

May 7, 2017

A MESSAGE REGARDING PASTORAL PLANNING

The Office of Pastoral Planning has worked over the past year to address the first objective of the Archdiocesan strategic plan, which is: *“Create and implement a comprehensive restructuring plan for our parishes, schools, agencies and offices to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future characterized by spiritual vitality, organizational efficacy and accountability and social and financial responsibility.”*

The primary drivers of the restructuring process included among others: the number of available priests; the degree of sacramental/ministerial activity; the optimal location of churches relative to people being served, and long-term financial sustainability. In the new structure, each priest will celebrate no more than four masses per weekend.

There are several key terms integral to restructuring:

PASTORATE: A distinct parish with a parochial church and one or more other churches, campuses and/or ministries. Led by a pastor/administrator, a pastorate may have several priest associates and deacons assigned to it, with responsibilities directed toward efficient operation of each entity integral to the pastorate. Pastorates were designed for a maximum of four masses per weekend for each priest.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH: The main church of the pastorate, where the pastor, the administrative staff, and all operations of the pastorate are centralized.

CHURCH: Other church(es) included in the pastorate that can be used in secondary ways for liturgical functions – e.g., for weddings, funerals, special feasts, etc.

MERGER: The uniting of two or more distinct parishes into a new, single canonical parish called a pastorate, with a new name, one pastor, two or more church buildings, one advisory Council, one Finance Council, and one pair of Trustees.

CLOSURE: A recommendation that necessitates a discussion with in a pastorate as part of its own ‘strategic pastoral plan,’ concerning the options for buildings being closed. Most closures will not be immediate.

The Archbishop of Hartford announced the newly defined parishes to the priests of the Archdiocese this past week. A letter from the Archbishop to Saint Thomas, Thomaston addressing specific planning for this particular parish is available in the bulletin racks and on the table in the vestibule. On Monday, the Archdiocesan Communications Office will disseminate the information to the general public. The effective date for new pastoral appointments will be June 29.