

CARDINAL'S OFFICE

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November 30, 2011

My Dear Brothers in Christ,

As we have shared on many occasions in recent years, planning for the future is an issue of the greatest importance for the Archdiocese. The means by which we use our resources for the spread of the Gospel calls for significant reflection and deliberation. We are blessed that the Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Commission and our Planning Office have been working on this project. They have provided regular updates to the Presbyteral Council and to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. The Commission is now prepared to offer a proposal for our consideration.

To begin the process of reviewing and discussing the Commission's proposal, I am calling for a consultation with our presbyterate on Monday, December 5, 2011 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at Lantana's, located at 43 Scanlon Drive in Randolph. It is my sincere hope that all diocesan priests and the religious priests stationed in the Archdiocese, particularly those assigned to our parishes, will attend. With recognition that planning for mission is crucial to our future, I ask you to make every effort to be present for this meeting. Members of the Commission will be present to listen to our discussion concerning their proposal, as a help to their ongoing work. In light of the importance of this meeting for the Archdiocese and its future, I have also asked members of the Cabinet and our Boston seminarians to attend.

To assist with your preparation for the meeting, attached please find materials from the Planning Commission for your review. <u>It is important that these documents remain confidential until we have had a chance to discuss them at the consultation.</u> Thank you for your careful attention to this matter. I look forward to being with you on December 5th.

With the assurance of my prayers throughout this Advent season for you and all whom you serve, I remain,

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Archbishop of Boston

+ Sean, Ofmap

Convocation of Priests of the Archdiocese of Boston

Lantana's Restaurant 43 Scanlon Drive Randolph, Massachusetts

> December 5, 2011 1:00 – 5:00 PM

Schedule of the Day

- I. Welcome Monsignor Robert Deeley, Vicar General
- II. Daytime Prayer Cardinal Seán O'Malley, OFM Cap, Presider
- III. Introduction to the Day and of Guests Present Monsignor Bill Fay,Co-Chair of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Commission (APPC)
- IV. Cardinal Seán's Address to the Priests
 - Response to the themes introduced by Cardinal Seán
 - Break / Table Conversation
- V. Presentations on the PST Model for Strengthening Parishes by Monsignor Bill Fay and Father Jack Ahern (APPC Member)
 - Break / Table Conversation
 - Response to the themes introduced by Monsignor Bill Fay and Father Jack Ahern
- VI. Panel Discussion with Members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Commission
 - Questions / Comments and Responses
 - Questions as we move forward
 - Wrap-up Monsignor Robert Deeley
- VII. Last Word, Blessing and Salve Regina Cardinal Seán

Refreshments will be available throughout the afternoon.



ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

Convocation of Priests December 5, 2011

Strengthening Parishes as Primary Communities of Faith

Developing the Vision for a Pastoral Plan: Disciples in Mission

A New Structure for Mission: The Pastoral Service Team

Reasons for the New Structure

Further Elaboration on the Pastoral Service Team

The Development of Local Pastoral Plans

Summary

Strengthening Our Parishes as Primary Communities of Faith

2 A Proposal

<u>Developing the Vision for a Pastoral Plan – Disciples in Mission</u>

- 4 The Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Commission has been asked by Cardinal Seán to offer its
- 5 recommendations on a pastoral plan. For the past ten months, the Commission has been
- 6 working on a pastoral planning document, entitled *Disciples in Mission*, which proposes a vision
- 7 for our Archdiocese that flows directly from the mission that Jesus Christ has given to his
- 8 Church. The principal thrust of the current draft of this pastoral plan is to form stronger Christian
- 9 disciples by strengthening our identity as a Christ-centered, mission-minded, welcoming and
- 10 evangelizing Eucharistic community of faith.
- 11 This challenging vision will be accomplished through five "Mission Initiatives," specific actions
- that arise out of the strategic priorities established by Cardinal Seán. These initiatives are: (1)
- 13 Becoming a Church that More Readily and Actively Welcomes Every Man, Woman and Child to
- 14 Conversion of Life in Christ Jesus; (2) Strengthening our Parishes as Primary Communities of
- 15 Faith; (3) Growing the Church through Evangelization; (4) Developing Excellence in Faith
- Formation for Catholics of All Ages; and (5) Re-energizing Pastoral Leadership.
- 17 A Pastoral Plan is a series of steps that will be taken by the leaders and the faithful of the
- Archdiocese of Boston to help our Church to fulfill our Gospel mission and to serve Christ more
- 19 effectively. Disciples in Mission is a map to guide the decisions we make for meeting our
- responsibilities as disciples of the Lord at this time in our history; it is planning for the pastoral
- 21 and spiritual needs of the Catholic faithful for the foreseeable future. It is also a call, a
- 22 summons to refocus our attention and to move from a mindset of "maintenance" to one of
- 23 "mission."

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- 24 This paper has been prepared to assist an extensive consultation of the Catholic faithful in the
- 25 Archdiocese the clergy, the religious and the laity regarding the second Mission Initiative of
- 26 Disciples in Mission, "Strengthening our Parishes as Primary Communities of Faith."
- 27 Specifically, it introduces a concrete proposal to strengthen our parishes as welcoming,
- 28 nourishing, thriving and evangelizing Eucharistic communities. After Cardinal Seán has heard
- 29 the faithful and the consultative bodies in our parishes and Archdiocese on this proposal and
- 30 adjusted it in light of the consultation, he will implement it gradually and in phases.

31 A New Structure for Mission: The Pastoral Service Team

- 32 The proposal is to create a new structure called a Pastoral Service Team (PST) to provide
- pastoral services to our parishes. The Pastoral Service Team is a group of priests, deacons,
- 34 pastoral associates, lay ecclesial ministers, parish pastoral and finance councils who provide
- 35 pastoral services to multiple parishes, which partner with one another to exercise more fully the
- mission of Evangelization. As opposed to a plan for merging parishes and closing church
- buildings, this plan adopts an approach that strengthens and enlivens our current parishes. By
- 38 creating these teams, improved pastoral services can be provided to parishes without altering
- the parishes themselves.
- 40 The members of each PST work together under the leadership of one pastor, serving and
- 41 ministering to multiple parishes in a particular area. The PSTs have two primary goals: 1)

This document is embargoed until December 5, 2011 at 5:00 PM

- 42 meeting the specific pastoral and spiritual needs of Catholics in each parish that the PST serves
- in order to strengthen their communion in Christ, and 2) drawing these parishes into a tighter
- and more effective bond for the work of the New Evangelization and the realization of the
- 45 Archdiocese's pastoral plan.

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Reasons for the New Structure

- 47 This proposed new structure does not involve changing the parishes themselves. Rather, it
- 48 focuses on the means by which pastoral services are provided in and to our parishes. The
- 49 parishes of the Archdiocese are Eucharistic communities of God's faithful people, entrusted with
- 50 carrying out the mission given to the Church by Jesus Christ. PSTs are the means by which
- services are provided for each community to fulfill the Gospel mission.
- 52 The present way in which pastoral services are structured in the Archdiocese of Boston is not
- healthy and it cannot be sustained much longer. Priests are being stretched too thinly; pastoral
- 54 associates and religious educators are not being replaced in sufficient numbers; permanent
- deacons are unevenly deployed; and we face a growing number of parishes (40%) unable to
- pay their bills, even as the cost for services in our parishes continues to climb.
- 57 In such an environment, the majority of our parishes have adopted a "maintenance model"
- rather than an "engagement model." Disciples in Mission envisions and fosters active and
- 59 committed participation in the mission of the Church. By improving pastoral services and
- reducing the costs for providing these services, every parish can better use its resources and
- talents for the sake of living and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 62 It is very clear that these goals cannot and will not be reached in the vast majority of our
- parishes according to the current model. Our resources are severely restricted both with
- respect to personnel and to finances. It is in the face of these challenges that the proposed new
- 65 structure of a Pastoral Service Team is introduced.
- 66 By means of a team approach, each PST will be able to offer a full range of pastoral services,
- something that is beyond the reach of a large percentage of our parishes under the present
- 68 system. By providing pastoral services in this new way, our parishes can be revitalized as faith
- communities, thus witnessing to, in an even greater degree, the Catholic commitment to and
- 70 culture of communion in Christ and mission to the world.

Further Elaboration on the Pastoral Service Team

- As noted above, the introduction of a PST for multiple parishes is a realignment of the way in
- 73 which services are rendered; it is not an alteration of our individual parishes. The Catholic
- faithful will continue to be members of their own parish and each parish will retain responsibility
- for its own assets and liabilities, including the Church and the other buildings it owns.
- 76 PSTs will enable each parish to determine how best to use their resources through a culture of
- partnering and collaboration. With the increased possibilities that are available through
- 78 "economies of scale" and greater collaboration, better pastoral services and more effective
- ministry can be provided within the parishes and for the mission of Evangelization.
- 80 The precise grouping of parishes to be served by a PST will be determined using the criteria
- and principles that are articulated in the accompanying Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- 82 Each grouping will be known as a "Pastoral Collaborative."

The Development of Local Pastoral Plans

- 84 A key element in the introduction of the new PST structure for serving the parishes is the
- 85 expectation that the parishes of each pastoral collaborative will come together under the
- guidance of a PST to develop a local Pastoral Plan for Mission. Each Pastoral Plan should be
- designed to ensure the identity of each parish, while at the same time encouraging and leading
- 88 parishes to work together in their pastoral collaboratives for our common mission of
- 89 Evangelization and for the benefit of all.
- 90 The local pastoral plans are means for demonstrating how our parishes will actually build up
- 91 their communities as strong and vital Eucharistic centers of faith. The plans are a dynamic
- means for ensuring that *Disciples in Mission* strengthens the communion and mission of each
- 93 individual parish in a given area. In order to achieve the goals identified in the local plan, each
- parish will be engaged in identifying specific ways within its pastoral collaborative to address the
- present and future needs of the Gospel mission of the Church in their area.
- There are 290 parishes in the Archdiocese of Boston. Within these parishes are worship sites,
- 97 Catholic schools, rectories, parish centers, convents and buildings that each plan will evaluate
- and address. Over time resources can be made available for mission by, for example, reducing
- 99 duplication and redundancy or by combining programs that are similar and insufficiently
- attended. By using the model of local pastoral planning, the best usage of buildings and of
- pastoral programs will be something determined locally, by a pastor working together with a
- team and with the parishioners.
- The local plans will encourage a spirit of cooperation and of common discernment, seeking first
- the good of the people in a pastoral collaborative. Each Pastoral Plan will take the strategic
- priorities of the Archbishop of Boston and make them their own. Under the leadership of our
- bishops and pastors, our local communities will determine how best to utilize and apportion their
- resources, schedules, property and facilities. They will develop a plan that reflects the needs of
- the Church's mission for their collaborative, based upon the resources that are available to each
- 109 parish.

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Summary

- 111 Disciples in Mission seeks to accomplish the goal that each parish community in the
- 112 Archdiocese of Boston be strengthened and enabled to participate in the communion and
- mission of the Church as fully as they are able.
- In summary, the proposal put forward for consultation is that:
 - The Archdiocese of Boston will create approximately 125 Pastoral Service Teams.
 The precise nature and number of PSTs will be determined as a result of an
- extensive study of and consultation with our parishes.
 - All 290 of our parishes will be served by one of these PSTs.
- In each local area, the Pastoral Service Team, in dialogue and discernment with their
- parishes, will develop a Pastoral Plan for how best to utilize and apportion their
- resources, property and facilities to strengthen the parishes as Eucharistic communities rooted in Jesus Christ and to advance the Gospel mission of the
- 123 Church.



ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

Convocation of Priests December 5, 2011

Frequently Asked Questions concerning the PST Model

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Strengthening Our Parishes as Primary Communities of Faith

Frequently Asked Questions concerning the PST Model

1) How will this new Pastoral Service Team (PST) model assist the New Evangelization by bringing people to and back to the Church?

There are three principal ways in which the PST model will assist the New Evangelization. First, members of each PST will be trained for successful mission-based leadership in multiple parishes. Special emphasis will be given in this training to the work of strengthening each parish they serve as a communion that is rooted in Christ and nourished by an exceptional experience of the Sunday Eucharist. Second, each PST will help the parishes it serves to collaborate with and support each other more fully in the work of identifying, welcoming and educating Catholics and others who desire a deeper relationship with Christ. Third, the PST will develop effective ways to help those they serve to live the grace of conversion to Christ and to fulfill their God-given vocation in Christ.

2) Why is this PST model of ministry being suggested for the Archdiocese of Boston? Are other dioceses doing this?

As noted above, the PST model is proposed as a creative, feasible and efficient way to bring about a stronger and more effective Church in the Archdiocese of Boston. The PST model also addresses significant challenges facing the Church in Boston today. These challenges include decreased Mass attendance, reduced financial resources, fewer men responding to the vocation to the ministerial priesthood, a smaller number of men and women stepping forward to serve professionally in parishes, and the inevitability that pastors will be asked to take on the responsibility of a second and third parish. By organizing our current personnel and material resources towards greater collaboration, the mission of Christ and his Church will better flourish in the Archdiocese of Boston. A greater coordination of trained personnel and the consolidation of similar works and ministries in parishes within a pastoral collaborative will ease the burden currently experienced by pastors and staff and will strengthen evangelization. This is especially true where a pastor has responsibility for multiple parishes and multiple staffs. Dioceses throughout the United States are strengthening themselves for evangelization in a number of ways. Having considered a variety of best practices around the country, the PST model was developed specifically for the Archdiocese of Boston as the way that best fits our local circumstances and can be implemented effectively.

3) When will this PST model be implemented? Will it happen all at once? How long will we live with this model of ministry in the Archdiocese?

Given the significance of the challenges before us, it seems best to begin implementing a plan to address them as soon as possible. However, two things need to happen before the PST model can be put into place. First, the consultation of the clergy, the religious and the laity of the Archdiocese on the PST model, including the proposed pastoral collaboratives, needs to be completed. Second, the model will be adjusted according to the feedback from the consultation and then presented to Cardinal Seán for approval. It is hoped that this consultation will be completed in the spring of 2012 and that implementation can begin soon thereafter. The implementation will happen in phases and be completed within three to five years. We expect that this plan will serve the Archdiocese for generations to come.

4) Once implemented, what can we expect to happen in the new PST model? Will parish Mass schedules change? Will parish facilities be closed or sold? Will the priests working in a pastoral collaborative live in one rectory? Will people have to go to another parish for religious education or for the marriage or funeral of a loved one? How will Catholic schools be handled within a pastoral collaborative?

Questions like these will be best addressed in the local pastoral plans. These plans will be developed by the PSTs, in consultation with the parishes in their pastoral collaboratives, and then submitted to Cardinal Seán for his approval. Standard procedures and guidelines from the Archdiocese, as well as suggested best practices, will be made available to the PSTs for the development of these local pastoral plans. The Catholic Schools Office will consult and work with the pastor and PST on ideas to strengthen Catholic education in the local pastoral collaborative. It is hoped that each local plan will reflect very well the distinct reality, the genuine needs and the particular goals for evangelization of the parishes that form a pastoral collaborative, including plans that recommend the new construction, renovation, or closure of facilities within the pastoral collaboratives.

5) Is there enough flexibility in the new model to address and to accommodate special circumstances that may arise?

Yes. It is expected that the PSTs will need some flexibility in implementing the ideas set forth in the new model. In the end, however, all parishes are challenged to position themselves for the mission of evangelization. The PST model is not intended as a new version of "business as usual." Every parish will be asked to embrace a newly structured team of pastoral ministers who will set and meet new pastoral goals: namely, becoming a church that more readily and actively welcomes every man, woman and child to conversion of life in Christ Jesus; strengthening our parishes as primary communities of faith; growing the Church through evangelization; developing excellence in faith formation for Catholics of all ages; and reenergizing pastoral leadership.

6) Given the significant change in the way in which ministry will be exercised in the PST model, will the central pastoral services of the Archdiocese experience a similar transformation?

Yes. Archdiocesan support for the parishes and the new pastoral collaboratives will need to be strengthened. Every department of the Archdiocese will be asked to submit an action plan that outlines how its offices and operations are affected by this new model and how it will support the efforts of the PSTs and pastoral collaboratives, especially during the time of transition. Appropriate organization, expertise, communication, funding, etc., will need to be in place, lest the parishes and their ministerial and parish leaders not be properly known, informed, respected, understood and supported.

7) Will the new PST model be more or less costly to implement and to maintain on the archdiocesan and local levels?

The heart of this model is a pastoral service team that has fewer staff than the present sum in the parishes of the future pastoral collaborative, but is nonetheless comprised of a full complement of ministers equipped for the work of evangelization. Accordingly the PST model should be less expensive over time than the current system. However, significant start-up costs are anticipated, especially administratively. For example, parishes in pastoral collaboratives will need to make transitions based on their local plans. The Archdiocese will need to acquire a

centralized database and transition all its present information and communication structures to this new model. In addition, there needs to be significant training of all those who work with or supervise parishes on the essential skills and practical tools for "multiple parish pastoring."

8) How will the pastor be chosen for a PST? How many priests will assist him in a PST?

Pastors will be chosen carefully, according to the procedures of the Archdiocese, with an eye to matching the priest's gifts and needs to those of the parishes he is being called to serve. Ordinarily, the pastor in a PST will not have been the pastor of a parish served by that PST. Priests chosen to serve as pastors will be experienced and respected as leaders who know how to build communion in Christ. They will be mission-oriented for the task of evangelization, open to a significant amount of training and evaluation, and effective collaborators with PST colleagues and parishioners. The number of priests available to assist pastors as parochial vicars will be dependent on the number of active priests available for parish service. Parochial vicars and deacons, like pastors, will be assigned in a way that considers the gifts and needs of both the men and the parishes they will serve. Other considerations for the assignment of parochial vicars and deacons will include the overall population of the parishes, Mass attendance and sacramental index. Senior priests who indicate a willingness to be assigned to a PST for some specified area or level of work will be given special consideration and matched accordingly to a PST.

9) How will the staff be chosen for a PST? Will current parish personnel lose their jobs when parishes are grouped?

The pastor, after consultation with the Archdiocese, the parish council, the finance council and other clergy assigned to the PST, will be responsible for choosing the staff of the PST. It is expected that many current parish staff will be selected for the new positions in their own pastoral collaborative or in one nearby. Allowing for attrition, employees for whom there are no new positions available will be offered severance, outplacement support and job posting seniority under the human resource guidelines of the Archdiocese.

10) By what criteria will parishes be assembled into pastoral collaboratives? How will the pastoral collaboratives be named?

In order to use the most objective standards possible in the exercise of developing the pastoral collaboratives, measures were established that would help to insure the highest degree of fairness in the groupings that were recommended and to have the fewest number of financially troubled collaboratives. Geographical proximity was paramount. Parishes in the same town, sharing school systems, or otherwise close by were given priority in that order. Because the ongoing weekly and monthly offertory was seen as the best measure of parish enthusiasm and reasonable critical mass, we tried to set up collaboratives where this number was projected to exceed \$500,000.00 per year. We also looked at other income (sacramental offerings, rent, bequests, etc.) so that, added together with offertory, the combined revenue would cover the expected staffing and compensation costs of the new collaborative, as well as other operating expenses. Another test used was to build as many parish collaboratives as possible where Mass attendance exceeded 1,600 attendees per week in the collaborative. Sacramental Index numbers and projections, as well as current demographic trends and projections, were used as factors. It is not expected that the pastoral collaboratives will be named, because the parishes belonging to a pastoral collaborative will not lose their identity or name as parishes. It is conceivable, however, that a pastoral collaborative could be referred to by a multiple parish or

collective name, such as "the St. Finbar, St. Julie and Holy Smoke Parishes," "the Hometown Pastoral Collaborative" or "the Catholic Parishes of Jefferson, Massachusetts."

11) How will the new PST model attend to the multiple languages of the Archdiocese?

This is a question still under discussion and will be an important issue raised during the consultation. Various models continue to be explored. Currently, it is anticipated that local circumstances and needs will be prime determining factors. In some cases, language communities can be integrated into an existing pastoral collaborative and be served by a PST with language and cultural skills. In other cases, it may be prudent to link ethnic non-contiguous parishes/communities with a PST that is skilled in the language(s) and culture(s) to be served.

12) Will parishes now staffed by religious belong to pastoral collaboratives?

This is another issue that is still under discussion and will be raised during the consultation. In addition, a special consultation with the provincials and leadership of the religious orders and movements serving in parishes is being planned. In the end, the goal is to determine the best way for these communities to exercise their charisms in the Archdiocese of Boston.

13) How many PSTs will there be? How many will serve 2 parishes, 3 parishes, 4 parishes?

Based on the criteria in Question 10, we expect that there will be approximately 125 PSTs. Most will serve two or three parishes; a few will serve a single parish or four parishes.

14) Will the priests and staff of the PSTs require new training? If so, who will be responsible for this? What assistance will be given the parish communities to adjust to the transition?

Yes, this will require new training of all the members of the PSTs, clergy and laity alike. The Archdiocese has committed to overseeing this training. The Archdiocese will also ensure that the transition to the PST model will be as smooth as possible by providing parishes with the informational and human support assistance that is necessary to help parishioners through this transition.

15) Will each parish in a pastoral collaborative have its own priest or deacon or layperson to oversee and/or coordinate the activity of that parish?

No. Ordinarily, the oversight and/or coordination of each parish in a pastoral collaborative will be provided by the PST and not by an individual member of a PST. Local circumstances, however, may dictate a different arrangement for a pastoral collaborative, which can be recommended to Cardinal Seán in the local pastoral plan.

16) Will each parish maintain and be responsible for its own assets?

Yes. Each parish will maintain and be responsible for its own assets. The PST serves the distinct needs of each of the parishes in the pastoral collaborative and will work to ensure each parish's integrity and heritage. At the same time, the PST has a responsibility to challenge the parishes in its pastoral collaborative to move towards a more prudent use of resources by working together to avoid redundancy and duplication of efforts. The costs for these shared services will be allocated among parishes on a pro-rated basis.

17) Will each parish continue to have its own pastoral council and finance council?

In the PST model, each pastor will be advised by one pastoral council and one finance council, each of which will be made up of members from every parish in the pastoral collaborative. The Cardinal will give new *Guidelines* for these councils, which will address issues like avoiding conflicts of interest when decisions are made. The new structure will enable the integrity of each parish to be maintained, while taking advantage of opportunities to collaborate. Council members will be trained on the nature and mission of the council to which they belong and on ways to encourage and strengthen collaboration among parishes, while continuing to safeguard the integrity and rights of each individual parish.

18) What happens if a parish in a pastoral collaborative becomes financially insolvent or dysfunctional? Must the other parishes in the collaborative come to its rescue?

Unless special arrangements have been made with the Archdiocese, parishes that become financially insolvent or dysfunctional bear the responsibility for their condition on their own. The PST should work closely with the Archdiocese in anticipating and addressing problems such as these as they develop. Other parishes within a pastoral collaborative can and should offer appropriate encouragement and support in Christian charity, but they have no obligation to take on or to solve the problems that develop in another parish.

