



Proclaim Christ *and* Make Disciples through the Sacramental Life *of the* Church.

ignite • renew • energize • ignite • renew • energize • ignite • renew • energize • ignite • renew • energize

Feedback from Priest and Parish Director Forum

March 10, 2017

Future Parish Models

Overall Summary:

Models 1 and 2 are preferred with models 3 and 4 viewed as transitional models.

Model 1 – One Parish, One Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director

- 10 groups affirmed this model
- 1 group affirmed with additions
- 1 group recommended it be changed
- 4 groups did not indicate affirm, add or change

Summary

Many see this as the “ideal” model, but unrealistic for many situations given the shortage of priests. One deanery commented they would soon only have one parish in the deanery still in this mode.

Affirmed

- This model is ideal because of the opportunity for the community and pastor to establish a relationship
- Without the lack of priests, this would and is the right model, if conditions allow
- This is the primary model among all because this provides a better shepherding of the community
- This should be the ideal. The archdiocese must give firmer direction creating these “flagship parishes” with potentially other parishes becoming chapels.

Additions & Changes

- Make a clear distinction or even create a different model for “One Parish-Multiple Sites” situations
- Keep some level of collaboration with other parishes so “no one stands alone”

Comments

- Watch the priestly workload shift as the stand alone parishes lose associate pastors
- Parish Directors need a solid supervising priest
- Who determines the stand alone parishes? What are the criteria? What is the cut-off?
- Who begins the process of determining the model to be applied to a parish?
- There needs to be consultation between parish and archdiocese.
- Each parish needs to identify which of these will work and may need help implementing the new parish.
- “Does pastoral and finance councils report to the staff? (see the diagram)

Model 2 – Multi-Parish: 1 Pastor/Admin/PD and 1 Staff, 1 Council

- 8 groups affirmed the model
- 2 groups affirmed with additions
- 2 groups recommended it be changed\
- 4 groups didn't indicated affirm, add or change

Summary

Many saw this model as preferred over Models #3 and 4 – less meetings, working with primarily one staff and shared council. However, responses indicated that the parishes must be very similar for this to work.

Affirmed

- This is preferred to model 3 because of the complexity it minimizes- at least from an administrative and economic perspective.
- The “ideal” for the pastoral leader – the priority is shared vision
- Workable but needs to be worked toward. Idea of this leading to an eventual merger could surface fears. Economic viability will dictate site sustainability.
- Have common DAS or Pastoral Associate
- Finance separate, but finance councils should meet together the same evening
- Administration needs to be streamlined as budgeting maintains balance between salaries and mission/outreach
- Archdiocese may be able to assist administratively by providing a menu of services such as finance, HR, maintenance, cleaning etc. – an option in/out basis which parishes may purchase

Additions & Changes

- This only works when parishes are similar
- Staff is critical for this model. Recommend quarterly reviews. It is difficult to ask them to give to two parishes if they previously worked at only one of them.
- Councils need to be trained (like staff) and give members time before merging
- Provide resources to pastor so he is able to unify staff and councils
- Should there be a link between committees and staff (directly) or just through finance and pastoral councils? See the diagram – this is the case with all models.
- Consider parish culture and not just geography.
- Balance leadership involvement with need to keep meeting schedule
- Financial considerations. There may be some shared staff but not necessarily all shared with can make it complicated financially.
- Challenge – each parish tries to keep its own identity.
- Too complex of a model because of separate budgets.
- Could this be a model which leads to merger? It takes time to move through this model and work together.

Comments

- Distance between parishes and culture differences will affect this model
- Sharing staff can be a benefit (i.e. pastoral council and finance council). Two different cultures and histories (i.e. like two siblings who don't get along).
- Do we want one DSA/Accountant to supervise all churches in a deanery?
- Note the parishes that are working well with the various models.

Model 3 – Multi-Parish: 1 Pastor/Admin/PD and Separate Staff and Separate Councils

- 3 groups affirmed this model
- 6 groups affirmed w/additions
- 1 group recommended it be changed
- 1 group recommended it be deleted
- 5 didn't indicated affirm, add or change

Summary

Some saw this model as a heavy workload for pastor – said it can begin this way but should be evolving to Model #2 over time. (“First step – not destination) Use of parish directors (or Pastoral Coordinator) would be helpful here. Transitional model.

Affirm

- This might give pastor freedom to focus on mission like Seton model
- Responsibilities of pastors and associates should be clear and they must witness a togetherness
- Recommended common DAS and Pastoral Associate
- Assignment of priests will need to be very sensitive to varieties in this model

Additions & Changes

- Permissible given necessity – geographic, linguistically or other reason that prevents two communities coming together
- Travel between parishes is a factor
- Affirm in many cases, but not in Hispanic parishes. It is a great challenge for this work in a Hispanic community.
- Civil law questions – merging corporations and the trustees representing each
- Need on pastoral council, otherwise you perpetuate parochialism
- Heavy work load for priest/parish directory (too much)
- Too much stress for leader
- Transition model – can be early stage of collaboration, but can't be permanent
- Need to share administration load with qualified lay people
- This model should add, there can be shared pastoral staff
- Ownership and stewardship need to be strengthened
- This is where help of the diocese could be used to get the two parishes to work together

Delete

- This looks like a nightmare for the Pastor/Administrator/Parish Director
- Might be a first step, but isn't a destination
- Would only be workable with COO or Pastoral Coordinator. We need more people (lay or clergy) who can be CEO or COO.

Comments

- Efficient to have Parish Director
- Clarification of Business Administration and Parish Director
- We need a pastor for “Spiritual Leadership”
- Need mentoring

Model 4 – Multi-Parish with One or More Satellites

- 2 groups affirmed this model
- 3 groups w/additions
- 3 groups recommended it be changed
- 8 groups did not indicate affirm, add or change

Summary

More complex – limited number of pastors have the ability to manage this model. Scary model for the priest – one priest called it a “spaghetti bowl of a mess.” Others praised it as preferred over #3 saying that aging priests can stay in ministry by being associates under this model. Newly ordained could learn under this mode and stay as associates longer. Some said this helps keep the parish identity strong and doesn’t penalize the “smaller parish.” Concern was expressed that this model does not enhance collaboration between the parishes.

Affirm

- A scary model for the priest(s) involved!
- Use transitionally only for 12-18 months
- Encourage DAS and Pastoral Associate to have responsible independence; more definite criteria to what should prod a merger
- This model is user friendly for aging priest to stay active in ministry

Additions & Changes

- Very, very, very few priests are capable of this type of leadership. Pastor is a mini-bishop.
- Each parish would need a competent CEO/COO or priest/parish director/team
- Very complex model, high workload and administration for pastor.
- Strongly consider Pastoral Coordinator being a Deacon
- It forces school issue – if parishes have schools, they now become “competing” schools
- Have pastoral coordinators, parish directors or administrators for each parish under the one pastor
- Minimum contact with parishioners for pastor
- Is this affordable?

Comments

- “Spaghetti bowl of a mess”
- Nightmare! We see serious difficulties here
- Too complex to move into; move slowly
- “Solidum teams” didn’t work – then why will this work?
- No support for this in the group
- All models should lead to mergers while keeping church sites open for worship. People identify with the place where they worship.
- Assumes stability of an associate pastor
- Does not enhance collaboration
- Lots of questions about this model
- Very transitional, not something you would aim for
- Management becomes challenging
- This model may work in parishes with long distances between them

NEW Ideas and Suggestions

- We need a long-term analysis of priest assignments. Begin by looking at priest, not places, when creating assignments. What gifts and charisms does each priest have and how can we create assignments that maximize those gifts. We need to do a strengths-finder analysis on our priests.
- The goal of the diocese can't be trying to keep every parish open. Keeping priest sane and healthy and using their gifts well needs to be a priority. This might require more flexibility in terms of office. If a priest is doing well in an assignment and the parish is thriving, why change that?
- All models work towards #1
- We dream! That in the future all the parishes be model #1.
- Recognize models #2, 3, 4 are a continuum Use sustainability and reductions of canonical status to creatively assist small parishes to embrace models.
- In models #2, 3, 4 there is a high risk/possibility that there is a disconnect between priest(s) and people as result of high levels of administration... even when shared take the vast majority of a priest's time.
- Team Model: Possible if physically close to together and need to be phased in
- The models are hopeful, but what if a parish isn't meeting the minimum level of participation to consider a parish viable?
- For all of these models there is affirmation. However, is there a minimum level of activity that identifies a parish as viable?
- "Movement" Model - linguistic - cultural (urban vs. rural) interest - e.g., Ecclesial Movement. *Directives in the best interest of community and personnel coming from the Archdiocese would be helpful & take backlash off pastoral leader.
- How much education/formation will parishioners need to embrace the changes of parishes and their own mindset?
- Who approves movement into these?
- Sometimes a model doesn't work.
- What drives the movement to the model?
- Can we discover opportunities for ministry?
- All these models are corporate.
- All models need to have enough time to be developed and lived.
- We also need greater freedom to collaborate in mission.
- These models are administrative, but admin will follow mission.
- We do not see any other model (especially due to the flexibility provided by models above).
- All require a scaling down of sacramental receiver both in availability and address, who can administer the sacramental
- Priesthood is being married to the church and requires love of the people. Priests serve well when they know and love their people.
- Next pastor needs to maintain current model with respect for the trajectory
- Can we have change managers when switching models, similar to church building process? Need nudge from on high. Auxiliary or Vicar General? Priests get tired of changing. Can we be Pastors under this model?
- Help Pastor versus Super Pastor
- Has to be more integrated model of pastoral care or a high value of pastoral care and sacramentality
- Have one Pastoral Council together
- Make a distinction! We question how the parishes are going to survive.