



MOST REVEREND
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November 14, 2011

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Vernon Deanery,

With heartfelt thanks, I express my appreciation to the clergy, religious and laity who have studied and discussed the pastoral needs of the parishes in your deanery. This was not an easy task. It is difficult to put aside our own interests and make decisions based solely on the well-being of the diocese. It is evident from the reports containing the recommendations from the three clusters in your deanery that the parish representatives maintained their focus in achieving the goal.

Be assured that the recommendations submitted to me were very seriously considered. However, it became necessary to make some adjustments in the parish clusters. The result, I believe, is a plan to restructure the deanery in a way that meets the spiritual and pastoral needs of the clergy, religious and faithful.

In a special way, I join with you in thanking Sister Elissa Rinere, C.P., J.C.D., the Director of the Diocesan Office of Pastoral Planning, for directing and coordinating this effort. Many of you have spoken highly of her ability and the assistance that Sister provides. The diocese is blessed by her many gifts and her ministry.

The results of the committee recommendations and the administrative consultations on those recommendations have resulted in the following arrangements.

Cluster One: St. Luke, Ellington; St. Edward the Confessor, Stafford Springs; All Saints, Somersville

Based on the study of your final report and recommendations, these three parishes are approved to function as a cluster. Your task is to focus on areas of collaboration among your parishes in order to prepare for eventual yoking. In your final report, your cluster expressed a special concern for the future of St Edward School. Please continue to have this concern as a special focus of your collaboration. The future of Saint Joseph Mission in Staffordville is to be determined by St. Edward Parish, pending required permissions from the Bishop.

At the present time, the current staffing of these three parishes will not change. In order to emphasize the newness of this collaborative venture, I suggest that the cluster adopt a name different from any of the parish names, in order to give identity to the cluster. For instance, the name "Corpus Christi Community" has been adopted by the three-parish cluster in Willimantic.

Cluster Two and Cluster Three: St. Bernard, Rockville; St. Matthew, Tolland; St. Joseph, Rockville; Sacred Heart, Vernon; St. Maurice, Bolton

In studying Clusters II and III, we found it necessary, for the benefit of the parishes, to make some adjustments to the original cluster arrangements. We concluded that the parishes of Saint Bernard and Saint Matthew, the largest in the area, would be able to benefit smaller parishes by working together with them.

Consequently, the newly arranged cluster will consist of the parishes of **Saint Bernard, Saint Matthew, Sacred Heart, and Saint Joseph**. The pastors of these parishes have been consulted and have agreed to these arrangements.

For the time being, the staffing of these four parishes will not change. The task of this cluster is to focus on areas of collaboration in order to prepare for eventual yoking, as that becomes necessary.

The remaining parish, Saint Maurice, will not be assigned to a cluster. However, Saint Maurice Parish is expected to collaborate with its neighbor parishes in all appropriate areas.

Sister Elissa Rinere will soon be in touch with the Dean and the pastors of the deanery to set out a plan for the work which now begins.

All of us realize the sacrifices and adjustments required by our clergy and by the faithful in this work of planning for our future. This process is about what we can do together. Our response to these changes must emanate from our love for the Lord in the Eucharist, our desire for the Sacraments, and our thirst for the proclamation of the Gospel.

With sincere gratitude to the clergy, religious and laity who have brought us to this moment in our history as a diocese, we invoke the intercession of our diocesan patrons, Saint Patrick and St. Anne. We seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we begin this new chapter in the life of our diocese.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Bishop of Norwich

NOTE: The goal of collaboration is the elimination of all unnecessary duplication of effort within a cluster. In all instances in which parishes are directed to collaborate with one another, the following list of activities will serve as a starting point.

Support of any parish schools

Faith Formation for children and adults, including sacramental preparation

Seasonal prayer services and celebrations

Devotional programs

Social events

Purchasing parish and office supplies

Coordination of Mass schedules

Coordination of hospital and nursing home calls