the team may have responsibility for a particular parish.

Diocesan examples: Our Lady Immaculate (with Our Lady Queen of Heavens Mission) and St. Francis, Athol and St. Peter's, Petersham

Model B: Multi-Parish Team	
Strengths	Weaknesses
No capital cost	Fewer Masses available with one priest
Maintains distinct communities	Overcrowding at Masses
	May result is loss of parishioners
	Space will be an issue for large celebrations (e.g., holidays)
	May require more lay staff
	Strain on priest
	Could impact finances
	Lose sense of parish identity over time



Model C — Merged Parish
(Could include new building or expansion of current buildings)

A merger takes place when two or more parishes join together to form a new or consolidated parish. The new canonical parish, usually with a new name, obtains the assets as well as the liabilities of the parishes that formed it. A merger may center all parish activities at one site or continue to use two or more building sites. A merged parish may also build a new church in a new location.

Diocesan example: Mary Queen of the Rosary, Spencer

Model C: Merged Parish	
Strengths	Weaknesses
With larger space can accommodate large liturgies, fewer Masses	Parishes lose sense of identity
Kinder on priests	Capital cost
Addresses priest shortage	If building new church the choice of location is difficult
Economical	Loss of intimacy of smaller church
More parishioners to share ministry	
Better youth programs	

Model D — Mission

A mission church is not a separate parish, but a church serving a community of people who are under the pastoral care of a particular parish. Although a mission church has its own name and may keep its own sacramental records, ordinarily all aspects of its administration are the responsibility of the pastor of the parish to which the mission is attached.

Diocesan example: St. Vincent de Paul, Baldwinville and St. Martin, Otter River

Model D: Mission Parish	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Consolidates administration	Fewer Masses at mission church
No capital costs	Strain on pastor
Maintains identity of the mission church	Loss of financial independence
	Over time, loss of identity

Model E — Lay Minister/Circuit Rider Priest Model

Although this model is not among those identified by the diocese, it was recommended as part of the cluster discussion last year. Parishes under this model would maintain the current status as individual parishes. A qualified and trained lay minister, employed by the parish, would be responsible for the administration of the parish, while the spiritual needs would be serviced by a priest who would schedule himself to meet the sacred and liturgical needs of the parish, when available. The priest might service many parishes in this manner.

Model E: Lay Minister/Circuit Rider Parish	
Strengths	Weaknesses
No capital cost	Fewer Masses; may have some Communion services
Maintains each community	Cost of lay administrator
More lay involvement	May lose parishioners

Model F — Close One Parish
Close one church. Allow impacted parishioners to choose a nearby church on their own.

Model F: Close One Parish	
Strengths	Weaknesses
No capital cost	Loss of parish community
	Unclear where assets would go



Perhaps you can think up another model we could follow? Certainly all of us can find more pros and cons with regard to each model. This is what we hope to hear about and discuss at the parish meeting on **October 15**. Please be sure to come and voice your opinions. We want you in the loop, and we need you to successfully plan our future together.