

Planning Information

For: Pastors, PCA Planning Groups [Trustees/PPC Chairs], other clergy and related ministries
From: Msgr. Jim Lang, Brother Ed Falsey, and Sister Laura Bufano
RE: Projected 2015-2016 Scheduling items

Peace and good things! We pray that your summer has been a time of joy, re-creation, and grace.

This note is meant to provide a helpful overview of the coming year. Its principle items will relate to the pastoral planning process, "Seeing Natural Bridges." Along with this note, we are attaching the "Seeing Natural Bridges" events, but to the calendar we have added all of the diocesan events that are scheduled, so far.

Here are some areas that you will want to share with your team. For the event of "major moment" we encourage consultation with parish consultative bodies, especially the pastoral and finance councils, and the pastoral staff that share in ministry with you. The wider the awareness of our journey, the more collaborative and gracious will be these evolutions in the care of the people of our diocese.

Scheduling Pastoral Care Area – Planning Group Meetings

PCA planning group meeting schedules will continue to be scheduled by the PCA Facilitator in collaboration with the pastors (of course, individual PCAs may find a more collaborative method that suits them.) The diocesan direction for PCA planning group membership remains consistent. The representation of each active parish should include the pastor or pastoral leader, the two parish trustees, and the key two members of the Pastoral Council. The reason is simple. These individuals represent the civil law and canonical collaborative process. As noted above, other groups should be consulted by the planning group, but only the planning group should attend the PCA planning group meetings. The exception to this rule would be the area clergy (other priests and deacons) who audit the meeting.

We know that a number of new parish lay leaders (parish trustees, parish council chairs & vice chairs) have joined the PCA groups since the onset of the "Seeing Natural Bridges Process." It is important that we provide these new leaders with information that will help them to be

successful in their role as pastoral planners. Please note the four regionally based orientation sessions scheduled in September. New members may attend any session that is convenient for them.

Topics:

There has not been a cookie cutter approach to planning. Each of the 27 PCA groups is discerning its own needs. However, there are four foci that are key to each group in the 2015-2016 Church year. They are:

1. The development of inter-parochial activity among the parishes and ministries.

The collaborative choices of PCAs are providing the background for fall and spring "Road Shows." Diocesan Staff members and other specialists will journey to the regions to enable planning groups and others to develop avenues for collaboration.

In the "Seeing Natural Bridges" process each group identified three areas for potential inter-parochial cooperation. The development of healthy inter-parish relationships will enable parishioners to work together more effectively both now and in the future.

The fall "Road Show" will bring diocesan representatives of the first three key areas that members have selected. Those represented offices will be:

- The Office of Evangelization [Discussing Inter-Parish Programs]
- The Office of Faith Formation [Discussing Adult Faith Formation]
- The Office of Communications [Discussing effective intra-parish and inter-parochial communication with parishioners]

The spring "Road Show" will highlight

- The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry [Discussing Young Adult Ministry].
- The Office of Parish Services [Discussing the administrative support system offered by the diocese to assist parish management].
- The Office of Vocation Promotion [Discussing effective ways to promote vocations.

2. The onset of an inter-parochial council will assist parishes to plan together. Sister Laura, Brother Ed, or Msgr. Jim will attend, at least one spring and one fall meeting

of your PCA in the coming year. They will facilitate a guided discussion of your members about the best ways to build an inter-parochial council for your area. This will be, but a beginning.

3. **Mass schedules continue to be a concern for parishes and for the diocese.** The diminished number of Eucharistic Celebrants will impact the number of Masses celebrated throughout the diocese. Pastors have voiced a few legitimate pastoral concerns about the ways to deal with these realities while addressing the current and future needs of parishes. At this time, PCA pastors have been asked to provide a Mass schedule that will allow them to “cover” the weekend Mass schedules of the area should one of them become sick or be away for the Canonical vacation time provided. PCA groups, if they have not already done so, should begin conversation for how Mass schedules will change as the number of priests continues to diminish. Clearly articulating this challenge to parishioners will assist the process when further adjustments to Mass schedules are necessary.

Growing toward linked and clustered parish leadership. Two concerns will require the attention of leadership as we continue our movement to the future. These are: 1) naming a parish management style for when one pastor is leading either a linkage or a cluster. We now have rich experience of the linkages. We are quickly discovering the challenges of cluster leadership. The discussions will explore the models of multi-parish leadership available, including the ‘core parish’ model. 2) We need the PCA groups to join the diocesan discussion about how to identify, invite, train, finance, place, and integrate authorized professional Lay Ecclesial Ministers (LEMs)* into the life of our linked and clustered parishes. **Please notice the sessions with Sister Laura about Lay Ecclesial Ministry** in the fall and spring time periods.

* [Currently, the majority of LEMs serving in the parishes of our diocese are over the age of 60 and may be retiring in the next 5-10 years.]

Other Pastoral Planning Opportunities [not shown on the calendar]:

1. **The Annual Clergy Convocation [“Live in”] at Alexandria Bay, September 21-23**
This year the Clergy Convocation welcomes two outstanding national speakers who will address the practical data and issues that are impacting pastors across the nation. Dr. Mark Gray, the publisher of the blog, 1964, serves as a senior research director at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate [CARA]. Mark Mogilka

is the director of the Office of Stewardship and Planning in the Diocese of Green Bay and served as the chair of the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership Study of Multiple Parish Pastoring and Multiple Parish Ministry. Both will bring us insights and ideas for our conversations, discernment, and prayer.

2. **Parish Priests, Parish Life Directors and Pastoral Coordinators:** Msgr. Lang will be scheduling luncheons with you by PCA so that each local group may have meaningful and candid conversation to establish clarity about the next steps in the evolving future of their area and any unique issues that are facing the planning process of the area. Regional Vicars will be invited to join the luncheons in their area.
3. **A (soon to be announced) Day for Parish Pastoral Councils (PPC) and Parish Finance Councils (PFC)** will take place in the late fall. We have been receiving inquiries about planning parish budgets, and specifically about how a finance council and a pastoral council are to collaborate in this annual effort. The day will be a jointly sponsored event that shares national insight into this significant topic and broadens the participants understanding of the key issues that are involved in creating the annual budget. The day is particularly recommended for the **chairs** of parish finance councils and parish pastoral councils, parish business administrators, and pastors.
4. **Campus Ministry:** The Vicar for Parishes has been asked to revisit the need for Campus Ministry at the Community Colleges of the Diocese [Onondaga Community College, Broome Community College, Mohawk Valley Community College, and Cayuga Community College at Fulton]. In addition, he has been asked to address the needs of the Catholic Communities at Cazenovia College and SUNY at Morrisville. As we prepare for the future the existing campus ministries may expect a visit to discuss their continuing and future good efforts.
5. **National Speaker in Spring Time** – Our diocesan tradition of inviting a national speaker on a topic of interest to parish leadership will continue in the spring. Details will follow.

Conclusion

We hope that this note and the accompanying calendar are useful in our planning for this year. We are grateful for your leadership and are inspired by your example of discipleship.