

Trusting in the Spirit – Update 9/13-14/2008

Today we want to provide the parishioners of St. Michael, St. Patrick and St. Thomas the Apostle the planning of our parish cluster implementation team to achieve the Bishop's goals for our parishes and parish families to the future.

Our **Mission Statement**, "Our parish cluster of St. Michael, St. Patrick and St. Thomas the Apostle will plan for the implementation of the *Guided by the Spirit* Directives and to best utilize our resources. Regardless of the challenges, we will always strive to build a more vibrant Catholic Community within our cluster.

Our **Value Statements**, "Our parish cluster of St. Michael, St. Patrick and St. Thomas the Apostle, cherishes and values:

- Living the Gospel message
- Faithfulness to our Catholic tradition
- Vocational discernment for all
- Stewardship of our time, talent, and treasure
- Full, active, and conscious participation in liturgical celebrations
- Compassionate outreach
- Life-long faith formation for all
- Exemplary Catholic education for all our children
- Access to St. Michael's Catholic School
- Fiscal responsibility
- Respect for all people and all creation

Our Vision,

Our parish cluster of St. Michael, St. Patrick and St. Thomas the Apostle is striving to become a community made up of many small welcoming communities of people who are learning together to live vibrant faith-filled lives. The Catholic learning community thrives on its sacramental life centered in the Eucharist, other life-giving prayer experiences, and various forms of devotion.

Adults are engaged in lifelong faith formation in Catholic Christian life. Parishioners of all ages are involved in various forms of leadership development as they become

Disciples of Christ in the world. They are energized to witness to the Gospel, be good stewards of the earth's resources and work together to create a Christian world.

Parents are actively involved in the formal formation of their children and youth. All family members participate in catechetical programs both in the parishes and through the school.

At this time there are no immediate plans for the merger of St. Patrick and St. Michael with a linkage to St. Thomas the Apostle. This merger and linkage will only occur when there is one pastor available to serve all three parishes. When this is identified, then an administrator would be named to serve St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Patrick and St. Michael would merge to form a new parish identity. To further stress, there are no plans to close any of the three parish churches, the parish communities would plan together to maintain the churches as long as it was feasibly possible.

The implementation team received information last week from the Diocesan Implementation Commission which identified that there will be twelve mergers of parishes within the Madison Diocese within the next one to four years. St. Patrick and St. Michael were not identified in this grouping.

The parish cluster implementation team has identified five goals to which our parish cluster will work together towards building our parish community. Each of these goals will have a committee formed, either an existing one or creating a new one, which will have representatives from all three parishes, with oversight from one member of the parish cluster implementation team. These committees will have goals identified along with timelines for their completion. By working together collaboratively it will strengthen the relationships of our three parishes and when/if a merger/linkage is identified, we will be in a position to transition to maintain our vibrant catholic community.

The parish cluster implementation team, along with the Diocesan Implementation Commission and Bishop Morlino values and respects that parishioners have concerns on the losing of their parish church. It is not our intent as we move to the future in our planning to destroy your rich history that your families have developed through the years with your parish church. We want

to move to the future to ensure that this rich cultural history is maintained and carried on and not destroyed and forgotten.

Following are the five goals along with the committee and the parish cluster implementation team member.

Goal #1: Pray and do all you can to increase vocations to ordained, consecrated life, and lay ministry.

Vocations Committee – Rick Mills, St. Michael

Goal #2: Improve the quality of religious education in parish programs and in our Catholic school, including adult religious education programs.

Faith Formation – Cindy Fischer, St. Patrick

Goal #3: Create evangelization processes in line with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' guidelines for St. Michael, St. Patrick and St. Thomas the Apostle.

Parish Life & Stewardship – Barb Taylor, St. Michael & Sharon Sellner, St. Patrick

Goal #4: Move in the direction of implementation of QuickBooks and ParishSOFT in each parish within our cluster.

Ray Ostertag – St. Patrick

Goal #5: To act as good stewards of all human, financial and facility resources, that will be needed for the restructuring and to adapt to our new model.

Thomas Rabaglia – St. Patrick and Leo Cross – St. Thomas the Apostle

In closing, we will be seeking volunteers from all three parishes to come forward and make a commitment to be a member of one of the identified committees that will help us plan to the future for our parish cluster. These committees will play a vital role in how we continue to work

on our Annual Cluster Implementation Plan. The cluster implementation team will report back to the Diocesan Implementation Commission by May 15, 2009, on our goals and how we are meeting them.

We will now open the floor for any questions that you may have of us.

We do want to thank you for your time today, and we will continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us for right judgment and courage, and make us firm in our baptismal decision to follow Jesus' way of love as we continue to plan for the future for St. Michael, St. Patrick and St. Thomas the Apostle.