

Diocese of Trenton COHORT 18 (Monmouth County)

Mother of Mercy (Asbury Park)

Saint Anselm’s (Wayside)

Church of the Holy Innocents (Neptune)



RESPONSE

COHORT PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE FORM

DUE: October 1, 2016

COUNTY: MONMOUTH

COHORT 18

PARISHES

~~Church of the Ascension~~

Mother of Mercy

St. Anselm

Holy Innocents

CITIES

~~Bradley Beach (moved to Cohort 19)~~

Asbury Park

Wayside

Neptune

SCHOOLS

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Holy Innocents

OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Jersey Shore Medical Center

Preliminary Recommendation from the Diocesan Planning Commission:

After reflecting on Bishop O’Connell’s goals and criteria for *Faith in Our Future*, your Cohort Evaluation, your Parish Evaluations, your Data Verification Forms and Parish Summary Forms, we respectfully disagree in part with your suggestions and we make the following preliminary recommendations:

- **Model Three: Merged Parishes** among Ascension, St. Rose (Cohort 19) and St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Cohort 19) at the St. Rose site, no later than July, 2018, pending a structural review and maintenance appraisal. There will be an additional worship site at Ascension or St. Elizabeth of Hungary that will be evaluated every two years based on usage, finances, etc.

Subsequent to a meeting between the Church of the Ascension and the Churches of Cohort 19, it was determined the Church of the Ascension would request a transition to that said Cohort and pursue a possible Linked Parish Model with Saint Elizabeth of Hungary.

- **Model One: Collaborative Parishes** among Mother of Mercy, Holy Innocents and St. Anselm’s and focus on the following areas which you noted on your suggestion form:
 1. Seek to expand and develop youth programs in a collaborative way utilizing facilities and personnel. **There is a very strong need at one or more of our Cohort parishes for the collaboration, development, and expansion of Youth Programs involving sports, music, retreats, social events, service projects, and youth catechesis, to name a few. This will serve increased numbers of young people in a cross-Cohort youth ministry, furthering opportunities for growth, friendship, and learning. Independently there is existing strength at differing levels for youth programs in each of our Cohort parishes. Our goal is to study the individual programs and determine a common vision toward a cross-Cohort youth ministry. Facilities, grounds, and personnel will be shared, and financial savings should benefit. Research regarding other successful parish youth ministries beyond our Cohort, will be a part of this future vision, as well as advertising to sister parishes in our Deanery and beyond once the program is established and thriving.**

2. Create a cross-reference matrix for easy use across the Cohort for all parishioners to access information regarding all activities.
 - Creation of a Cohort reference matrix for all cross-Cohort parishioners that lists components of all 4 FioF major categories and the 9 FioF Criteria categories. This will serve as a reference of information such as Mass times, website/phone references, who has Eucharistic Adoration and when, multi-language Masses, complete ministry information, parish life activities, CCD times, outreaches such as St Vincent DePaul and the Knights of Columbus, and the like but not limited to these. This will give a collaborative view for all Cohort parishioners to use to learn of the availability of times and opportunities across the Cohort in assisting ALL of our parishioners.
 - An important component of this living document (the reference matrix) of various parish information will especially and particularly be the Mass schedules so that all parishioners in the Cohort may have the knowledge of all Cohort Mass times and take advantage of times not available in their home parish to fit the busy schedules in today's culture of life. With the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass being the focal point of parish life, the current Mass Schedules should be retained at each of our Cohort parishes for the following reasons –
 - To promote growth in Mass attendance and the return of inactive Catholics, availability and flexibility of schedules is important.
 - A fairly wide geographic Cohort; unfair to any of our parishioners to remove Mass times at their home parishes asking them to travel unwillingly.
 - In some cases, parishioners walk to their home parish; asking them to drive will cause inconvenience, and could be a deterrent to their Mass attendance.
 - Because we are in close proximity to the beaches, seasonal schedules may adjust to include additional Mass times.
 - A number of Masses are said regularly in ethnic languages, it is important to keep those available.
 - One or more of our Cohort parishes utilize retired priests that assist at many surrounding parishes; there would be a possible loss of their help if schedules were adjusted creating conflicts.
 - Mass schedule adjustment is still fresh in the lives of those who underwent the merger to Mother of Mercy in 2012; further adjustments would be disruptive.

Should circumstances such as changing demographics or decreases in parish enrollment create the need, future adjustments to Mass schedules at our Cohort Parishes may be made. In the interim, the Cohort proposes that their Pastors meet regularly to review capacity and attendance issues to determine if schedule adjustments are required.

3. Seek ways to meet the needs of Jersey Shore hospital and surrounding nursing homes in a way that spreads responsibilities so as not to burden a few parishes.
 - In the true spirit of collaboration and sharing for our ill and those hospitalized and homebound, create a regularly scheduled rotation of Pastoral Care support equally from across the entire Monmouth County Coastal Deanery to fulfill the significant need for assistance to the Catholic Chaplain with the Jersey Shore University Medical Center (JSUMC). This hospital is a Level II Trauma Center and is currently expanding with a vast and significantly large oncology ward/building which will more than double the currently stretched responsibility of Holy Innocents' two priests, presently answering anywhere from 2-18 calls per day. JSUMC is not the sole responsibility of Holy Innocents Parish. Currently, other parishes participate only when requested to cover for the priests at Holy Innocents.
 - Form a joint committee of Deanery personnel to create and carry through a formal and fairly distributed schedule of coverage for the JSUMC.
 - In addition, with nearly 160-190 Catholics per day currently at JSUMC and the pastoral care necessary at a large number of area Nursing Homes and Rehabilitation Facilities, formulate a program, training, and advertising to grow the number of laity as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist to further assist.
 - A Pastoral Care Training Program (with particular classes pertaining to hospital ministry) is requested from the Diocesan Pastoral Care Office under the direction of Deanna Sass at the Jersey Shore Area for the entire Deanery in order to encourage and train the laity in pastoral care ministry for the hospital, nursing homes, and homebound in this area. Training should also be available in Spanish.

- **Review and evaluate current nursing home coverage across the Cohort and optimize the current geographic schedule of coverage.**
4. Explore ways to both evangelize new Catholics, but also re-evangelize those who are in the community but not participating.
 - **Research and evaluate programs like the previous Renew program from the 1990's.**
 - **Solicit the involvement of the Diocesan Office of Evangelization.**
 - **Expand the current Live Christ/Share Christ catechesis program already existent in two of the Cohort parishes, to a Cohort-wide program that may be advertised to Churches beyond the Cohort with an eventual vision to a more structures and centralized program across said churches.**
 - **Create a Cohort planning team that engages the cross-Cohort Pastoral Councils and parishioner volunteers, to formulate ways of evangelization such as but not limited to creating small communities of faith (at the churches throughout the Cohort and/or solicit volunteers to offer such from their homes), sharing inactive parishioner lists and formulating a Cohort-wide communication plan to reach them, and formulating methods to stimulate and encourage current parishioners to assist in the evangelization of others and promote their greater participation in faith formation.**
 5. Your stated need for multicultural training among staff.
 - **Based upon the experiences of Mother of Mercy Parish who have successfully completed such training, this training is best given utilizing the existing Diocesan program with textbooks in locations that are convenient to and serve the Cohort and the Deanery.**
 - **Create a Cohort planning team to determine the multicultural needs across the Cohort and in the surrounding areas, and formulate the best schedule for training including locations, timing, and resources necessary.**
 - **Brainstorm hospitality events and welcoming initiatives across the Cohort to answer the needs of the various cultural groups and provide cross-cultural camaraderie.**
 - **Plan and regularly schedule multicultural Masses with Readings and Homilies in various languages rotating among Cohort parishes. Advertise to surrounding areas and Cohorts.**
 6. Have a combined plan to meet the needs of the social mission of the local community particularly as it applies to the St. Peter Claver Outreach Center.
 - **Continue the network of active and vibrant chapters of the Saint Vincent dePaul Society already existent throughout our Cohort and Deanery to service the needy in our area. The Saint Peter Claver Outreach Center under the ownership of Mother of Mercy Parish is a subset entity of the Saint Vincent dePaul Society.**
 - **Create a combined Cohort plan to promote integration of the Outreach Center and the various StVdP chapters and their particular offerings so as to help the area needy in all aspects – financial assistance, food, clothing, and furniture. Work beyond the Cohort to incorporate chapters cross-functionally within the Deanery and beyond.**
 - **The Director of the Saint Peter Claver Outreach Center may be made available to speak to the Cohort parishes to promote awareness and volunteerism.**
 7. Consider the possibility of land sales to help support the mission of the Cohort.
 - **The Church of the Holy Innocents has sold their former rectory and surrounding acreage with proceeds going toward the reduction of their outstanding debt to the Diocese.**
 - **Create a Cohort planning team consisting of staff, parishioners, Finance Committee members, Trustees, and Business Managers from each parish to formulate a 5-10 year comprehensive and strategic property analysis plan, for presentation to the Pastors, which will study possible property sales and rental opportunities. Engage the Office of Diocesan Building & Expansion.**

We further recommend that you:

1. Help Mother of Mercy and Holy Innocents parishes work on balancing their fiscal budgets for 2016-2017 as a start to set a course for a more balanced approach in the future.
 - **Create a Cohort planning team enabling the combined expertise of each Pastor, his Business Manager, and corresponding Finance Committees, in conjunction with the Diocesan Financial Director, Tony Mangarino, and financial leaders of the Diocese.**
 - **This team will brainstorm to educate each other and gain insight about budgeting and financial techniques that have worked successfully in the past either in our Cohort parishes or from demonstrated experts in their field who may be a part of said group here or others on Cohort parish staffs or parishioners. Results will be placed into practice.**
 - **Cohort parishes commit to support each other in fiscal liability by exploring and addressing cost reductions and shared services for all Cohort parishes (and possibly beyond the Cohort) through**
 - **the study of duplicate resources,**
 - **staff consolidation where appropriate,**
 - **mutual contractual agreements such as but not limited to landscaping, snow-removal, janitorial,**
 - **and creating, maintaining, and utilizing a preferred vendor list.**

2. Develop an action plan to address the long term debt service along with strategies to meet those obligations to the Diocese now and in the future.
 - **With an eye on the goal of balancing the future finances going forward and not adding to the current debt in future years, create a Cohort planning team enabling the combined expertise of each Pastor, his Business Manager, and corresponding Finance Committees, in conjunction with the Diocesan Financial Director, Tony Mangarino, and financial leaders of the Diocese, to educate each other and gain insight about debt reduction, capital campaigns, fund-raising opportunities, and other financial techniques that have worked successfully in the past either in our Cohort parishes or from demonstrated experts in their field who may be a part of said group here or others on Cohort parish staffs or parishioners.**
 - **Echo #1, third major bullet above, by researching a shared services approach, the use of common vendors, streamlining and downsizing practices, and improved utilization of existing resources.**
 - **Further debt reduction through allocation of returned funds from the Annual Catholic Appeal and the Faith-to-Move-Mountains campaigns.**

3. Identify an action plan for Holy Innocents to lessen the burden of the school's operating costs on the parish.

Further to this preliminary recommendation, keeping in mind the themes of both Schools in our Cohort, Holy Innocents and Our Lady of Mount Carmel, their future viability, and management of their operating costs, we propose and note the following -

 - **Create a Cohort planning team enabling the combined expertise of each Pastor, his Business Manager, both School Principals and School Boards, and corresponding Finance Committees, in conjunction with the financial leaders of the Diocese and the Diocesan Office of Catholic Education.**
 - **This team will study both schools' current operating costs, brainstorm savings opportunities, learn from success stories and improvement areas regarding school operations at both schools, and engage others from Saint Anselm's as well as Cohort parishes' staff and parishioners with expertise and experience in academic administration and finances. Administrative, professional, and leadership support of our Catholic Schools by all parishes in the Cohort is necessary to encourage increasing enrollment.**
 - **This team will have made at their disposal, complete and detailed reports on the two schools, current enrollments by grade level and demographic breakdown, operating budgets and income/expense reports for both schools, as well as copies of all reports from the Diocesan Office of Catholic Education on the viability of the two schools.**
 - **This team should keep in mind that Our Lady of Mount Carmel School is a magnet school for the localized Hispanic population, which tend toward more limited financial resources. Recent reductions in the Diocesan subsidization could have a serious impact on the future viability of both schools in our Cohort.**

- **Solicit any further input from the Diocesan Office of Catholic Education to promote and support these Catholic schools.**

Both of our Cohort's Catholic Schools offer sound Catholic education, are well established with respected faculties, and have many strengths. Catholic education is priceless and the best foundation for our children. These two elementary schools (K-8 and PreK3-Grade 8) offer this outstanding availability in an over 10-mile wide area for the many families to educate their children. We continue our achievement of glowing evaluations of our Catholic Schools by the Diocesan Office of Catholic Education through their reviews and their studies of enrollment and financial trends.

4. Continue to explore ways to invite and grow diverse groups' participation in the Eucharist with an eye on future enrollment in the schools as well.
 - **Create a Cohort planning team, including the advisory capacity of the cross-Cohort Pastoral Councils, to deepen the familial sense of Catholic identity by**
 - **Striving to include young families to promote evangelization, participation, and interest in conjunction with their children, and in combination with the Schools and School programs.**
 - **Planning regularly scheduled multicultural Masses with Readings and Homilies in various languages rotating among Cohort parishes. Advertise to surrounding areas and Cohorts.**
 - **Planning regularly scheduled Children's Masses involving the children in the liturgical Readings and Intercessory Prayers.**
 - **Researching and evaluating programs like the previous Renew program from the 1990's.**
 - **Expanding the current Live Christ/Share Christ catechesis program already existent in two of the Cohort parishes, to a Cohort-wide program that may be advertised to Churches beyond the Cohort with an eventual vision to a more structures and centralized program across said churches.**
 - **Soliciting the involvement of the Diocesan Office of Evangelization.**
 - **Also in conjunction, develop a planning team and formulate an action plan to expand the numbers of people in various parish ministries and across the Cohort.**

5. Convene a conversation among the leadership of Saint Rose (Cohort 19), Mother of Mercy, and Saint Mark's (Cohort 19) to identify ways of strengthening Hispanic Ministry in the area.
 - **Create a planning team among these 3 parishes to recognize the need for collaboration among their Hispanic ministries and other Hispanic religious groups in the surrounding communities of these churches.**
 - **Mother of Mercy Parish should serve as the Center of Excellence by leveraging the blessings, expertise, history, and long-standing existence of their parish with its multiple Spanish Masses, Hispanic clergy, 85% Hispanic enrollment in their School, and Hispanic ministries including youth programs, which can be utilized and grown, and fully integrated, across the area.**
 - **Develop an action plan toward the formation of a Hispanic Cultural Center or a Regional Center for Hispanic Ministry recognizing the Mother of Mercy Parish as the Regional Site.**
 - **This approach will be mindful of the needs of the Mother of Mercy Parish such as parishioner enrollment, involvement, and long-term revenue, based upon their long-standing existence in the local Hispanic community, so as to have no adverse effect on their parish or the Cohort.**

Diocesan Planning Commission's Rationale for their Preliminary Recommendation:

We make these preliminary recommendations based on your own study and data and the following:

1. Based on the request by Ascension parish to be connected with St. Elizabeth and St. Rose.
2. Your financial statements and concern in the Cohort report for planning and needed improvements to facilities.
3. Concerns expressed regarding Catholic schools support.
4. The demands of the need for addressing the Jersey Shore hospital ministry as well as the many nursing homes.
5. We believe our preliminary recommendations for models and ministries will help Cohort 18 achieve the 5 goals approved by Bishop O'Connell for *Faith in Our Future*.

COHORT CORE TEAM RESPONSE

The What

Our response to the Preliminary Recommendation is . . .

With the details presented above, in summary we foresee our future by formulating our goal to manufacture and grow the collaborative approach beginning with our Cohort parishes, formulate planning teams, and solicit participation from “experts” in our parishes and Cohort, leveraging their knowledge and experience for each of the recommended areas. Further expand the planning teams with parish and Cohort staff and volunteers. Advertise beyond the Cohort first in a “guest” sense and eventually as participants with an expanded team for each of the areas be it Youth Ministry, Evangelization practices, multi-cultural growth programs, etc.

The Why

Our reasons for this response are . . .

With complete collaboration in mind, the various programs and ministries across our Cohort can only strengthen from this collaborative partnership. Not only would there be increased participation but also a leveraging of experience, knowledge, talent, personnel (paid and volunteer), and facilities. This collaborative and “shared services” model brings exciting camaraderie to expanded groups of parishioners with common needs and visions, while also enabling good business sense and savings going forward.

For the foreseeable future of 5-10 years, our Cohort Parishes anticipate they will remain financially viable. Our Cohort Parishes are committed to assisting and supporting each other, through deepening collaboration, to constantly address the current financial issues in order to ensure on-going stability and growth (see specific responses regarding formation of joint Cohort financial teams and their recommended agendas in #7 above and #1, #2, and #3 under further recommendations regarding finances).

COHORT CORE TEAM MEMBERS (PLEASE INCLUDE SIGNATURES)

Cohort 18 Parish	Core Team Member	Signature	Date
Mother of Mercy	Father Miguel Virella	<i>F. Miguel Virella</i>	9/20/16
Mother of Mercy	Rosemary Paduano	<i>Rosemary Paduano</i>	9/20/16
Mother of Mercy	Jane Strada	<i>Jane Strada</i>	9/20/16
Mother of Mercy	Carlos Limardo	<i>Carlos Limardo</i>	09/20/16
Mother of Mercy	Gene Del Carmen	<i>Gene Del Carmen</i>	9/20/16
Saint Anselm	Father Eugene Vavrick	<i>Father Eugene Vavrick</i>	9/20/2016
Saint Anselm	Michael Bellina	<i>Michael Bellina</i>	9/20/16
Saint Anselm	Kathleen Majewski	<i>Kathleen Majewski</i>	9/20/16
Saint Anselm	Christopher Skurat	<i>Christopher Skurat</i>	9/20/16
Saint Anselm	Robert Stoute	<i>Robert Stoute</i>	9-20-16
Church of the Holy Innocents	Father H. Todd Carter	<i>F. Todd Carter</i>	9/20/16
Church of the Holy Innocents	Mary J. Chabala	<i>Mary J. Chabala</i>	9/20/2016
Church of the Holy Innocents	Pat Riordan	<i>Pat Riordan</i>	9/20/16
Church of the Holy Innocents	Anthony Scotto	<i>Anthony Scotto</i>	9/25/16

DATE: September 20, 2016

Date due: October 1, 2016

Please send the original electronically to: **Sherrie Sporek** – sspore@dioceseoftrenton.org
Thank you!