

Parishes of Cluster 71 Post Information

Data is delivered and a context is provided

In developing Cluster 71's Pastoral Plan, the members of the Cluster Pastoral Planning Committee recognized how census data and the Report to Pastor had helped them to understand the present situation and plan for the future. They believed that it was important to make this information available to all parishioners. The parishes of Cluster 71 agreed to post their Report to Pastor for 1997, 2000, and 2001 on the Cluster page of the Archdiocesan web site. These reports provide information about the parish over an eleven year period. The committee hoped

that this would provide a better understanding of the issues and concerns within individual parishes and the Cluster.

The Committee made the creation of a Cluster web site a goal of their Cluster Pastoral Plan. A web professional donated his time and knowledge to the Cluster, and helped to create the Cluster web site. He also worked with the committee to test the functionality of the web site. A new committee was created to maintain the web site and post information that is useful to everyone in the cluster. This committee relies on the parishes to submit updates and new information.

In addition to this web based information, members of the Cluster Implementation Com-

mittee requested assistance from the Office for Research and Planning in writing bullet points for publication in their parish bulletins concerning demographic trends. Some examples are:

- ❖ Twenty-five percent of all the households registered in the parishes of Cluster 71 are single persons. How do the parishes of Cluster 71 foster a sense of community among these people? You can see all of the living arrangements of the people who live in the cluster in U.S. Census Report 4 on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia web site for cluster 71,
- ❖ There are 4 parish schools in Cluster 71. Between 1990 and 2000, the

number of children enrolled in the schools in the Cluster declined from 1,455 to 1,327; the number of children in elementary and junior high parish religious education (CCD, grades K-8) increased 45% from 652 to 947. How will the parishes of Cluster 71 continue to provide for the religious education and faith formation of the children of the parishes? You can see the summaries of the data reported by the parishes on the Archdiocese of Philadelphia web site for cluster 71,

The Office for Research and Planning can help your parish to develop new ways to share information with parishioners. We can assist in the preparation of bullet points concerning demographics and the writing of questions that can prompt further reflection about the data and how it relates to the parish's efforts to live out its mission. We can also provide an electronic copy of the Report to Pastor. +

Internet Use Increases, Many Seeking Religious Info

The Internet can offer your parish another point of contact with which people are becoming more comfortable and familiar. The Pew Internet & American Life Project is a non-profit, non-partisan research organization fully funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts to examine how Internet use affects many aspects of our lives. This initiative may be of interest to those in the parish responsible for developing plans for evangelization, youth and young adult ministry, parish communication and other outreach programs. Some findings of the project:

- 60% of Americans now have Internet access
- 40% of Americans have been online for more than three years
- 25% of internet users have gotten religious or spiritual information online at one point or another. This is an increase from findings in late 2000, which showed 21%.
- 28 million American Internet users have gotten religious and spiritual material online.
- 3 million internet users report getting religious or spiritual material each day; this is up from 2 million reported last year.
- More people have sought spiritual information online than have gone to gambling Web sites, participated in online auctions, traded stocks online, or done online banking.
- 78% of middle and high school students use the Internet
- 86% of college students have gone online, compared with 59 percent of the general population.

The complete report can be found at www.pewinternet.org. You can locate information about specific topics studied by clicking "Our Reports" on the menu bar on the left side of the page.

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Local Pastors Contribute to National Study

Pastors in the Dioceses of Syracuse, Harrisburg and Rochester, and the Archdioceses of Dubuque and Philadelphia have given very positive assessments of their dioceses' planning efforts that took place before 1995. The study was conducted by the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development and funded by the Raskob Foundation. In 2000 the same pastors who were involved in parish reorganization efforts at least five years earlier were asked to evaluate the outcomes of these efforts.

Based on eight measures of effectiveness, these dioceses have been highly successful in carrying out planning and reorganization activities.

The eight measures include four related to parish outcomes, one related to the planning process, and three related to the pastor. They are:

PARISH OUTCOMES:

- parish needs are being met after the planning process;
- there is an increase in parish needs being met;
- parish ministry has been enhanced; and
- the parish has a greater sense of purpose.

PLANNING PROCESS:

- the reorganization was carefully planned.

PASTOR:

- more time is spent on direct pastoral care;
- less time is spent on administrative duties; and
- there is increased personal effectiveness.

An effort that resulted in no net change in the parish and pastor outcome measures would receive a

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Mailing list

The Office for Research and Planning has a mailing list for those who wish to receive notice of new pastoral planning resources and statistical information, either by electronic or regular mail. Please pass this information on to parish staff, members of Parish Pastoral Councils and leaders of parish organizations. They can contact the Office for Research and Planning at 215-587-3545 or resplan@adphila.org to request that their name be added to our mailing list.

Common Characteristics of Top Dioceses

Planning is mandatory for all parishes throughout the diocese.

The process makes use of middle-level structures (deaneries, clusters).

The process is highly consultative (including pastors, parish pastoral councils, and middle-level structures).

The most important goal is that parishes maintain or achieve a full ministry program (4 of 5 named this as a central principle).

Other key goals or criteria named by a majority of these dioceses are: Mass is accessible (no one would travel an unreasonable distance), priests would not be overextended, and each parish would celebrate Eucharist every Sunday.

score of 68%. A perfect score on all measures would be 100%.

The scores for the five highest dioceses were:

• Dubuque	92%
• Syracuse	91%
• Harrisburg	89%
• Philadelphia	88%
• Rochester	86%

All of these scores are indicative of highly positive outcomes of parish reorganization

efforts. These dioceses also achieved results that were at least 5 percentage points higher than the 81% average average score for all survey respondents.

To assess overall performance in dioceses, only those dioceses with at least eight parish responses were considered in this analysis. Consequently, other dioceses with fewer responses may also have positive outcomes. †

U.S. Census Reports for Parishes

Learn more about the demographic composition of the people living within the boundaries of every territorial parish of the Archdiocese. U.S. Census Reports 1 - 4 cover a number of topics, including Age, Hispanic Origin and Race, Share of Population Registered Catholic, Age and Age Cohorts, and Household and Housing Characteristic. Locate a parish at <http://www.archphila.org/parishes/index.html> and click on one of the links to the U.S. Census Reports.

**SUPPORT FOR
PASTORAL PLANNING**

Fostering an Environment for Growth

The new life celebrated in the Paschal mystery and the beauty of Spring remind us of the call to ongoing renewal.

In his book, *The Parish as Covenant*, Thomas Sweetser, S.J., offers three questions that promote growth:

*As we plan for the future,
what do we need to hold on to?*

What should we let go of?

What new things should we initiate?



The first question provides an opportunity to affirm the good things that are happening. It is beneficial to discuss how to sustain and strengthen them.

The second question offers a chance to acknowledge what needs to be relinquished. This "pruning" permits energies and resources to be used in other ways. The third question recognizes the possibility of emerging issues.

These questions complement the questions that the Parish Pastoral Council considers during the Annual Self-Assessment of the Parish Plan. The answers can help parish organizations to set priorities for the coming year. †

Visions and Dreams

*"Your old ones will dream dreams and your young ones will have visions."
(Joel 3:1-2)*

This promise of our God is still true today as it is in each generation. We still dream dreams and have visions of our own future, our individual future and our future life as a community. These visions should be embraced as life-giving. The creativity of the youth and the wisdom of the elders come together in a community and move us into the unknown future with a certainty of purpose that can only be called inspired.



But, in order for these visions and dreams to become real, they must be discussed, challenged, and supported. Once the community has discerned its course of action, the important task is to come together to implement those ideas and make the dream a reality. This is a corporal undertaking which relies on all the members of the parish community. Once the community has acted, those visionaries must evaluate the actions in relation to the plan that was originally formed. This is the cycle of pastoral planning. It is an ongoing process of dreaming, discerning, acting, and evaluating. This is the role of the parish pastoral council.

Therefore, although it is important to include a diversity of people on the council, it is more important to select individuals who are visionary, who see the larger picture and mission of the parish, and who are not afraid to dream together.

This is also why it is important for council members to pray and reflect together. For as we come together to reflect on Scripture we are really focusing on God's dream for us. As we are inspired by that dream we find the ability to work together to build the Kingdom which Christ proclaimed and which binds us all together as one people of God. †

*We welcome Bob Choiniere, Program Coordinator for Parish Pastoral Councils,
as a contributor to this newsletter and look forward to other collaborations
to support the work of Councils.*

The Leader's Role in Implementing a Plan

If knowledge of Church teachings and the needs of the parish is the head of a plan and the feelings and beliefs of the pastor and parishioners are the heart, then the resources of time, talent and treasure are its legs. Without the legs, the head and heart can't go anywhere.

Attracting and retaining the time and talent of parishioners who are willing and ready to take on some of the work of the parish is always a challenge for parish leaders. Without good people to work on carrying out the work of the parish, nothing will get accomplished. Employers also have difficulty attracting and retaining good people and what they have found out can also be helpful to parishes. For one thing, it's not the money and benefits that keep people interested in working for an organization if they have alternatives, it's the characteristics of the work they are being asked to do and the leader for whom they work.

Qualities of an Effective Parish Leader

1. Trust builder: Creates a sense of trust and concern with parish workers

2. Esteem builder: Develops ways to give parish workers responsibility, freedom to act, and to feel good about themselves

3. Communicator: Communicates the importance of the work to be done to parish workers effectively

4. Climate builder: Develops ways to make parish work and the parish workplace enjoyable and fulfilling

5. Flexibility expert: Recognizes, understand and adapts to individual needs and concerns.

6. Talent developer and coach: Develops and coaches parish workers to help them grow, which results in greater commitment and loyalty to the Church

7. High performance builder: Creates conditions that reinforce high levels of parish worker performance particularly critical for retaining the most talented people

8. Talent finder: Within the scope of his or her role, actively seeks to identify and select qualified people effectively.

❖ **For more information on this topic see "Working Successfully with Volunteers: Six Secrets" by Katherine A. Menard in Today Parish, September 2002, page 18.**

Volunteering in the U.S. is Alive and Well

More than 1 in 4 people over age 16 have volunteered last year according to a survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The main organizations for which the majority of volunteers worked were either religious (33.9%) or education/youth service related (27.2%). Older volunteers were more likely to volunteer for their church than

their younger counterparts. For example, 45.2 percent of volunteers age 65 and over performed volunteer activities mainly through their church, compared with 28.6

percent of volunteers age 25 to 34 years.

The volunteer rate is higher among women and employed persons. The volunteer rate of college gradu-

ates was four times that of high school dropouts. Volunteers spent a median of 52 hours volunteering during the year.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics News, Dec. 18, 2002

For Consideration:

- ❖ When young adults return home, they bring with them new experiences and skills. How does your parish invite them to become involved and share their time and talent?
- ❖ How are older adults encouraged to serve the parish?

Has your parish revised its Mission Statement or Pastoral Plan?

If your parish has revised its Mission Statement or Pastoral Plan, please forward a copy to the Office for Research and Planning so that we can update our files.

SUMMER TRAINING SESSION Enhancing Skills for Parish Meetings

These sessions are designed to assist those who:

- prepare agendas • lead meetings • wish to have more effective parish meetings

June 18 and 25 Archdiocesan Office Center, Philadelphia

All sessions are two hours in length, and begin at 7:15 PM! If interested, call the Office for Research & Planning 215-587-3545 to register. Space is limited.

PLEASE INCLUDE THIS NOTICE IN YOUR PARISH BULLETIN WHEN SPACE PERMITS.