

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Building a New Parish Community

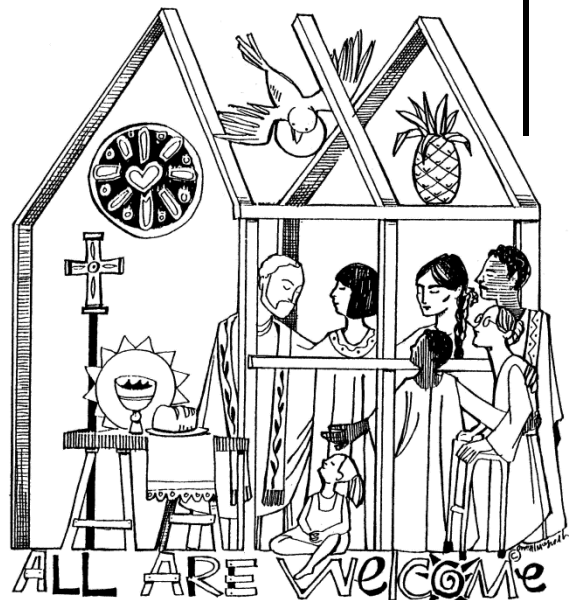


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INTRODUCTION

*Do not let your hearts be troubled.
You have faith in God, have faith also in Me.*
—John 14:1

There are many factors that bring about the need for change. Periods of change cause great pain, and those most affected will experience grief. The merging of parish communities is a difficult process that means the loss of what is familiar and much loved and the uncertainty about what lies ahead. At the same time, the coming together of parishes brings with it the sharing of many different gifts that are unique to each community, enriching all. For this reason, this time of change is also a moment of new birth and a time to rediscover the gift of being the Mystical Body of Christ. Now, more than ever, the Church community is called to look to the Lord Jesus Christ for consolation, peace and guidance. For it is in Christ that the community is held together in love. As his disciples, we are confident that if we follow him, he will lead us to the new life he is bringing about through the new parish community.

This manual, *Building a New Parish Community*, has been put together to assist you and your parish community in the process of forming a new parish. While the process of building a new parish is not identical in each situation, this manual provides the basic steps that are common to all. It is designed in a simple format that provides both a general overview of the merger process as well as the concrete details that make it happen. It begins with an at-a-glance outline of the basic movements of the transition process. This outline, found on page 2, is the guiding structure for the whole manual. Each general step listed in the outline has a section in the manual where further information is offered and action steps are laid out. This will facilitate the distribution of tasks, the organization of details and the collaboration of many people both in the parish and between parishes. While this process may be complex and involved, this organized approach can help simplify a process that seems very daunting.

Some key elements to remember in this process:

- *Make the process a prayerful one.*
- *Communicate information* and decisions frequently and consistently, informing parishioners of each parish simultaneously.
- *Collaborate and consult* with one another within the parish and between parishes throughout the entire transition process.
- *Move at a deliberate pace*, putting priority on those items that must be in place at the time of the new parish opening.
- *Prepare for emotional difficulty* and provide ways to help one another move through the grieving process.

During this time of transition, let us look to the Paschal Mystery of Christ. For it is in Christ's dying and rising that we find our confidence and hope, knowing that the pains of this transition will give way to the joy of new life in a new parish community.

Building a New Parish Community

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

1 Announcement

- Archbishop officially decrees parish mergers
- Parish merger announced to Parish Pastoral Council and staff
- Parish merger announced to parishioners at all weekend Masses and in parish Bulletin
- Office for Communication sends out News Release

2 Current Parish Committee (CPC)

- Form CPC composed of Pastor and representatives from Parish Pastoral (PPC) and Finance Councils (PFC), School, PREP and other parish leaders
- Meet regularly to facilitate a smooth transition to new parish
- Support and advise the Transition Team
- Communicate progress regularly to parishioners
- Provide opportunities to celebrate past and embrace future
- Plan Healing Prayer Service, Mass for merger of parish; other final events

3 Transition Team (TT)

- Meet regularly to facilitate a smooth transition to a new parish community
- Establish uniform method of communication to all parishioners
- Make recommendations for budget, staffing and building usage, etc.
- Determine use and scheduling of worship site
- Oversee the uniting of ministries, organizations, committees and activities
- Plan Mass for Opening of Parish

4 Action Steps

- During the transitional period, the pastors, staff of the current parishes, and TT will work together to accomplish the suggested action steps necessary for parishes to become one new parish

5 Uniting Parish Groups

- The Transition Team (TT) will delegate one person from each parish to coordinate the uniting of parish groups (ministries, organizations, committees)
 - Coordinate leadership, membership, scheduling, communication, training
- *Please note: Prioritize ministries, beginning with those needed immediately for parish opening, e.g., liturgical, catechetical*

6 Staffing the New Parish

- Decide what staff positions are needed and develop job descriptions
- Hire new staff
- Consider office space in terms of new staff's roles and relationships
- Establish interim Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council

7 Opening of New Parish

- Publicize new parish information to all parishioners, including Mass times, address changes, parish contact info, and website
- Celebrate Opening Mass for the Formal Opening of the Parish
- Host open house and other community-building events
- Pastor and Interim PPC and PFC continue to meet throughout first year
- Continue uniting all ministries, organizations, committees and activities
- Continue to integrate the ideas and practices of former parish communities into all new parish events and activities

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*Building a New  
Parish Community*

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**OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO PASTORS**

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- Archbishop Charles Chaput officially decrees parish mergers.

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**TO PARISH PERSONNEL AND COUNCILS**

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- Immediately following Archbishop Chaput’s announcement, the Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Council and Parish Staff are informed.

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**TO PARISHIONERS**

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- A letter is sent to all registered parishioners, followed by an announcement at all Masses and in the Sunday Bulletin.

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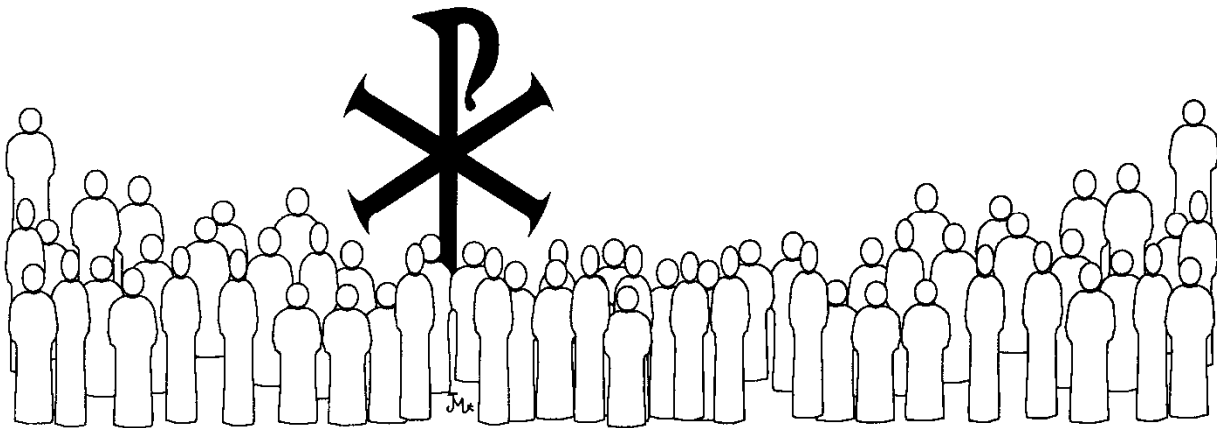
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**TO MEDIA**

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- The Office for Communication sends out a news release, and assists parish with media inquiries.



# 2

## Current Parish Committee

Each Pastor forms **Current Parish Committee (CPC)** composed of representatives from the Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Catholic School, Religious Education Program and other active parishioners.

This committee may already be in place from the In-Depth Evaluation of Parish Life process.

Representatives from CPC will be selected to serve on the **Transition Team (TT)**.

Once the new parish formation is complete, some members of this team will serve on Interim Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council.

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### Goals

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- Meet regularly during transition period to assist pastor, staff and parishioners
- Support and advise Transition Team (TT) by providing information on the unique identity of the current parish for integration into new parish community
- Communicate progress to parishioners through emails, letters, website, announcements and bulletin
- Provide opportunities for parishioners to celebrate past and embrace future
- Plan Mass for Formal Closure of Parish and other final parish events

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### Schedule Meetings

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- Set dates and times for meetings
- Frequency of meetings (weekly/monthly) is determined by length of transitional period
- To enable dialogue between committees, schedule meetings on alternate weeks/months

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### Meeting Agendas

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- Review and prioritize discussion topics listed below
- Include other topics as needed
- Meetings can cover more than one topic at a time

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### Discussion Topics

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- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication – method, uniformity</li><li>• Worship</li><li>• Buildings</li><li>• Finance</li><li>• Uniting of Ministries, Organizations, Committees</li><li>• Other concerns</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Closing Mass and Events</li><li>• Use of Healing Prayer<br/>(<i>Transform All Things in Christ</i>)</li><li>• Use of Transition Prayer<br/>(<i>Building a New Parish Community</i>)</li></ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

# Current Parish Committee

## *Sample Meeting Agenda*

### Opening Prayer and Reflection

Choose from sample Scripture readings and reflections provided

### Discussion Topics

See topics listed below

### Action steps

- Determine what information will be communicated to parishioners. How?
- Assign other tasks as needed.
  - Who is responsible?
  - How and when will they be achieved?

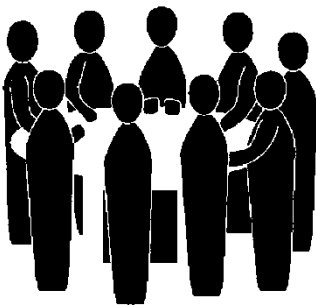
### Next Meeting

- Date
- Time
- Topics

### Closing Prayer

Building A New Parish Community – *Transition Prayer*

**Please Note:** *Since parish closures evoke feelings of grief and anger, this prayer may help to acknowledge these emotions and give people a chance to work through them. Consider ways this prayer could be prayed by all parishioners.*



### Discussion Topics

- Communication – method, uniformity
- Worship
- Buildings
- finance
- Uniting of Ministries, Organizations, Committees
- Other concerns to be reported to Transitional Team
- Use of Healing Prayer (Transform All Things in Christ) & Transition Prayer (Building a New Parish Community)
- Mass for Formal Closure and other Events

# *Suggested Opening Prayers*

**1. Reading from Scripture: Romans 12:4-5**

*“For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.”*

**Reflection Question:** It is Christ who gives the community its identity and unity.

In this time of transition, how can I keep my eyes fixed on Christ, staying firm in the hope that all that I have loved and received from my parish will find new expression in my new parish community?

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**2. Reading from Scripture: 1 Cor 12:4-7**

*“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”*

**Reflection Question:** What gifts do I see my current parish bringing to the new parish? What gifts might I be open to receive from the other parish communities?

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**3. Reading from Scripture: Eph 4:1-6**

*“I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

**Reflection Question:** How will “striving to preserve the unity of the spirit” help us in the process of integrating the many different gifts that each of the parishes will bring to the new parish community? How will the virtues of humility, gentleness, patience and love help me in the process of building a new parish community?

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**4. Reading from Scripture: Romans 6:3-11**

*“We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”*

**Reflection Question:** The Church is built on the Paschal Mystery. To what do we have to die as a community, so that we, the community, will have new life? How can we help one another do this?

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**5. Reading from Scripture: Ezekiel 36:24-28**

*“I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees. You shall be my people, and I will be your God.”*



**Reflection Question:** What newness of heart and spirit do I hope for as we become a new parish community? How will I help bring this hope to life?

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**6. Reading from Scripture: John 2:13-25**

*“At this the Jews answered and said to him, ‘What sign can you show us for doing this?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.’ The Jews said, ‘This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?’ But he was speaking about the temple of his body.”*

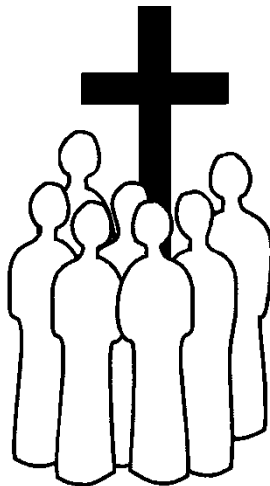
**Reflection Question:** How can I contribute to “building anew” my parish community?

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**7. Reading from Scripture: 1 Peter 2:4-5**

*“Come to the Lord, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*

**Reflection Question:** How can we as individuals and as a community, like living stones, let ourselves be built into a spiritual house?



## Building a New Parish Community *Transition Prayer*

Heavenly Father,

Your wisdom is beyond our understanding;  
surround us with your love, so that we may not be overwhelmed by our loss.

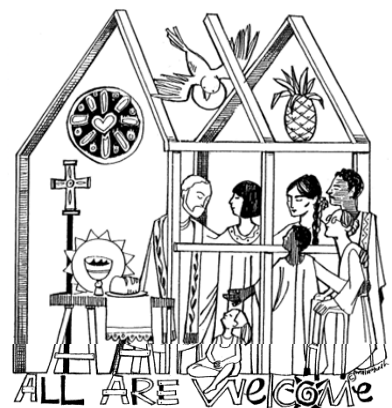
Let us find comfort in our sadness, certainty in our doubt,  
courage to live through this difficult time and strength to meet the days to come.

We hope these months of preparation will find us  
open to new possibilities that will unite us as one faith community,  
so that we may pray, worship and serve one another in your Name.

May the richness, diversity and gifts of our people  
be treasured and used as we become one in the Body of Christ.

Let us view this moment of change and renewal,  
not as a threat to what has been,  
but as an invitation to build up the foundation which has been given to us:  
a vibrant, new community of faith,  
united in mission and dedicated ever more  
to the fruitful building up of your Kingdom.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.



# Transform All Things in Christ

**A faith-sharing process for healing in response to closures, consolidations or transitions.**  
(Needed: open Bible in center, candle, basket, strips of paper and pencils/pens, soft music, songs for singing)

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## Opening Prayer

### Leader:

From the letter to the Romans: "For I am certain that neither death or life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future nor powers will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:38-39)

### Reader 1:

Gracious God, you have walked with us since our inception, continue to walk with us and teach us your ways even in times of difficulty. Send your Holy Spirit to dwell within us and give us the peace that we yearn for at this time. We ask this through Jesus, our Lord. Amen

## Song (optional)

## Purpose:

### Leader:

Human life is filled with transitions and loss. Some psychologists suggest that learning how to deal with the various losses we all have to face throughout life is really what living is about. We take the risk of being emotionally and spiritually wounded if we do not address loss in our lives. Wounds can fail to heal and keep us from growth in other areas of our lives. This can also be true of a community. If members do not take the time to work through a loss as a community, it may prevent the group from moving forward as a community and fulfilling its purpose and mission.

Our faith tradition roots our understanding of transition and loss in the experience of the Cross. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, called the Paschal Mystery, we find loss's deepest meaning and ultimate source for healing. God continues to walk with us in the mystery of every loss and helps us welcome the new life that rises from the tombs of fear, anger and sadness created by such transitions.

We come together to pray, share and reflect on God's Word as we experience this (closure, consolidation, transition). May this time together help us to feel God's strength and the support of the community.

## Share:

- Recall and describe your initial and continuing reaction to this reality.
- Recall what you loved best or share a memory of the (community, parish).
- Recall a loss you have had in your life: a death, a lost job, a failed relationship. How did you face and deal with that loss? How did your faith help you deal with that loss?

## Scripture Reading:

Read: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

*"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every purpose under the heavens..."*

**Share:** What "time" in life are you experiencing right now?

**Reflection:**

**Leader:**

The words of Ecclesiastes remind us of an important truth, that living is a process. We will find in every ending the promise of a new beginning. There is a time and purpose for every step we take. Every moment of our life is sacred and is no mistake. The journey of the spirit rarely travels down a straight path. Sometimes it is contradictory or even circular, a step forward may require a step back, and sometimes learning requires unlearning. St. Teresa of Avila wrote a beautiful prayer to help us with this understanding. Let us pray together:

**All:** Let nothing disturb me. Let nothing make me afraid. All things are passing. God alone never changes. Patience gains all things. If I have God, I will want for nothing. God alone suffices.

**Leader:**

What feelings about the (closure, consolidation, transition) disturb you? Are you willing to surrender those feelings to Christ?  
*(Do not share these feelings, they are meant to lead you into the ritual)*

**Ritual:**

(Distribute to each person a strip of paper and pencil/pen. Play soft music while people are writing. Have them put their response in a basket by the Bible.)

*Lord, I surrender to you*

*so that I can experience new life.*

Let us pray together asking God for the strength and courage to accept this reality and trust in the promise that new life can emerge from any death.

**Prayer:**

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;  
and wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time;  
enjoying one moment at a time;  
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
taking as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;  
trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will;  
that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen  
*(The Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr)*

**Closing Song (optional)**

*(Leader: The basket with strips of paper should be placed in a sacred place. Periodically lift up the intentions in prayer.)*



(Portions of this prayer service came from the Diocese of San Bernardino, Office of Small Faith Communities. Used with Permission.)

# 3

## *Transition Team*

- Serves as a consultative body to the pastor.
- Pastor selects a Project Manager or Project Committee from the members of the TT.
- Pastor selects a Communication Coordinator from the members of the TT.
- Pastor selects one person from each parish to coordinate the joining of parish groups (ministries, organizations and committees).

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### Goals

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- Meet regularly to facilitate a smooth transition
- Gather information from each of the parishes for integration into new parish
- Communicate decisions and other related information after each meeting to CPC
- Determine specific dates and methods of communication that will insure all parishioners are informed simultaneously and as frequently as possible

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### Schedule Meetings

---

- Frequency of meetings (weekly/monthly) is determined by length of transitional period
- To enable dialogue between CPC and TT, schedule meetings on alternate weeks/months

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### Meeting Agendas

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- Review and prioritize discussion topics listed below
- Include other topics as needed
- Meetings can cover more than one topic at a time

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### Discussion Topics

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- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worship</li><li>• Buildings</li><li>• Staff</li><li>• Integrating culture and practices</li><li>• Religious Education</li><li>• Finances</li><li>• Combining Inventory</li><li>• Honoring the traditions of the merging parishes</li></ul> | <p>Administrative Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data and Management Records</li><li>• Uniting of Ministries, Organizations, Committees</li><li>• Use of Healing and Transition Prayer</li><li>• Other areas of concern</li><li>• Mass for Formal Closure and other Events</li><li>• Mass for Formal Opening</li></ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

# Transition Team

## *Specific Roles and Responsibilities*

### **Communication Coordinator**

- Coordinate consistent, ongoing transmission of information to all parishioners from each parish
- Coordinate with person from each parish responsible for:
  - a. Website
  - b. Bulletin
  - c. Mass announcements
  - d. Mailings

### **Project Manager/Committee (may be shared by a few individuals)**

- Monitor the progress of action steps
- Address possible obstacles and solutions
- Surface new issues
- Report to TT on progress
- Move next steps forward

### **Coordinator of Parish Groups**

One person from each parish assigned to work together to coordinate the uniting of parish groups (ministries, organizations and committees).

### **Facilitator (Pastor will decide if beneficial for Transition Team)**

- Keeps meetings on track and on time
- Manages communication process among the group members
- Makes certain that everyone has a voice and is heard
- Helps group accomplish goals and commitments
- Guides the group in establishing a plan
- Ensures that everyone can support the outcome

# Transition Team

## *Sample Meeting Agenda*

**Opening Prayer and Reflection**

Choose from sample Scripture readings and reflections provided

**Discussion Topics**

See topics listed below

**Action steps**

Determine what information will be communicated to parishioners. How?

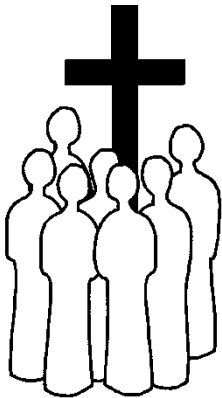
- Assign other tasks as needed.
  - Who is responsible?
  - How and when will they be achieved?

**Next Meeting**

- Date
- Time
- Topic

**Closing Prayer**

Building a New Parish Community – *Transition Prayer*



### **Discussion Topics**

- Worship
- Buildings
- Staff
- Integrating Culture & Practices
- Religious Education
- Finances
- Combining Inventory
- Honoring the traditions of the merging parishes
- Administrative Items-Data Management
- Uniting of Ministries, Organizations, Committees
- Use of Healing and Transition Prayer
- Other areas of concern
- Mass for Formal Closure and other Events
- Mass for Formal Opening

# 4

## *Action Steps*

The following action steps are a guide to assist in the transition to a new parish. The tasks can be distributed to appropriate staff or parish leaders to accomplish. A Project Manager or Committee (serves on Transition Team) may be appointed to oversee the coordination and accomplishment of these tasks. The archdiocesan offices referenced at the bottom of the page will provide any needed assistance.

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### **WORSHIP**

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1. Worship Sites
2. Schedules of Liturgical and Devotional Celebrations
3. Announced Masses
4. Christian Initiation of Adults
5. Baptism Preparation
6. Weddings and Marriage Preparation
7. Pastoral Care of the Sick and Homebound (Communion Calls)
8. Funerals and Pastoral Care of the Bereaved
9. Liturgical Ministries
  - Music Ministry
  - Ushers/Greeters
  - Altar Servers
  - Lectors
  - Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
  - Sacristans
10. Inventory of Sacred Objects and Religious Articles
11. Devotional Practices
12. Mass for Formal Closure of the Parish
13. Mass for Formal Opening of the Parish

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### **ADMINISTRATION**

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1. Parishioner Information – Data Management
2. Sacramental Records
3. Computers and Communications Systems
4. Address Changes
5. Contribution Envelopes
6. Office Equipment and Supplies
7. Parish Bulletin
8. Parish Seal
9. Parish Archives
10. Communication During Transition



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## **BUILDINGS**

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1. Properties
2. Cemeteries
3. Facility Rental Contracts
4. Security
5. Inventory

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## **FINANCES**

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1. Office for Parish Service & Support review
2. Bank Accounts
3. Financial Records and Bills
4. Budget
5. Capital Improvements

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## **PARISH FAITH FORMATION**

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1. Parish Religious Education Program
2. Parish and Regional Catholic Schools
3. Adult Faith Formation

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## **PARISH LIFE AND LEADERSHIP**

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1. Interim Parish Pastoral Council
2. Interim Parish Finance Council
3. Cultural Ministries
4. Ministries, Organizations, Committees
5. Social Services and Outreach
6. Fundraising Activities
7. Social Activities

**WORSHIP SITES**

**GOAL:** To determine the use of churches other than the one parish church as a worship site.

| Action Step                                                                  | Person Responsible | Timeline                   | Completed |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Determine feasibility of using the current parish churches as worship sites. |                    |                            |           |
| If feasible, determine use and schedule.                                     |                    |                            |           |
| <b>Office for Divine Worship</b>                                             |                    | <b>Phone: 215-587-3537</b> |           |

**USE OF NON-PARISH CHURCHES (WORSHIP SITES)**

*The parish church is to be the normal site for the celebration of the Sacraments. Funerals and devotions, however, may always be celebrated in a worship site church.*

*On special occasions, such as a feast day related to the church patron, the pastor is authorized to have Mass celebrated in a worship site church.*

*Weddings that are already scheduled for worship site churches may take place as planned. Going forward, weddings should be scheduled only for the parish church, unless permission is obtained from the chancery.*

*Baptism, Confirmation and the Easter Triduum are to be celebrated only in the parish church.*

*The Most Blessed Sacrament must be reserved in the parish church. Permission is given to reserve the Most Blessed Sacrament in worship site churches, provided that there is a genuine pastoral advantage in doing so and provided that the Blessed Sacrament is renewed regularly.*

*The names of all churches are to be maintained, unless otherwise determined.*

*Appendix B*

**REGULATIONS FOR THE USE OF A WORSHIP SITE  
WITHIN A PARISH OTHER THAN THE PARISH CHURCH**

*In situations where worship sites have been created as a result of the merger of two or more parishes, every effort must be made to prepare the parishioners to celebrate every Sunday Liturgy together in the Parish Church. If the Pastor of the new parish in consultation with his Parish Councils would determine that providing Sunday Mass in a Worship Site for a short period will help parishioners to make the transition to one worshipping community in the parish Church, Sunday Mass may be offered in the Worship Site(s) during the one year of transition.*

*Appendix B-1, #8*

**SCHEDULES OF LITURGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL CELEBRATIONS**

**GOAL:** To establish the schedule for the celebration of the Eucharist on Sundays, holydays and weekdays, the schedule for Baptism, Penance and Reconciliation and Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                               | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>MASSES</b>                                                                                                    |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain from each parish the current Mass schedule for Sundays, weekdays and holydays.                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss and decide on new Mass schedule with Transition Team. Obtain and consider the most recent October Count. |                           |                 |                  |
| Make appropriate announcements.                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| <b>BAPTISM (also see page 22)</b>                                                                                |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain from each current parish the schedule for Baptisms on Sundays.                                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss and decide on a new schedule with Transition Team.                                                       |                           |                 |                  |
| Make appropriate announcements.                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| <b>PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION</b>                                                                                |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain from each current parish the schedule for Penance and Reconciliation.                                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss and decide on a new schedule with Transition Team.                                                       |                           |                 |                  |
| Make appropriate announcements.                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| <b>EXPOSITION OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT</b>                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain from each current parish the schedule for Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament.                       |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss and decide on a new schedule with Transition Team.                                                       |                           |                 |                  |
| Make appropriate announcements.                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**ANNOUNCED MASSES**

**GOAL:** To establish guidelines regarding Mass intentions in the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain the current Mass books containing those Masses already scheduled, if any, for which stipends have been accepted.                                                 |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain from each of the CURRENT parishes the records of the stipend accounts.                                                                                           |                           |                 |                  |
| Integrate already scheduled Masses into a new book following guidelines in Appendix B.                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Decide on policy regarding the number of Masses any one individual or family may request in a given year and also regarding intentions for major feasts, holydays, etc. |                           |                 |                  |
| Decide when Mass book opens each year.                                                                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Make appropriate announcements.                                                                                                                                         |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**ANNOUNCED MASSES**

*A new book of Mass intentions should be started as of the date the new parish opens. The announced Mass intentions of the individual merged parishes should be combined equitably into the new book. Preference should be given to those intentions which are identified as being related to the date scheduled (such as the anniversary of death). Others should be scheduled as close to the original date as possible. Parishioners should be notified that the dates of announced Masses may have to be changed as the Mass Intention books are merged. Anyone who wishes to cancel a requested intention should be refunded any stipend they gave.*

*Appendix B*

**CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (R.C.I.A.)**

**GOAL:** To provide for the formation of adults preparing to be baptized or received into Full Communion of the Catholic Church.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from each of the current parishes the names, addresses and phone numbers of adults in the process of initiation (R.C.I.A.).              |                           |                 |                  |
| Plan a meeting for RCIA leaders from current parishes to share details of their RCIA process. Determine leadership, roles and responsibilities. |                           |                 |                  |
| Invite RCIA leaders and teams to discuss the appropriate ways in which the current initiation processes may be combined.                        |                           |                 |                  |
| Schedule dates for ongoing meetings, rites, interviews of new candidates and formation sessions.                                                |                           |                 |                  |
| Plan ongoing promotion and announcements to invite inquirers.                                                                                   |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**BAPTISM PREPARATION**

**GOAL:** To establish a schedule and guidelines for the celebration of Baptism.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from each parish the current schedule for Baptism.                                                                                   |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain from each of the current parishes any policy regarding parental preparation for Baptism.                                             |                           |                 |                  |
| Invite Baptism Preparation teams to meet and discuss appropriate ways to combine the team, sessions, leadership roles and responsibilities. |                           |                 |                  |
| Schedule dates for Baptism Preparation.                                                                                                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Adjust website and parish bulletin announcement.                                                                                            |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**WEDDINGS AND MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

**GOAL:** To establish a schedule and guidelines for celebrating weddings.

| Action Step                                                                                                                    | Person Responsible | Timeline | Completed |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| Obtain from each of the current parishes a list of scheduled weddings, including names and addresses of the brides and grooms. |                    |          |           |
| Notify brides and grooms of any changes or adjustments.                                                                        |                    |          |           |
| Obtain from each current parish any guidelines for planning a wedding.                                                         |                    |          |           |
| Obtain from each of the current parishes the policy regarding marriage preparation.                                            |                    |          |           |
| Invite Marriage Prep teams to meet and discuss appropriate ways to combine teams, sessions, roles and responsibilities.        |                    |          |           |
| Schedule dates for Marriage Preparation.                                                                                       |                    |          |           |
| Adjust website and bulletin announcement.                                                                                      |                    |          |           |

**Office for Divine Worship**  
**Office for Life and Family**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**  
**Phone: 215-587-5661**

*Weddings that are already scheduled for worship site churches may take place as planned. Going forward, weddings should be scheduled only for the parish church, unless permission is obtained from the chancery.*

*Appendix B*

**PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK AND HOMEBOUND**

**GOAL:** To establish an accurate list of those in the new parish who are sick or homebound.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from each of the current parishes the names, addresses and phone numbers of those currently on "communion call" lists.                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain from each of the current parishes the schedule for visits and the specific pastoral care provided, e.g. visit by Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, and Anointing of the Sick. |                           |                 |                  |
| Identify Nursing Homes and Hospitals and the service that current parishes provide.                                                                                                                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Create a new consolidated list.                                                                                                                                                                                |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**



**FUNERALS AND PASTORAL CARE OF THE BEREAVED**

**GOAL:** To gather details related to the celebration of Funerals in each current parish and decide how these practices may be initially integrated in the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from each of the current pastors any important details regarding funerals, set times and other services provided (Bereavement Committee, lunch, etc.). |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss details of these celebrations with the new parish staff and Transition Team to determine new funeral guidelines.                                      |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain from each of the current parishes a description of the pastoral care given to the bereaved.                                                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss with the Transition Team the most suitable way to continue to provide this care in the future.                                                        |                           |                 |                  |
| Make appropriate announcements.                                                                                                                               |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**LITURGICAL MINISTRIES**

**GOAL:** To coordinate and combine the services provided by those already involved in Liturgical Ministries of each current parish including: Music Ministers, Ushers, Greeters, Altar Servers, Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Sacristans.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                           | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Identify those involved in the music ministry of each current parish (paid positions, volunteers, etc.).                                                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Identify the needs for liturgical musicians based on the Mass schedule of the new parish.                                                                    |                           |                 |                  |
| Identify title, publisher and quantity of hymnals used in each current parish. Determine if they can be combined or if additional hymnals should be ordered. |                           |                 |                  |
| Invite choir director and other music group leaders to make a list of musical repertoire. Compare lists and make a common repertoire for new parish.         |                           |                 |                  |
| Make a list of music libraries, instruments and equipment from current parishes and determine how they can best be combined.                                 |                           |                 |                  |
| Bring together the Choir, Cantor and other liturgical musical ensembles using the suggested process for uniting parish groups found in Section 5.            |                           |                 |                  |
| Follow the suggested process for uniting the Worship Committee and other Liturgical Ministries.                                                              |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**INVENTORY OF SACRED OBJECTS AND RELIGIOUS ARTICLES**

**GOAL:** To identify the sacred objects and religious articles of current parishes. All property of the current parishes becomes the canonical property of the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from the current parishes an inventory of sacred vessels, vestments, books, sanctuary furnishings and religious articles: statues, crucifixes, Stations of the Cross, etc.        |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss needs for sacred objects and religious articles in the new parish, as well as worship sites.                                                                                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss with Current Parish Committee and Transition Team what sacred objects and religious articles from current parishes could be incorporated into the new parish as a sign of unity. |                           |                 |                  |
| Make available to other parishes or missions items not being used through the Ecclesiastical Exchange Program.                                                                           |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Special Projects – Ecclesiastical Exchange Program**

**Phone: 215-587-3996**

**DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES**

**GOAL:** To obtain a list of devotional practices observed in each current parish and decide how these practices may be initially integrated into the life of the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from the current parishes a complete list of the devotional practices held in the parish and the specifics of how they occur - dates, seasons, times, etc. |                           |                 |                  |
| Make an outline of all devotions celebrated throughout the liturgical year.                                                                                       |                           |                 |                  |
| Using the calendar, decide, in consultation with the Transition Team, if and how these devotions are to be continued in the new parish.                           |                           |                 |                  |
| Make appropriate announcements.                                                                                                                                   |                           |                 |                  |

*Office for Divine Worship*

*Phone: 215-587-3537*

**MASS FOR FORMAL CLOSURE OF THE PARISH**

**GOAL:** To plan closing events appropriate for the current parishes.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                       | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Current Parish Committees assist pastors of the current parishes with scheduling events that appropriately “close” the current parishes. |                           |                 |                  |
| Current parishes plan Healing Prayer Service during transitional period.                                                                 |                           |                 |                  |
| Plan Mass for Formal Closure of the Parish.                                                                                              |                           |                 |                  |
| Plan final social event.                                                                                                                 |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**MASS FOR FORMAL OPENING OF PARISH**

**GOAL:** To celebrate the establishment of the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                     | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Plan Mass for Formal Opening of the parish.            |                           |                 |                  |
| Schedule liturgical ministers.                         |                           |                 |                  |
| Make appropriate announcement regarding date and time. |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**PARISHIONER INFORMATION – DATA MANAGEMENT**

**GOAL:** To obtain and maintain all current parish files.

| Action Step                                                                                                                                         | Person Responsible | Timeline | Completed |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| Combine all files of registered parishioners into one database: electronic and/or hard copy.                                                        |                    |          |           |
| Save and transfer all group email addresses.                                                                                                        |                    |          |           |
| No historical or financial records of current parishes should be destroyed.<br><i>See Parish Archives #9</i>                                        |                    |          |           |
| Send non-sacramental records to the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center (PAHRC) for preservation.<br><i>See Parish Archives #9</i> |                    |          |           |
| Develop a process for creating a new parish census some time during the first year.                                                                 |                    |          |           |
| Send all Safe Environment records from current parish to the new parish for retention.                                                              |                    |          |           |

**Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center**

**Phone: 610-667-2125**

**PARISH MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTRATION**

*All of those living within the boundaries of the new parish are members of that parish. The registration records of merged territorial parishes should be combined. Should parishioners wish to register in some other nearby parish, the pastor is encouraged to be flexible in allowing them to do so.*

*Members of merged personal parishes should be notified that they have the option of belonging to the newly merged successor parish, the parish in which they actually live (if other than the successor parish), or in the nearest qualifying personal parish. If they do not make a choice they will automatically be registered as members of the merged successor parish.*

*Regardless of parish membership or registration, Catholics are always free to attend Mass in any Catholic Church.*

*Appendix B*

**SACRAMENTAL RECORDS**

**GOAL:** To collect and preserve the sacramental registers of the current parishes in one central location and to purchase new ones for the newly established parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                       | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from the current parishes an inventory of the number of volumes of sacramental registers they possess.                                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Plan an appropriate location with easy access to store all registers.                                                                                    |                           |                 |                  |
| Collect and store all sacramental registers in the new parish as soon as possible.                                                                       |                           |                 |                  |
| Purchase new Sacramental Registers: Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion, Marriage, Sick Calls, Death, Book of Catechumens, Elect, and Full Communion. |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Divine Worship**

**Phone: 215-587-3537**

**PARISH SACRAMENTAL RECORDS**

*New sacramental record books should be started as of the date the new parish opens. No additional entries should be made into the old sacramental record books. All of these records are to be kept at the new parish office.*

*Going forward, if weddings or other sacraments are celebrated in those churches used as worship sites, they are to be recorded in the new sacramental records of the new parish.*

*When issuing a sacramental certificate for a sacrament which had been administered in one of the current parishes: beneath the name and address of the new parish, type in the name of the church where the sacrament was actually administered.*

*Appendix B*



**COMPUTERS AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS**

**GOAL:** To evaluate existing computers and communication systems, determine needs and establish plans for new Parish system.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                       | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Evaluate computers and communication systems in current parishes (phones, fax, cable, and internet).                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Make a list of all computer equipment and determine which equipment will best serve the needs of the new parish.         |                           |                 |                  |
| Assess communication and computer needs for the new parish.                                                              |                           |                 |                  |
| Transfer all software, records, parish database information and email contact lists from current parishes to new parish. |                           |                 |                  |
| Implement new or expanded system. Train staff, publish new phone numbers and email addresses.                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Link current parish website to new parish site during transitional period.                                               |                           |                 |                  |
| Update new parish website to communicate information as decisions are made.                                              |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Information Technology**

**Phone: 215-854-7067**

**ADDRESS CHANGES**

**GOAL:** To establish official addresses for combined Church properties: rectory, school, administrative centers, etc.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                           | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Make a list of addresses of existing postal entities: rectory, school, parish office, religious education, etc. Make necessary address change notifications. |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine buildings to be designated for the new parish.                                                                                                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Notify postal authorities, vendors, utilities, etc. of address changes and their effective dates.                                                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Set up mail forwarding to the new parish.                                                                                                                    |                           |                 |                  |
| Order and install new signs where necessary.                                                                                                                 |                           |                 |                  |
| Order new stationery, if needed.                                                                                                                             |                           |                 |                  |

**CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES**

**GOAL:** To establish a combined envelope system for the new parish.

| Action Step                                                                                                  | Person Responsible | Timeline | Completed |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| Identify which envelope service the existing parishes currently use.                                         |                    |          |           |
| Select an envelope company for new parish.                                                                   |                    |          |           |
| Make arrangements with company to send out new parish envelopes to all parishioners. <i>(see note below)</i> |                    |          |           |

*Please see note at the bottom of page 31 concerning personal parishes.*

**Pastoral Consideration:**

- When a personal parish is merging with a territorial parish, it will be necessary for the pastor of the new parish community to send a letter to the parishioners of the personal parish inviting them to become members of the local parish.

This should happen before the envelopes are sent.

- The current pastor of the personal parish should advise the envelope company NOT to automatically send the envelopes of the newly created parish.

The Pastor of the new parish may wish to order a supply of “visitor” envelopes for use during the transition period. Envelopes could be placed in the end of the pews or the entrances of the church. Visitor envelopes could include checkbox for “I would like to receive envelopes” with lines for name and address.

**OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

**GOAL:** To assess office equipment and supplies needed for new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                            | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Identify all office equipment and decide what to keep and utilize, and what can be discarded. |                           |                 |                  |
| Combine all office supplies and furnishings and create revised inventory.                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Prepare a document summarizing current parish rental contracts.                               |                           |                 |                  |
|                                                                                               |                           |                 |                  |

**PARISH BULLETIN**

**GOAL:** To publish a parish bulletin that meets the needs of all the parishioners of the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain samples of recent bulletins from each of the current parishes and approximate costs of publishing, as well as numbers of copies printed by each of the current parishes. |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine the number of copies needed for the new parish.                                                                                                                       |                           |                 |                  |
| Create a new design which reflects a combined style, format and method of communicating.                                                                                        |                           |                 |                  |

**PARISH SEAL**

**GOAL:** To establish the seal of the new parish as required for specified legal and canonical documents.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Seals of current parishes may no longer be used. They should be sent to the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center (PAHRC) for preservation.<br><br><i>(See Appendix B)</i> |                           |                 |                  |
| The parish seal with the name of the new parish may continue to be used.                                                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |

**Archdiocesan Historical Research Center**

**Phone: 610-667-2125**

**PARISH ARCHIVES**

**GOAL:** To collect and preserve the archives of current parishes.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| The archives of the current parishes should be reviewed. Any material that is unique to the parish and of real historical value must be preserved - major resources of heritage and history: bound bulletins, old papers, anniversary books, yearbooks, pictures, memorabilia, etc. Some items could be displayed at the new parish, boxed and stored or archived at the Archdiocesan Historical Research Center. |                           |                 |                  |
| Contact the Archdiocesan Historical Research Center to assist with determining which items should be archived.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                           |                 |                  |

**Office:** Archdiocesan Historical Research Center

**Phone:** 610-667-2125

**COMMUNICATION DURING TRANSITION**

**GOAL:** To communicate information about the new parish frequently consistently, and simultaneously to all parishioners.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b>            | <b>Completed</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Communicate initial announcement of parish merger to all parishioners by letter, Mass announcements and the parish bulletin.                |                           |                            |                  |
| Keep all parishioners informed of decisions made throughout transition period via bulletin, website and Mass announcements.                 |                           |                            |                  |
| Send final mailing announcing new pastor, new staff, Mass schedule and other important information. Post on website and in parish bulletin. |                           |                            |                  |
| Consult the Office for Communication if media call the parish with questions related to the merger.                                         |                           |                            |                  |
| <b>Office for Communication</b>                                                                                                             |                           | <b>Phone: 215-587-3747</b> |                  |

\* The Communications Coordinator from the Transition Team will guide and assist in the communication process.



**PROPERTIES**

**GOAL:** To complete a site inventory that will help determine:  
 (1) Location of residences for priests (2) Location of administrative offices  
 (3) Decisions on additional property use (4) Decisions on surplus property

| Action Step                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Person Responsible | Timeline                                           | Completed |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Current pastors create a committee to evaluate existing properties. Include new pastor, professionals (builders, real estate agent, etc.), and members of the Transition Team.                                                                    |                    |                                                    |           |
| Draft a report that will itemize all buildings and contents. Note needed repairs and estimate property values in the current market.                                                                                                              |                    |                                                    |           |
| Prepare final recommendations for use of the buildings and those that are not needed.                                                                                                                                                             |                    |                                                    |           |
| Discuss and decide parish needs in relation to property with Transition Team.<br>(Consider access for wheelchair users)                                                                                                                           |                    |                                                    |           |
| The Archdiocesan Chancery must be notified if there is a chapel or oratory in a rectory, convent, or worship site which is no longer going to be used. A decree will be issued relegating the new use of these spaces.<br><br><i>(Appendix B)</i> |                    |                                                    |           |
| The Archdiocesan Office of Property Services should be advised of mergers and possible sales as soon as a date for the merger is known.                                                                                                           |                    |                                                    |           |
| <b>Chancery<br/>Office of Property Services</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                    | <b>Phone: 215-587-4538<br/>Phone: 215-587-3560</b> |           |

**CHAPELS**

*Should there be a chapel or oratory in a rectory, convent, or a within a worship site church which is no longer going to be used, please notify the chancery so that a decree can be issued relegating the space for non-religious use.*  
*Appendix B*

**CEMETERIES**

**GOAL:** To coordinate the finance, administration and maintenance of current parishes' cemeteries under the custody of the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                         | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain financial and administrative cemetery records from current parishes (deeds, maps).                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Assess financial records, including the sustainability of the Endowment Care Fund.                         |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine availability of burial records and method in which they are maintained.                          |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine where cemetery records will be kept in the new parish.                                           |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine available resources (employees, volunteers, subcontractors) for daily operation and maintenance. |                           |                 |                  |
| Examine sources of revenue, including lot sales, grave opening fees, Endowed Care Investments.             |                           |                 |                  |
| Identify any written policies and procedures for operation of cemetery property and record keeping.        |                           |                 |                  |
| Contact the Catholic Cemeteries Office to establish a protocol for records and cemetery care.              |                           |                 |                  |

**Catholic Cemeteries Office**

**Phone: 215-895-3450**

**FACILITY RENTAL CONTRACTS**

**GOAL:** To evaluate any existing contracts with non-parish organizations in all current parishes: buildings used for day care, head-start, adult day care, scout groups, charter schools, etc.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                       | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Gather all data from current parishes regarding rental contracts.                                        |                           |                 |                  |
| Consult the Archdiocesan Office for General Counsel to obtain copies of contracts or agreements on file. |                           |                 |                  |
| Obtain recommendations from current pastors regarding these agreements.                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Meet with groups to obtain their plans for the future.                                                   |                           |                 |                  |
| Renew or terminate contracts based on findings.                                                          |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for General Counsel** **Phone: 215-587-0511**

**SECURITY**

**GOAL:** To plan for the security of all buildings and properties.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                    | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Make a list of all security systems, codes, contracts and manuals.                                    |                           |                 |                  |
| Combine or update security systems where needed.                                                      |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine need for security system in buildings used infrequently or that will be sold in the future. |                           |                 |                  |
| Collect all building keys from staff groups, etc.                                                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Change locks, if necessary.                                                                           |                           |                 |                  |
| Reissue keys where needed.                                                                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Establish a new parish policy for use of keys by staff, groups, etc.                                  |                           |                 |                  |

**INVENTORY**

**GOAL:** To take an inventory and combine the contents of all parish buildings.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Compile a detailed inventory of all items contained in each current parish building. Property owned by priests residing in the rectory, or religious living in the convent, should be clearly identified. |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine if any of these items will be needed for facilities in the new parish.                                                                                                                          |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine the best way to store or dispose of items that will no longer be used.                                                                                                                          |                           |                 |                  |

**OFFICE FOR PARISH SERVICE & SUPPORT**

**GOAL:** To review the financial report for each current parish to establish a clear understanding of the assets and liabilities of the newly formed parish, and to address payroll, taxes and other outstanding transactions.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| The OPSS office will contact Pastor to schedule a review date. The parish will receive an outline of records needed for examination.                                                                                                                                                   |                           |                 |                  |
| The Office for Financial Services and the OPSS Office may request a joint meeting with the Pastor/Business Manager prior to review, if needed.                                                                                                                                         |                           |                 |                  |
| The OPSS staff will clarify what records can be sent to new parish and what records are needed for the review.                                                                                                                                                                         |                           |                 |                  |
| The OPSS representative will update the new Pastor on the details of the outstanding debt that is to be transferred to the newly merged parish from the parish(es) that are merged into it.                                                                                            |                           |                 |                  |
| The OPSS representative will update the new Pastor on the details of the Archdiocesan Trust Funds that are to be transferred to the newly merged parish from the parish(es) that are merged into it. <i>Note that the financial assets transferred are restricted to pay the debt.</i> |                           |                 |                  |
| The OPSS representative will update the new Pastor on Building Insurance Values of the merged parish(es) that are transferred to the newly formed parish. This information is obtained from the Office for Insurance Services.                                                         |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Parish Service & Support**

**Phone: 215-587-2474**

**BANK ACCOUNTS**

**GOAL:** To close all bank accounts listed under the name of the current parishes and open new accounts in the name of the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b>            | <b>Completed</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Identify all bank accounts from the current parishes and all their organizations.                                                                                       |                           |                            |                  |
| Create a new bank account under the new Employer Identification Number (EIN) of the new parish.                                                                         |                           |                            |                  |
| Review subsequent three months of bank reconciliations to ensure that all outstanding checks have cleared before closing out the accounts. Reissue checks if necessary. |                           |                            |                  |
| Close all current parishes' bank accounts, including all their organizations, commencing with the merger date.                                                          |                           |                            |                  |
| Transfer funds from all current parishes' accounts into the new parish account.                                                                                         |                           |                            |                  |
| Destroy all unused checks and deposit slips (shredding is preferable).                                                                                                  |                           |                            |                  |
| Inform all vendors of the name, address, Pastor/Business Manager of the new parish.                                                                                     |                           |                            |                  |
| Submit all past bank statements and financial records of current parishes, to the Pastor/Business Manager of the new parish.                                            |                           |                            |                  |
| <b>Office for Parish Service &amp; Support</b>                                                                                                                          |                           | <b>Phone: 215-587-2474</b> |                  |

*All redeemed pledges are part of the assets to be transferred to the new parish. Normally, all future unredeemed pledges are also part of the assets to be transferred unless the donor requests the Office for Stewardship and Development (Archdiocesan campaigns) or the pastor of the new parish (parish campaigns) to direct the unredeemed pledge to another parish where the donor is registered.*

**FINANCIAL RECORDS AND BILLS**

**GOAL:** To consolidate the financial records of the current parishes into the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Prepare copies of the current parishes’ budget reports and financial statements and transfer to new parish.                                   |                           |                 |                  |
| Notify vendors of new address as of new parish opening date.                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Identify and discontinue all current parishes’ credit card accounts.                                                                          |                           |                 |                  |
| Current parish pays for all invoices received prior to new parish opening date.                                                               |                           |                 |                  |
| New parish pays for all invoices received after opening date.                                                                                 |                           |                 |                  |
| Investigate all remaining outstanding transactions and ask Business Manager to contact appropriate company about outstanding items.           |                           |                 |                  |
| Draft an initial plan to incorporate existing financial records.                                                                              |                           |                 |                  |
| Each parish is required to prepare a final Financial Report through the merger date.                                                          |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine whether payroll function is performed internally or by an outside service provider. Make appropriate adjustments and notifications. |                           |                 |                  |
| If computer system is used, perform back-up of current year’s financial data for each current parish.                                         |                           |                 |                  |
| Transfer current parishes’ contribution records to new parish.                                                                                |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Parish Service & Support**

**Phone: 215-587-2474**



**BUDGET**

**GOAL:** To establish a budget for the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                      | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b>            | <b>Completed</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Collect copies of the budgets of each of the current parishes.                                                          |                           |                            |                  |
| Prepare and submit a combined budget for the new parish for the new fiscal year.                                        |                           |                            |                  |
| File one Archdiocesan Budget and Financial Report for all activities beginning with the opening date of the new parish. |                           |                            |                  |
| <b>Office for Parish Services &amp; Support</b>                                                                         |                           | <b>Phone: 215-587-2474</b> |                  |

\*Commencing with the effective date of the merger the newly merged parish will file one Archdiocesan Budget and Financial Report for all activities.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

**GOAL:** To evaluate the need for capital improvements to be undertaken by the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                  | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain data from the current parishes on any capital improvements which are underway or planned in the near future. |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine the need for any immediate capital improvements.                                                          |                           |                 |                  |
| Develop a short and long term plan for capital improvements.                                                        |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Property Services**

**Phone: 215-587-3560**

**PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**GOAL:** To provide for the faith formation of parish children by combining the efforts of those already involved in religious education within the current parishes into the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from each of the current parishes a brief summary of the religious education program as it currently exists: number of students, names of DREs, catechists, days and times of meetings, fees, etc. |                           |                 |                  |
| Invite current staff to discuss the ways that current programs can best be combined and coordinated.                                                                                                      |                           |                 |                  |
| Set appropriate time-lines for the new programs to begin.                                                                                                                                                 |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Catechetical Formation**

**Phone: 215-587-3720**

**PARISH AND REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

**GOAL:** To integrate the mission of the Catholic School with the mission and activities of the Parish and to allocate the new parishes' resources to the Catholic School.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b>            | <b>Completed</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Discuss with all parents any issues related to the continued relationship of parish and Catholic School.                               |                           |                            |                  |
| Invite parents to make concrete commitments to the life of the parish, especially its sacramental celebrations.                        |                           |                            |                  |
| Discuss with principals and teachers any issues related to the continued relationship of parish and Catholic School.                   |                           |                            |                  |
| Discuss financial issues with principals, teachers and parents (tuition, parish contribution, contribution of buildings and services). |                           |                            |                  |
| <b>Office of Catholic Education</b>                                                                                                    |                           | <b>Phone: 215-587-3700</b> |                  |

**ADULT FAITH FORMATION**

**GOAL:** To provide for the ongoing formation of all parishioners.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                             | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b>            | <b>Completed</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Obtain from current parishes a brief summary of any current Adult Faith Formation programs.                                                    |                           |                            |                  |
| Plan a meeting for AFF leaders from current parishes to share details from current programs. Determine leadership, roles and responsibilities. |                           |                            |                  |
| Invite AFF leaders and teams to discuss ways the current programs can be combined (Scripture Study, speakers, series, missions, libraries).    |                           |                            |                  |
| Schedule dates for ongoing or upcoming events and programs.                                                                                    |                           |                            |                  |
| Plan ongoing promotion and announcements.                                                                                                      |                           |                            |                  |
| <b>Office for Life and Family</b>                                                                                                              |                           | <b>Phone: 215-587-5661</b> |                  |

\*Consider using “Arise Together in Christ”, a series of faith sharing sessions centered on the loving and healing message of Jesus that will help forge deeper relationships among parishioners.

<http://www.renewintl.org/RENEW/Index.nsf/vpages/ARISEOverview?opendocument>

908-769-5400

**INTERIM PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

**GOAL:** To assist the Pastor in the life and mission of the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                              | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Create an Interim Parish Pastoral Council, including members from each current parish's council to serve during the first year. |                           |                 |                  |
| Develop a mission statement which reflects the identity and mission of the new parish.                                          |                           |                 |                  |
| Advise and assist the Pastor in areas of pastoral concern.                                                                      |                           |                 |                  |
| Recommend parish pastoral plans and directions.                                                                                 |                           |                 |                  |
| Inform the Pastor of needs, concerns, gifts and resources of the whole parish and its members.                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Plan for the election of a new Parish Pastoral Council.                                                                         |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Parish Service and Support**

**Phone: 215-587-3848**

**INTERIM PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL**

**GOAL:** To advise the Pastor on financial matters.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                   | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Create an Interim Parish Finance Council, including members from each current parish's council.                      |                           |                 |                  |
| Members of this council will review the financial status of the new parish and advise Pastor on financial decisions. |                           |                 |                  |
| Make recommendations for membership on new Parish Finance Council.                                                   |                           |                 |                  |

**Office for Parish Services & Support**

**Phone: 215-587-2474**

**CULTURAL MINISTRIES**

**GOAL:** To integrate the unique cultural contributions of all parishioners into the life of the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                           | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Identify cultural groups and practices in current parishes.                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss how these customs may be integrated into the life of the new parish. |                           |                 |                  |

**Office of the Vicar for Cultural Ministries**

**Phone: 215-667-2822**



**PARISH GROUPS (Ministries, Organizations and Committees)**

**GOAL:** To unite parish groups.

| Action Step                                                                                                                                                                                        | Person Responsible | Timeline                   | Completed |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Obtain from each of the current parishes the names of each of the parish ministries, organizations and committees, including the names, addresses and phone numbers of their leaders.              |                    |                            |           |
| Make a list of combined groups and those with similar missions.                                                                                                                                    |                    |                            |           |
| Hold combined meetings of the leaders of identical or similar groups to share details of their group. Determine leadership, roles and responsibilities.                                            |                    |                            |           |
| Invite each of the group leaders to consider ways they might combine ongoing meetings and activities.                                                                                              |                    |                            |           |
| Hold combined membership meetings for the purpose of adopting plans developed by leaders and electing interim leadership of combined groups. Plan usual events and activities throughout the year. |                    |                            |           |
| Make plans to conduct a ministry/organization fair at the new parish next year.                                                                                                                    |                    |                            |           |
| <b>Office for Life and Family</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |                    | <b>Phone: 215-587-5661</b> |           |

**SOCIAL SERVICES AND OUTREACH**

**GOAL:** To coordinate the practical aspects of how the Corporal Works of Mercy are carried out in the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                              | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Identify social services and outreach currently available in each parish: food pantry, food collections, clothing drive, holiday baskets, Aid for Friends, etc. |                           |                 |                  |
| Discuss best way to combine and continue these services.                                                                                                        |                           |                 |                  |

**Catholic Social Services**

**Phone: 215-587-3900**

**FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES**

**GOAL:** To make a plan to continue, combine or initiate new fundraising activities.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                              | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain a complete list, including specifics and brief summary, of fund-raising activities held in each parish.                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Create a combined monthly list.                                                                                                 |                           |                 |                  |
| Examine events that are similar and can be combined.                                                                            |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine adjustments needed in scheduling.                                                                                     |                           |                 |                  |
| Discern and decide with Transitional Team which of the above will continue initially in the new parish (during the first year). |                           |                 |                  |
|                                                                                                                                 |                           |                 |                  |

**SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

**GOAL:** To plan social activities for the new parish.

| <b>Action Step</b>                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Person Responsible</b> | <b>Timeline</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Obtain from the current parishes a complete list of social activities held in the parish and the specifics of how they occur: dates, seasons, times, groups involved, etc. |                           |                 |                  |
| Place all of the social activities on a monthly calendar.                                                                                                                  |                           |                 |                  |
| Examine events that are similar and can be combined.                                                                                                                       |                           |                 |                  |
| Determine adjustments needed in scheduling.                                                                                                                                |                           |                 |                  |

# 5

## *Uniting Parish Groups*

The Transition Team (TT) will delegate one person from each parish to coordinate the uniting of parish groups (ministries, organizations, committees).

---

### **Identify**

---

Coordinators identify all groups – ministries, organizations and committees – active in each of the parishes.

---

### **Gather Information**

---

Coordinators gather the following information concerning each group:

- Name and purpose of group
- List of leaders and members
- Meeting schedule, training, method of communication, events, etc.

---

### **Plan for Uniting**

---

Coordinators:

- Identify groups with the same or similar missions
- Identify those groups who have a singular, unique mission
- After discernment, combine groups as appropriate
- Compile a new list of groups to publicize to the newly formed parish

---

### **Leadership Meeting**

---

- Coordinators meet with group leaders to determine leadership for newly formed groups, (e.g., current leaders share responsibilities, one leader volunteers, etc.)
- Group leaders plan a meeting for each individual group, date, agenda, etc.  
*(Begin with groups that must be in place by the Mass for the Formal Opening of the new Parish.)*
- See sample Leadership Meeting Agenda

---

### **Membership Meeting**

---

- New leaders meet with combined membership
- See sample Meeting Agenda

# Leadership Meeting

## Sample Meeting Agenda

*The following can be used for meetings of parish group leaders:  
(Ministries, Organizations, Committees)*

### Introductions

- Ask leaders to sit together with other leaders of same ministry, organization or committee in small groups.
- Invite each person to introduce themselves
  - Name, Parish
  - Group (ministry, organization, committee) role
  - Briefly state what you most appreciate about your involvement.

### Prayer

Invite parish leaders from same groups to share their responses to the reflection questions.

- **Reading from Scripture: 1 Cor 12:4-7**  
*“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”*
- **Reflection Question:**  
What gifts do I see my current parish bringing to the new parish? What gifts might I be open to receive from the other parish communities?

### Break – Refreshments

### Discussion

How can our groups become one?

- Leadership
- Meetings
- Activities
- Events
- Other Concerns
- (Training and Scheduling for Liturgical Ministers)

### Plan Meeting for All Members

- Date
  - Time
  - Place
- (See Membership Sample Agenda)

### Closing Prayer

*Building a New Parish Community – Transition Prayer*

# Membership Meeting

## *Sample Meeting Agenda*

### **Introductions**

In small groups, invite each person to introduce themselves.

- Name, Parish
- Group (ministry, organization, committee) role
- Briefly state what you most appreciate about your involvement.

### **Prayer**

Invite members to share their responses to reflection questions with someone from another parish.

- **Reading from Scripture: Eph 4:1-6**

*“I, then, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

- **Reflection Question:**

How will “striving to preserve the unity of the spirit” help us in the process of integrating the many different gifts that each of the parishes will bring to the new parish community? How will the virtues of humility, gentleness, patience and love help me in the process of building a new parish community?

### **Break – Refreshments**

### **Discussion**

Leadership reports on the suggested reconfiguration.

- Leadership
- Meetings
- Activities
- Events
- Other important details
- (Training and Scheduling for Liturgical Ministers)

### **Reminder of Next Meeting/Event**

- Date
  - Time
  - Place
- (See Sample Agenda)

### **Closing Prayer**

*Building a New Parish Community – Transition Prayer*

# 6

## *Staffing the New Parish*

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### **Assess Current Parishes' Staff Positions**

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- Each current pastor should identify how the following functions within the parish are being performed: Administrative/secretarial/receptionist, Business Management, Cemetery, Maintenance/custodial, Parish Outreach Services, Parish Pastoral Services, Religious Education and Sacristan Duties. Include job descriptions and contracts.
- Identify whether these functions are performed by an employee, independent contractor or volunteer. Include employees' resumes and basic hire information.

---

### **Discuss and Determine Staff Needs for the New Parish**

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- The Transitional Team discusses the overall needs of the new parish, examining the needs of the community, rather than attempting to match current positions with incumbent employees, volunteers or independent contracts.
- Develop job descriptions for needed positions (see sample job description – Appendix F)
- Determine positions needed by examining current resources, including current positions and budgets.
- A staff person from the Human Resources Office can participate with the committee to facilitate identification of resources, as well as to help with legal and employee relation problems

---

### **Establish Process for Hiring New Staff**

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- Identify a process for filling any vacant or newly created positions (e.g., current staff having the opportunity to apply for any newly created positions).

---

### **Current Staff Not Continuing Employment**

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- If there are members of the staff that will not continue employment as a result of restructuring, they must be informed appropriately. (A sample Lay Off letter is included in Appendix G.) Employees, who are laid off, will receive pay for any accrued but unused vacation.
- Staff, who are laid off as a result of parish restructuring, will continue to receive health benefits at no cost to the employee for three months from the date of their last day of service.

**Please note:** Employees, who are laid off, have the option of converting the Group Life insurance to an individual plan. The time for this conversion is limited, so they must take action immediately after the last day of employment. The Parish Business Manager can provide the necessary forms.



# 7

## *Opening of New Parish Building a New Parish Community*

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### **PUBLICIZE**

---

Publicize new parish information to all parishioners, including Mass times, address/parish contact information, web site by means of:

- Letter or new parish information packet mailed to all parishioners
- All information posted on new parish web site
- Create insert for current parish bulletins

---

### **CELEBRATE**

---

Celebrate Mass for Formal Opening of the Parish

- Include music familiar to all parishioners
- Ensure liturgical ministers represent all parishes
- Include in liturgy, sacred vessels, art and environment from all parishes

---

### **BUILD**

---

Host open house and other community building events, such as:

- Prayer services
- Socials
- Ministry fairs

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### **INTEGRATE**

---

Continue to integrate the traditions and practices of former parish communities into all new parish events and activities.

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### **UNITE**

---

Continue to unite all ministries, organizations, committees and activities.

## Appendix A

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### **Recourse Against the Administrative Decree Merging the Parishes**

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Church law provides the opportunity for those claiming to be aggrieved by a decree to seek recourse in accord with the Code of Canon Law (canons 1732 through 1739). Before initiating formal recourse, and within ten (10) business days of the legal notification of the decree merging the parishes (canon 1734 §2), a written petition from a person (canon 96) who considers himself or herself aggrieved by the decree merging the parishes must be directed to:

Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia  
222 N 17 Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

If the Archbishop's response leaves the person who considers himself or herself aggrieved still dissatisfied, then the author of the initial petition seeking revocation or amendment of the decree has fifteen (15) business days to initiate formal recourse to the Congregation for the Clergy (canon 1737 §2). Should the Archbishop not respond to the initial petition, the time period for the person who considers himself or herself aggrieved to initiate formal recourse begins on the thirtieth day after the petition for revocation or amendment was submitted (canon 1735).

In these instances, the recourse is addressed to the Congregation for the Clergy. This can be submitted directly to the following address:

His Eminence Beniamino Cardinal Stella  
Prefect  
Congregation for the Clergy  
Piazza Pio XII 3  
00193 Rome, Italy

Or, through the office of the Apostolic Nunciature:  
Apostolic Nunciature  
United States of America  
3339 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20008-3610

Or, through the office of the Archbishop (address above)

The person making recourse against the decree has the right to engage the services of a canon lawyer (canon 1738).

Any questions or comments on these guidelines, please contact the Chancery (215-587-4538).

## **Appendix B**

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### **Merger of Parishes: Canonical Guidelines**

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Only the Archbishop can establish, suppress, merge or otherwise notably alter parishes. Before doing so he is required to consult with the council of priests (canon 515§2).

#### **Parish Sacramental Records**

New sacramental record books should be started as of the date of the formal opening of the parish. No additional entries are to be made into the old sacramental record books. All of these records are to be kept at the new parish office. (Going forward, if weddings or other sacraments are celebrated in those churches used as worship sites, they are to be recorded in the new sacramental records of the new parish.)

When issuing a sacramental certificate for a sacrament which had been administered in one of the parishes joined in the merger: beneath the name and address of the new parish, type in the name of the church where the sacrament was actually administered.

#### **Parish Seal**

The parish seal with the name of the new parish and parish church may continue to be used. The seals of the other parishes should not be used. They should be sent to the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center (PAHRC) for preservation.

#### **Parish Historical Records**

The historical or financial records of the individual parishes that were joined in the merger should not be destroyed. Non-sacramental records of the parishes should be sent to the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center (PAHRC) for preservation.

#### **Announced Masses**

A new book of Mass intentions should be started as of the date of the formal opening of the parish. The announced Mass intentions of the individual merged parishes should be combined equitably into the new book. Preference should be given to those intentions which are identified as being related to the date scheduled (such as the anniversary of death). Others should be scheduled as close to the original date as possible.

Parishioners should be notified that the dates of announced Masses may have to be changed as the Mass Intention books are merged. Anyone who wishes to cancel a requested intention should be refunded any stipend they gave.

#### **Parish Membership and Registration**

All of those living within the boundaries of the new parish are members of that parish. The registration records of merged territorial parishes should be combined. Should parishioners wish to register in some other nearby parish, the pastor is encouraged to be flexible in allowing them to do so.

Members of merged personal parishes should be notified that they have the option of belonging to the newly merged successor parish, the parish in which they actually live (if other than the successor parish),

or in the nearest qualifying personal parish. If they do not make a choice they will automatically be registered as members of the merged successor parish.

Regardless of parish membership or registration, Catholics are always free to attend Mass in any Catholic Church.

**Use of Non-Parish Churches (AKA Worship Site Churches)**

The parish church is to be the normal site for the celebration of the Sacraments. Funerals and devotions, however, may always be celebrated in a worship site church.

On special occasions, such as a feast day related to the church patron, the pastor is authorized to have Mass celebrated in a worship site church.

Weddings that are already scheduled for worship site churches may take place as planned. Going forward, weddings should be scheduled only for the parish church, unless permission is obtained from the chancery.

Baptism, Confirmation and the Easter Triduum are to be celebrated only in the parish church.

The Most Blessed Sacrament must be reserved in the parish church. Permission is given to reserve the Most Blessed Sacrament in worship site churches, provided that there is a genuine pastoral advantage in doing so and provided that the Blessed Sacrament is renewed regularly.

The names of all churches are to be maintained, unless otherwise determined.

**Canonical Ownership of Parish Property and the Intentions of Donors**

All property of the individual parishes becomes the canonical property of the merged successor parish. Items (such as ciboria, vestments, etc.) donated by parishioners of the individual parishes can be used by the merged successor parish as needed.

It is presumed that items were donated for the use of the Church without conditions, unless such conditions were expressed at the time of the donation. It is not necessary, therefore, to consult with those who made donations about their current wishes for such objects. Sensitivity, however, should be shown in the disposition of donated items. Items donated for use in worship should not be returned to the donor. They may, however, be transferred for use in another parish.

When conditions were placed upon donations, such as with funds donated for a particular purpose, the intention of the donors must be respected.

**Chapels**

Should there be a chapel or oratory in a rectory, convent, or a within a worship site church which is no longer going to be used, please notify the chancery so that a decree can be issued relegating the space for non-religious use.

Contact: Rev. Monsignor Gerard Measure, Chancellor....215-587-4538

## **Appendix B-1**

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### **REGULATIONS FOR THE USE OF A WORSHIP SITE WITHIN A PARISH OTHER THAN THE PARISH CHURCH**

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*[Originally promulgated by Cardinal Bevilacqua on June 28, 2000; confirmed by Cardinal Rigali on November 1, 2006; revised and promulgated by Cardinal Rigali on June 3, 2011; revised and promulgated by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. on March 12, 2012.]*

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has established the following regulations regarding parishes which have a worship site in addition to the parish church. These regulations apply to all parish worship sites, other than the parish church, established on or after July 1, 2011. All other parishes having parish worship sites in addition to the parish church are to strive to conform to these regulations as circumstances permit.

1. The parish church is the primary place of worship of a particular parish where the sacraments and other religious services are celebrated throughout the liturgical year. The pastor is responsible to assure the availability of the parish church for the sacramental life of all the members of the parish community. A worship site other than the parish church, on the other hand, is a church situated within a parish's boundaries and used primarily for devotional services.
2. Among the just causes for the establishment of a worship site in addition to the parish church are:
  - a. to allow greater accessibility of the faithful to devotional services;
  - b. to accommodate larger numbers of the faithful, particularly if the parish church is too small for a particular liturgical or devotional celebration.
3. In keeping with canon law and existing archdiocesan guidelines, the Paschal Triduum, the sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, first Eucharist), weddings, and other sacramental rites (including first Penance, communal penance services, communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick, etc.) are to be celebrated in the parish church and are not to be celebrated in any other worship site within the parish that is in addition to the parish church.
4. The Rite of Christian Funerals, including the Funeral Mass, may be permitted in a worship site within the parish other than the parish church.
5. Permission in individual cases may be given by the Chancery for a wedding to be celebrated in the worship site.
6. For pastoral reasons, sacramental rites (including first Penance, communal penance services, communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick, etc.) may be celebrated in the worship site.
7. For pastoral reasons, devotional services (such as ceremonies associated with a patronal feast, a public novena, stations of the cross, etc.) may also be permitted in a worship site.
8. In situations where worship sites have been created as a result of the merger of two or more parishes, every effort must be made to prepare the parishioners to celebrate every Sunday Liturgy together in the Parish Church. If the Pastor of the new parish in consultation with his Parish Councils would determine that providing Sunday Mass in a Worship Site for a short period will help parishioners to make the transition to one worshipping community in the parish Church, Sunday Mass may be offered in the Worship Site(s) during the one year of transition.

## **Appendix C**

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### **Office for Parish Service & Support Procedures**

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- Review “Preliminary” Annual Parish Financial Report (APFR) for the current parishes as of the merge date. In certain situations, audits can be as of June in preparation for the September submission of the APFR. Business Manager of the new parish will be responsible for completion of final APFR.
- Determine whether payroll function is performed internally or by an outside service provider.
- Ensure that all payroll of the current parishes will be processed prior to the opening date. This would include teachers who are normally paid over 12 months.
- Determine who will file final quarterly tax filings. “Final” return must be checked off on the last return for the parish.
- Determine that all tax filings with respective federal, state and local municipalities are current as of audit.
- Determine who will file W-2’s for the current parishes. This information should be provided to new parish.
- Determine who will file 1099 Forms for the current parishes. This information should be provided to new parish.
- Determine who will file pension information with Pension Office. This could be done by the current parishes. Parish should complete termination pension form and return to Pension Office.
- Ensure that all bank accounts are reconciled as of audit date. It is advisable that all accounts other than the Parish Operating Account be closed out prior to the merger date.
- Ensure that all banking activity is ceased as of merger date.
- Investigate all remaining outstanding transactions and ask Business Manager to contact appropriate parties regarding outstanding items.
- All census data should be maintained at the new parish.
- Ensure that the current parishes receive and pay all diocesan invoices where feasible prior to merger date, if possible. If not, the new parish will be responsible for payment.

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### **Office for Parish Service & Support - Follow Up**

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- Determine that appropriate financial records are forwarded to new parish.
- Follow-up: Determine that “final” tax filings with federal, state and local municipalities are made.
- Transfer hard copies of payroll records (941, check register, etc.) to new parish.

## Appendix D

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### **Liturgical Celebration to Mark the Formal Closure of a Parish**

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The Mass to mark the formal closure of a parish should be as inclusive of the whole parish community as possible. Those entrusted with planning this celebration might consider the use of the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water, a procession with the *Book of Gospels*, and Holy Communion under Both Kinds. These elements highlight the essential bonds of communion within the parish – Baptism, the proclamation of the Word of God and participation in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord in the Mystery of the Eucharist. If the liturgical calendar permits, the *Roman Missal* and *Lectionary for Mass* texts can be taken from the Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions (for example, For Giving Thanks to God, ), which might be more suited to the occasion.

#### **Introduction after the Greeting**

*After the greeting, the priest celebrant may possibly speak to the assembly in these or similar words:*

We gather today to give thanks to God for the many years that (NAME) Parish has served us as a community of faith. While there is sadness in the closing of this parish, we can be grateful for all that it has provided us.

Although this is our last celebration in (NAME) Parish, we will continue to hear God’s Word and share the Eucharist as a people of faith. In a spirit of gratitude, let us bring to this celebration of the Mass the memories of all the many blessings and graces we have received in this parish and trust in the providence of God as we soon become members of a new parish.

#### **Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water**

*This rite is found in Appendix II of the Roman Missal.*

#### **Possible Petitions to be included in the Prayer of the Faithful**

For the pastors, priest and deacons, religious and lay staff who have faithfully served in this parish in so many ways throughout its history, let us pray to the Lord.

For ourselves, the members of (NAME) Parish, that the gifts and graces we have received here in this holy place will guide us as we become members of a new community of faith, let us pray to the Lord.

#### **Possible Ceremony to follow the Dismissal**

##### **Priest Celebrant:**

My brothers and sisters,

Now that this Mass has ended and we leave this church to become parishioners of a new parish, let us turn to the Father in thanksgiving for the many ways the sacred images and places in this building have formed us as the Body of Christ and have led us to deeper grasp of the presence of God in our lives.

**At the Image or Statue of the Parish's Patron**

Priest: Let us remember our parish patron (NAME) and the many blessings we have received through his/her intercession.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for the inspiration and spiritual patronage bestowed on us through our devotion to (NAME OF PATRON).

All: Blessed be God forever!

**At the Shrine of Our Lady**

Priest: Let us remember the generations of prayer and devotion that this sacred image of Mary has inspired over the years.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for the comfort and the consolation we have received through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother.

All: Blessed be God forever!

**At the Twelfth Station of the Cross**

Priest: Let us remember those who walked these stations of prayer and devotion over the years.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: The twelfth station of Christ's Way of the Cross, "Jesus Dies on the Cross." We adore you O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

All: Blessed be God forever!

**At the Font**

Priest: Let us remember the Sacrament of Baptism celebrated over the years here at this font.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for the life of faith given to all who have passed through the waters of new life at this font.

All: *Blessed be God forever!*



**At the Confessional or Reconciliation Chapel**

Priest: Let us remember the times we have been forgiven, comforted and consoled in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for the healing and reconciling love that has been given through the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

All: *Blessed be God forever!*

**At the Ambo**

Priest: Let us remember the power of God's Word proclaimed here at the ambo.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for your holy Word. May it always echo in our hearts and lives.

All: *Blessed be God forever!*

**At the Altar**

Priest: Let us remember the many times we have gathered at the altar of the Sacrifice of Jesus.

*Pause for a moment of silence.*

Priest: We thank you for nourishing us with the body and blood of your Son. May this saving mystery lead us to the joys of eternal life. Strengthened by this sacrament may we be open to what lies ahead.

All: Blessed be God forever!

**Priest Celebrant:**

My brothers and sisters,

Our thanksgiving for the sacred images and places in this church reminds us of the enduring reality they represent. Mary and all the Saints continue to intercede for us that we may be faithful to all that God asks of us in this time and in all times. The Word of God guides us and the Holy Body and Blood nourishes us to love and serve Him now and throughout our lives and one day in glory.

May our thanksgiving strengthen and encourage us to walk bravely the new path set before us with confidence in God's providence as members of a new family of faith.

*A suitable hymn or instrumental music may follow.*

## Appendix E

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### **Liturgical Celebration to Mark the Formal Opening of a New Parish**

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The Mass to mark the formal opening of a new parish should be as inclusive of the whole new parish community as possible. Those entrusted with planning this celebration might consider the use of the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water, a procession with the *Book of Gospels*, and Holy Communion under Both Kinds. These elements highlight the essential bonds of communion within the parish – Baptism, the proclamation of the Word of God and participation in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord in the Mystery of the Eucharist. If the liturgical calendar permits, the *Roman Missal* and *Lectionary for Mass* texts can be taken from the Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions (for example, For the Holy Church), which might be more suited to the occasion.

It is most important that for this celebration of the formal opening of a new parish that there is a blend of liturgical ministries from all the former parishes that have now become the new parish. The liturgical music that is planned should be familiar to all those assembled for the celebration of Mass. Hospitality on this occasion includes signage for rest rooms and other directional information for those who may be in the church building for the first time. Finally, and perhaps a sensitive point, greeters and ushers should assist with arranging for seating for all in all parts of the church building.

#### **Introduction after the Greeting**

*After the greeting, the priest celebrant might possibly speak to the assembly in these or similar words:*

We assemble for this first Sunday as a community of faith in our new parish to give thanks to Almighty God for his continued providence. Many of us have passed through a time of grief and loss and now we have arrived at a time of grace and blessing as members of this new parish. In this church, we find a new unity as God's people from our bonds in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, especially as we receive the Holy Body and Blood of Christ. May the Word of God today and always form and guide us as the family of faith in the parish of (NAME).

#### **Rites for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water**

*This rite is found in Appendix II of the Roman Missal.*

#### **Possible Petitions to be included in the Prayer of the Faithful**

That Monsignor/Father (NAME PASTOR), our new pastor, our deacons, religious and lay staff may be filled with the fire of God's love to lead this new parish community in faith, fidelity to the Gospel, and in service to one another. Let us pray to the Lord.

That all of us, members of this new parish community, may rejoice in hearing God's Word and celebrating the Sacraments and become stronger witnesses to Christ in his Church and in the world. Let us pray to the Lord.

## Appendix F

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### SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

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**TITLE:** Receptionist

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Regular, Full Time, Non-Exempt

**MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

To welcome visitors and parishioners, receive and route telephone calls, and provide clerical support in an office.

**SUPERVISION RECEIVED:**

On-going direct supervision from Office Manager and/or designated Supervisor.

**SUPERVISION GIVEN:**

- Position does not provide supervision for any other employees.

**POSITION CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Work is generally routine; most tasks are well defined, but with considerable variation; some phases of the work are less well-defined and may require independent action.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Welcomes visitors to the office, assists them in making appointments, assures their comfort, and directs them to the proper staff or service; maintains a calendar of staff location and appointments as needed.
- Answers telephones; screens calls, forward calls and/or records and forwards messages accurately; may transcribe messages from telephone answering machine.
- Receives, sorts, and distributes mail within the office; files correspondence and other materials as required.
- Types forms, letters and other documents as required at acceptable levels of speed and accuracy; collates and photocopies materials as necessary; maintains supply of forms and charts as needed.
- Maintains necessary files; sorts, files, and retrieves documents and records.
- Maintains parishioner confidentiality in conformance with parish's confidentiality policy
- and State laws and regulations.
- Other duties as assigned.

**REPRESENTATIVE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

- Knowledge of and orientation to the mission of the parish as presented in Mission statements.
- Ability to establish and maintain a positive and professional relationship with co-workers, parishioners, and visitors; cultural sensitivity and ability to relate well and effectively in a diverse workplace and with a diverse population.
- Typing ability at required speed and accuracy
- Considerable knowledge of English, spelling and punctuation, office practices and procedures.
- Ability to organize, efficiently document and routinely update information; ability to apply procedures to work problems and situations.
- Familiarity with DOS/Windows/Windows XP operating system (as applicable) and proficiency in required software, including currently supported versions of Microsoft Office Suite, WordPerfect, etc.)
- Ability to operate and trouble-shoot general office equipment (e.g., copier, fax, calculator, etc.).
- Flexibility in responding courteously to immediate needs of visitors and callers; ability to establish priorities and maintain productivity despite numerous interruptions.
- May require fluency in predominant language of parishioner population served.

**OTHER REQUIREMENTS:**

- High School graduate with one year of experience in clerical work or any equivalent combination of acceptable training and experience for Receptionist
- One to three years of experience as Secretary/Receptionist

Contact: Human Resources Office, 215-587-3911

## Appendix G

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### **Sample Letter: Notification of Layoff**

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*Insert Parish Letterhead*

Date

Name

Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear :

As has been discussed with you, your position will be eliminated in conjunction with organizational changes taking place within {PARISH}. Please be assured that this action is due to operational and financial necessity. It in no way should be construed as a reflection of your job performance or service to {PARISH}. The effective date will be {DATE}.

You will receive your remaining pay according to the regular pay cycle. You are also eligible to apply for unemployment compensation benefits through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of Employment Security. All decisions regarding the eligibility for benefits are made by that office. {PARISH} will verify that your employment has ended in conjunction with a layoff.

#### Medical/Dental Coverage

You will remain on the medical and dental plans at the employer's expense until {insert date - 3 months from the last day of service}. At that time you may opt to continue coverage for an additional six months at your own expense. The monthly premium for your {PLAN} medical coverage is currently {PRICE}. Your {PLAN} dental coverage is {PRICE}.

Therefore, if you elect to continue medical and dental coverage beyond {insert date - 3 months from the last day of service} you must send a check payable to {---} in the amount of {Medical + Dental} to {Address} by DATE. Subsequent payments must be received by the first of each month for which you wish to continue coverage. Otherwise your coverage will cease at the end of the month for which payment was last received.

#### Voluntary Group Term Life Insurance

If you wish, you may apply to convert your voluntary group term insurance with CIGNA to an individual policy. If you choose this option, the enclosed APPLICATION FOR CONTINUATION OF INSURANCE UNDER LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY OF NORTH AMERICA provides you with detailed information concerning conversion. To be eligible, you must complete this application and submit it to the address listed on the form within one month from your date of termination.

Sample letter – page 2:

Pension Plan

In order to be vested in the pension plan, an employee must have five years of service. Your date of hire was (insert date). Therefore, you have not (OR have) met the service requirement for vesting and will not (OR will) be entitled to receive a benefit.

Long Term Disability

This coverage terminates on your last day of employment, which is will be {DATE}.

Vacation

You will be paid for any accrued but unused vacation time.

Miscellaneous

Please be sure to return your photo identification card, keys and any other items belonging to (insert name of Parish).

{Name}, please be assured that this very difficult decision in no way is meant to indicate anything about your abilities, skills and commitment to the {PARISH}. The service you provided is appreciated. Thank you again for all your service to our parish community.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this letter, or the terms listed, or would like any assistance in your job search, please do not hesitate to contact {PARISH} at (insert parish phone number).

Sincerely,

Pastor

## Appendix H

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### Archdiocesan Offices and Staff

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**Office for Parish Services and Support**

Marc A. Fisher, CPA, Director  
215-587-3995

**Office for General Counsel**

215-587-0511

**Office for Catechetical Formation**

Ann Menna, Director,  
Parish Elementary Religious Education  
215-587-3720

**Philadelphia Archdiocese  
Historical Research Center**

Joseph J. Casino, Director  
610-667-2125

**Catholic Cemeteries Office**

Robert Whomsley, Director  
215-587-3450

**Office for Information Technology**

Franz Fruehwald, Chief Information Officer  
215-854-7067

**Catholic Social Services**

Edward Lis, Director,  
Catholic Mission Integration  
215-587-3900

**Office for Insurance Services**

Charles J. Debevec, Director  
215-587-3644

**Chancery**

Monsignor Gerard Mesure  
215-587-4538

**Office for Life and Family**

Steven Bozza, Director  
215-587-5661

**Office for Communications**

215-587-3747

**Office for Real Estate Services**

**Deacon Thomas Croke**  
215-587-5624

**Office of the Vicar for Cultural Ministries**

Reverend Bruce Lewandowski, Director  
215-667-2822

**Office for Special Projects/Closures**

Edmund Rafferty  
Ecclesiastical Exchange Program  
215-587-3996

**Office for Divine Worship**

Reverend Dennis Gill, Director  
215-587-3537

May, 2014

