

Auburn-N. Cayuga Planning Team  
 Minutes from February 15, 2018  
 St. Francis, Auburn (Nacca Hall)

**Attendance**

Present: **Holy Family:** Liza Kelly, Fr. John Gathenya, **Our Lady of the Snow:** Fr. Bill Darling, Edward O’Neil, **Sacred Heart/St. Ann:** Fr. Michael Brown, Patrick Dooley, Kim Guinnip (alternate for Fr. Brown), **Ss. Mary and Martha, St. Mary’s:** Fr. Frank Lioi, Fr. Erick Vilorio, **Ss. Mary and Martha:** Dan Szozda, James Malinowski, **St. Alphonsus:** Fr. Tim Niven, Lisa Ann Homic, Nancy Camardo, **St. Mary’s:** Joseph Manning, **St. Joseph School:** Anne Marie Duffy, **Staff representatives:** Shawn Gillen-Caryl, Aaron Wilson, **Diocesan staff:** Karen Rinefierd

Excused: **Holy Family:** Robert Ringwood, **Our Lady of the Snow:** Diane Case, **Sacred Heart/St. Ann:** Frank DeOrio, **St. Mary’s:** Ed Fenzl, **Diocesan staff:** Tom Kubus

<b>Previous Action Items</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>
Compile list of fundraisers (which ones are held and when) for one’s own parish	Business managers/ bookkeepers	done— needs to be distributed
Compile list of the ministries at one’s own parish with a brief description of each	Pastors to delegate to someone at their parish(es)	11/20
Compile how many contributed through envelopes at each parish in 2016/17	Tom	10/26
Post finalized minutes and data already gathered on shared website	Karen to Jerome Brabant	ongoing
Ensure that documents posted on the website are also available in parish offices	Karen	ongoing
Provide information about diocesan vocation efforts	Karen	
Each parish’s pastoral and finance councils meet to discuss 9 scenarios and generate additional advantages and disadvantages of each	Pastoral and finance councils	done
Prepare summary and complete reports of the Ministry Assessment Survey results	Karen, Tom	done
Send to Karen the dates of upcoming pastoral and finance council meetings	Fr. Brown, Fr. Darling, Fr. Gathenya, Fr. Niven	done
Draft letter to Bishop Matano regarding proposed future parish configuration	Fr. Lioi	done
Suggest any needed changes to the draft letter	All	done
Send finalized letter to the Bishop	Fr. Lioi	done

Draft a bulletin article to communicate the parish configuration recommendation by the planning team	Karen	2/19
Provide someone to take notes at future planning team meetings	The hosting parish	Ongoing
<b>New Action Items from this meeting</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>
Revise the template for creating a Mass scenario	Karen	ASAP
Create a Mass scenario and send to Karen	Planning team members	2/28
Use the ministry summary reports and the accompanying worksheet to prioritize ministries at the next pastoral council meeting (may also use with finance council); send completed worksheet to Karen for use of planning team	Pastors and pastoral council/ finance council reps	6/1

**Opening Prayer:** Prayer for Guidance

**Distribution of information gathered since last meeting**

- Ministry assessment reports
- Comments from parishioners who filled out the ministry assessment survey last fall
- Worksheet to be used by the pastoral councils and, where desired, the finance councils
- Travel time between churches

**Update regarding Parish Configuration Recommendation to Bishop Matano**

- Karen: Individual letters were prepared by Bishop Matano and either distributed tonight or sent out to each participant on this planning team. He wanted to personalize his gratitude for the effort involved. In a conversation with Karen he praised Fr. Lioi for the article that recently appeared in *The Citizen*.
- There was agreement to share with parishioners the parish configuration recommended to Bishop Matano and his response in the March 3/4 bulletins.
- We leave it up to the individual Pastors to decide if they also want to announce the future parish configuration from the pulpit the weekend of March 3-4.
- There will be more regular bulletin articles over the next two months – sharing the results of the ministries assessment survey, information about our current weekend Mass schedules, the process of reaching decisions about Mass schedules utilizing 4 priests, advertising the upcoming parishioner meetings, etc.

**Determining a future weekend Mass schedule utilizing four priests**

- The planning team has been gathering information about each of our Masses, church seating capacity, etc. since last fall. In November we had an initial discussion about the practical considerations and principles that should guide the selection of one particular Mass schedule over another.
- Proposal: aim to determine a 12-Mass weekend schedule (3 Masses per weekend for each priest- 4 priests) – discussion and decision
  - Need to remember that priests also preside at funerals/weddings on Saturdays as well as a Saturday Mass of Anticipation.
  - Need to come up with best possible Mass schedule that will last the long term, not just for the interim while we go through this transition.
  - Is a 12-Mass schedule doable?

- Fr. Lioi: has no problem with doing 3 Masses on Sundays, 4 per weekend including the Saturday Mass of Anticipation.
- Fr. Brown: concern that a revised Mass schedule can affect incoming revenue and attendance.
- Fr. John: back home (in Kenya) priests say 4 to 5 Masses each weekend.
- Canon law stipulates that for pastoral reasons a priest can say three Masses on a Sunday. Some commentators include the Saturday anticipated Masses among these three. Other commentators take the three Masses on a Sunday at face value.
- Fr. Lioi clarified why canon law was written to limit the number of Masses that a priest could say on any one day. He said that in days gone by, a priest could get a stipend for every Mass he said. The more he said, the more stipends he received. To eliminate that abuse, canon law restricted the number of Masses a priest could say on any given day. Today, priests are paid a fixed salary and are not dependent on the number of Masses said.
- Fr. Lioi: said creating a viable Mass schedule is much different for 6 churches (St. Mary's, St. Francis, St. Hyacinth, St. John, St. Joseph, St. Patrick) than for 4 churches (Holy Family, St. Alphonus, Sacred Heart, St. Ann).
- Fr. Darling: said that we should look at what serves the people well to create a vibrant Mass for the people.
- Fr. Lioi suggested that each cluster figure out its own Mass schedule.
- Karen noted that the task of revising the Mass schedule was given to the planning team as a whole. We should not base the Mass schedule on our current priests. Also, it may be advantageous to pay attention to the times and locations of Masses across the entire area when setting the final Mass schedule.
- Decision: When planning team members prepare their own Mass scenario to propose to the planning team, they may choose to include anywhere from 12 to 16 Masses across the Auburn-N. Cayuga area. They may also choose to submit only a scenario for the cluster to which their own parish will belong or one for each of the two future clusters.
- At the beginning of the meeting Karen had passed out a "template for weekend Mass schedule scenarios." This template had only 6 Masses in the column for each future cluster. Karen will revise and email a new template to each planning team member.
- Karen explained the "priest A or B" column on the template. We know that two priests will serve in each of the two clusters. By indicating on the Mass schedule you create which Masses on a given weekend will be celebrated by Priest A and which by Priest B, we can ensure that there is sufficient time for each priest to get from one church to another. The two priests of a cluster would not always preside at the same Masses but they would rotate between the schedules for Priest A and Priest B on whatever basis the two priests determine (e.g. weekly, biweekly, monthly).
- Other discussion
  - One planning team member commented about the travel times and distance between Auburn churches and St. Patrick's church in Cato.
  - Karen explained how to use the "travel time between churches" handout. When seeking to figure out the distance between any two of our churches, find one of them down the left side and the other across the top. Go down the column and across the row to learn the distance and the travel time.
  - A question was put to Fr. Lioi regarding if the rotation of Mass times between St. Francis and St. Francis every 6 months was a problem. Fr. Lioi responded that it was

not anymore than usual, but with the 3 more churches of “Our Lady of the Snow” in the mix, who knows?

- One member from Ss. Mary and Martha added that originally the rotation seemed to be a problem but it got better as time went on.
  
- Discussion of Appendix 1 “principles & practical consideration list” (ones which other parishes have adopted as they went through a process to revise their weekend Mass schedules) and decision regarding which principles and practical considerations will guide the selection of our new weekend Mass schedule
  
- Discussion
  - Faith Formation times could affect Mass time considerations.
  - Do we need to ensure sufficient room for parking? No.
  - We need to safeguard Masses that are most attended and bring in the most donations. With Mass time changes, both attendance and collections may decline initially but sometimes over time they stabilize.
  - Collection envelopes put in the basket at other churches come back to the home church. It might be good to encourage parishioners to set up automatic payments so that they can attend any church and the donation always goes to their home church. Even when parishioners are away, their home parish would receive their regular offertory amount.
  - Does the collection from the one Mass at St. John’s (Port Byron) cover the expenses? Because Our Lady of the Snow is a merged parish, all finances are together and not divided up between the 3 churches.
  
- Decision: the following principles and practical considerations were agreed to:
  - Enhance the participation of the faithful.
  - Minimize the disruption to parishioners in their current Mass attendance patterns as much as possible given the challenge of fewer Masses.
  - Pay attention to liturgical ministries, especially the existence of strong choirs or music groups. Where possible, choose vibrant music over weaker options.
  - Allow the largest number of parishioners to attend Mass at more convenient, popular Mass times.
  - Allow sufficient time for the priest to travel between sites for Masses, including in winter weather.
  - Allow sufficient time for the priest to prepare for Mass and to interact with parishioners afterward.
  - The Mass schedule may affect the times for Sunday morning faith formation sessions, but families will be able to participate in both Mass and religious education.
  - Pay attention to the potential impact on the Offertory. Anticipate that Mass attendance may decline – at least initially. Consider how that will affect the Offertory.

- What is the advisability of an additional Mass, a regional Sunday evening Mass with each priest presiding once every 4 weeks?

Discussion

- The 5 pm Sunday Mass at St. Alphonsus should be shared since large numbers of people from different churches attend.
  - By the same token, the first Sunday morning Mass at 7:00 am and the last Sunday morning Mass at 12 noon at St. Mary's could also be considered regional Masses, since some of those attending are from various churches.
  - Fr. Niven asked that the 5 pm Sunday Mass at St. Alphonsus be shared among the 4 priests.
  - It was noted that some other Sunday evening Masses in other parts of the diocese where priests share presiding and preaching, there might also be a sharing of liturgical ministers including cantors and musicians.
  - The new Emmaus youth ministry, which reaches out to youth from all of our parishes, has been connected to the Sunday evening Mass. The hope is that we will build to where once monthly teens take all of the liturgical roles.
  - Fr. John: We might want to think of the Sunday evening Mass not as a regional Mass but a Mass for the youth even though the youth come from different churches.
  - It is good for the youth to have different priests saying the Mass on a revolving basis and to see their own priests presiding.
  - Fr. Darling: We should schedule in such a way as to enhance the participation of the faithful.
  - Youth may generally go to Mass with their parents at other times and maybe come one time a month to the youth Mass (with or without their parents).
  - Some parents and other adults like the more lively music at Sunday evening Masses focused toward youth as it is different and can attract them, too.
  - Is it too much to ask priests to preside at 4 weekend Masses (plus funerals and weddings) and then once a month do an additional Sunday evening Mass?
- Decision: The Sunday evening Mass will be a regional Mass and not part of the 12-18 Masses designated for particular churches within the two future clusters.
  - **Action item:** Each planning team member will review all the information we have gathered about our current Masses and then create a Mass scenario that best meets the principles and practical considerations agreed upon tonight. There may be anywhere between 6 and 8 Masses per cluster, the scenario may include a rotation of Mass locations. Please get these to Karen by February 28 so she has time to put them all into one spreadsheet and planning team members can come prepared to the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting where we will choose two or three Mass scenarios to present to parishioners for consideration and their input. At our May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting we will review the input from parishioners and work toward agreement on a Mass schedule to go into effect when fewer priests are available to serve our parishes.

### **Next steps with the Ministry Assessment Reports**

- Each planning team member was given the summary report of the responses of all those who completed the survey as well as the summary report(s) for his/her own parish and, where applicable, the individual churches. These reports will be posted to the website.
- Comments received were all compiled into a single document. Negative comments referring to a particular individual were deleted but shared with the appropriate pastor.
- Karen went over the worksheet and instructions for pastoral councils as they review and work with the report(s) from their own parish:
  - The materials handed out particular to each parish should be reviewed at the next pastoral council meeting.
  - Look at what is important to your parish and identify the top five areas in importance for your community.
  - Then identify the areas your parish wants to improve (based on what your parishioners indicated through the survey and your own observations) and/or which new ministries you want to begin. Pick up to 5 (can be less than 5).
  - Use the second page to discuss and work through the areas you identified for improvement and the third page to do the same for any new ministries you are considering.
  - Send the completed worksheets to Karen.
  - The planning team will not work with the worksheets until the June meeting (date TBD).
  - Karen: besides the pastoral councils you can have your finance councils review these too, depending on the pastor's preference.
  - Fr. Brown: what if you have more than one pastoral council? Each can do this work separately—the pastor can decide.

**Next meeting:** is Wednesday, March 7, at 6:45 pm, at St. John, Port Byron

**Closing prayer:** "Our Father"

Meeting adjourned at 8 pm.