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OFFICE for PASTORAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

Pastoral Planning for PPA 570

As a part of Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning, five parishes of Pastoral Planning Area #570 (Mother of Divine Grace Parish, Nativity B.V.M. Parish, Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Saint Adalbert Parish, and Saint George Parish) were asked last October to enter into discussions to formulate a proposal by which these five parishes could possibly be reduced to two or three parishes. A Parish Planning Committee made up of representatives from each of the parishes, the pastors, a priest coordinator, and a facilitator met together over several months in an attempt to draft a recommendation. This recommendation was to be submitted to the Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee, which oversees pastoral planning in the Archdiocese.

In March of this year the parishes reported to the Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee that despite making a good faith effort they were not able to reach a consensus on a recommendation. They noted that the issues the parishes face are complex and do not allow for a simple solution. They agreed to accept whatever decision Archbishop Chaput would make for the area.

The Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee considered the issues involved and made a recommendation to Archbishop Chaput. The Archbishop, after discussing the matter with the Council of Priests, has decided:

- 1) The complex and difficult issues in PPA 570 will require further study and discussion before any final decisions are made. It is noted that the special circumstances in this area include a number of personal parishes, some large parish complexes that are difficult to maintain and in close proximity, a declining number of active Catholics in the area, and serious financial difficulties in several of the parishes.
- 2) The Parish Planning Committee for PPA 570 will be asked to resume deliberations in the Fall of 2015. The primary focus will be on ways the parishes can collaborate in sharing pastoral ministry and resources.
- 3) The Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee is to work on formulating structures that will facilitate a formal collaboration between parishes.

The pastors and other members of the Parish Planning Committee have performed a great service by participating in this parish study and by making a good faith effort to reach a consensus on a proposal. Hopefully by continued discussions they will be able to find ways to build stronger ties between various parishes in the area and so that they will be better able to share the Gospel.