

Cluster Planning and Coordination Team Meeting

July 25, 2007

The meeting commenced at 7 p.m. with a welcome and get acquainted introduction by Fr. Vince Hawk.

The "No Longer Strangers" prayer began a period of reflection and discussion.

After one-on-one sharing, several areas of concern were discussed by the entire group. They were future priest availability, potential of parishioner loss, financial stability and solvency, the distance factor, group acceptance, the future of the clustering program, effect on youth, the need for the education of parishioners, and evangelization. The need for communication between clustered parishes was also addressed. Fr. James Cassidy emphasized the need for cluster identity. Fr. Hawk asked that the group keep in mind the Ashland University ministry as well as area nursing homes, hospitals, etc.

The "hopes and dreams" segment of discussion addressed ideas and opportunities afforded by working together. Better Eucharistic liturgies, enhancement and expansion of social groups, combination of talents, and a cluster newsletter were mentioned. Fr. Hawk stressed the need for imagination and outreach.

Bishop Lennon's DVD was shown. The realities of population out migration, church finances, and the availability of priests were told. Re-evangelization, enhanced worship, the coordination of mass schedules and staffing, and shared ministries are plans for moving our Church forward. Bishop Lennon reminded us that we are trying to carry on the mission of Christ.

A review of the evening's program emphasized re-evangelization, mass attendance, the importance of Eucharist, and a strong Catholic presence in our area. The group reconsidered the four challenges presented earlier in a letter from the Bishop:

- Continue to explore collaborative possibilities to strengthen pastoral care in an equitable manner.
- Consider how best to staff these parishes in light of the financial realities.
- Strengthen evangelization and the social and community services that serve the poor and surrounding area.
- Engage all of our faithful in regularly attending and participating in the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy.

The meeting ended on a hopeful note with a closing prayer. The next meeting will be August 22nd at St. Stephen Church in West Salem. Subsequent meetings will be on the 4th Wednesday of each month.

Eleanor Chapman