

RENEW MY CHURCH

COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY PLAN

Objective:

The Objective of the Collaborative Ministry Plan is to create opportunities for the evangelization of the Catholic communities on Chicago's southwest side. The Plan recognizes the importance of the individual parishes in forming the faith life of their parishioners, while it outlines a plan for those parishes to work together to create and implement an area-wide evangelization program, supported by area-wide ministries.

The Plan creates a template for our five parishes to work together toward this goal. The success of the Plan requires that it be more than a vague concept. Its success will require that our pastors and our parishioners actively participate in sharing resources, ministries and information. Success will require lay leadership as we create and implement new initiatives. It is our hope that this Collaborative Ministry Plan, as described below, captures the level of teamwork, lay leadership and parishioner commitment that will provide for area-wide evangelization success.

Parish Structure:

- Five (5) parishes: (St. Barnabas ("SB"); St. John Fisher ("SJF"); St. Cajetan ("Cajetan"); St. Christina ("SC) and Christ the King ("CK")), each to remain separate and independent;
- Five (5) separate churches for worship;
- Five (5) separate Parish Councils, Finance Committees and local Ministries; and
- Five (5) separate and independent schools.

Pastoral Issues:

- As of July 1, 2022, there will be a transition from five pastors to four pastors. Fr. Jim remains pastor of SB; Fr. Ken remains pastor of SJF; Fr. Larry remains pastor of CK; and Fr. Tom remains pastor of St. Christina. One of the four pastors will also be the initial pastor of Cajetan;
- The pastors will coordinate weekly masses / sacraments at their discretion for their respective parishes. The pastors will rotate once each month saying mass at a different parish. Coordination of an associate priest will be necessary to cover the fifth parish each week, not just on rotating weekends;
- In three to five years, there will be a transition from four pastors to three pastors. Fr. Tom remains pastor of St. Christina; and Fr. Jim and Fr. Larry remain pastors of SB and CK, while also assuming roles as pastors of SJF and Cajetan;
- In ten to twelve years, there could be two pastors with responsibility for all five parishes; and
- The pastors will agree upon a plan to share the responsibility for implementing the Collaborative Ministry Plan.

Oversight Council:

An area-wide Oversight Council will be created to coordinate the activities of the five-parish group. The Oversight Council will be comprised of two members from the pastoral councils of each of the participating parishes. The Oversight Council will meet as necessary, but no less than every other month, to establish and monitor group activities.

Collaborative Ministry Plan:

Year One: *At a minimum:*

While remaining separate parishes, the five parishes will work together to promote and encourage active participation with a number of joint ministries and initiatives that will be coordinated by the Oversight Council. A sampling of potential activities that could be implemented in the first year include:

- Establish an *area-wide* **Baptismal Prep Program**. The Program would meet in different (rotating) parishes. It could be a lay-run program and/or it could be coordinated by the ten (10) deacons currently involved in the area parishes.
- Establish an *area-wide* **Marriage Prep Program**. This program would be limited to marriage prep and *not* wedding prep. The program could be run by a stipend person who would oversee a minimum of five (5) couples total from the various parishes. Each engaged couple would pay a wedding prep fee that would cover the cost of the employee.
- Establish an *area-wide* **RCIA Program**. The Program would meet in different (rotating) parishes. It could be a lay-run program and/or it could be coordinated by the ten (10) deacons currently involved in the area parishes.
- Coordinate a **Service Day** in 2022 for all five parishes.
- Coordinate a **Summer Event/Outing** in 2022 for all five parishes. Coordination of an introductory meet and greet that would encourage area-wide involvement and Evangelization. Prospective events/outings could include: a Windy City Thunderbolts game; a Chicago White Sox game; or a summer concert at the Pritzker Music Pavilion in Millennium Park.

In addition to the activities that are implemented in the first year, the Oversight Council will begin to assess the current active ministries at each of the five parishes and will formulate a plan for coordinating and expanding those ministries across the five parish communities as appropriate (recognizing that certain ministries may best remain, in whole or in part, the local activities of the individual parishes). A representative sampling of current ministries that are in place at the parishes, which could be ready for an area-wide application in the near term, would be:

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| - Companions in Faith; | - SPRED; |
| - CRHP; | - Teen CRHP; |
| - GriefShare; | - Taize Prayer; |
| - Eucharistic Adoration with Benediction; | - Alpha |

The list of ministries that would ultimately be reviewed and considered for area-wide implementation is impressively long, which includes, but is not limited to:

- parish missions;
- sacramental preparation for parents;
- spiritual direction development;
- spiritual renewal programs (e.g. 19th Annotation, Mercy, Augustinian, Carmelites); and
- "Why do Catholics Do That?" seminars.
- liturgical minister renewal programs;
- service ministry for youth and elders;
- ministry retreat center;

Year Two: *At a minimum:*

- A continuation or adaptation of all activities from year one.
- The Oversight Council would begin meeting monthly and its membership would not be limited to current pastoral council members.
- The group will host a **Day of Spiritual Reflection and Renewal** for the parishioners of all five parishes. A committee would be formed in May/June of 2023, with the event to be held in August/September of 2023.
- A **Spring Service Day** and **Fall Service Day** would be planned in 2023 for all five parishes.
- An area-wide **"Fun" Raiser** for the five parishes with the proceeds benefiting area-wide events. A "fun raiser" puts more emphasis on fun than funds, but that would change over time.
- A **Senior Leadership Day** would be planned for anyone in Leadership. Examples would be: Incoming and Outgoing President of the School Advisory Boards; Chairperson of the Finance Committees; and / or Head of Organizations like Fiat Lux or Peace and Justice Committee. The day would begin with prayer, breakfast and "Audacious Planning." If money were no object, if we could paint a picture of success, what would it look like? Really challenge the leaders of the five parishes to be creative.
- In addition to the Oversight Council, the priests of each parish would meet on a regular basis and start covering masses for each other, and would consider an alignment of mass schedules for all five parishes.
- Additionally, the deacons of the parishes would begin meeting together regularly to identify common parish needs and opportunities in the areas of: prayer and worship; social justice; care for the environment; and corporal works of mercy to those in need, i.e., the homeless, the hungry, victims of natural disasters, etc.

Year Three: *At a minimum:*

- A continuation or adaptation of all activities from year one and two, and expansion into other area-wide ministries, as appropriate.
- Thoroughly and realistically look at a possible resource person shared among some or all of the parishes. Do we hire a youth minister, a Director of Ministry of Care, combine some support staff positions? Could rectory phones be forwarded to a neighboring parish rectory during vacation weeks or if someone is sick?
- Creation of an *area-wide*: **Evangelization Team; Religious Education Team; Youth Ministry Team; and Outreach Team.** The combined activities of the four teams, and of the group as a whole, will be overseen by the Oversight Council.
- **State of the Parish Address** from each of the five parishes would be given to the Leaderships of the parishes. The pastors would share what is happening in each of their parishes since that affects all of the parishes in this parish group.

Coordination with other Parishes:

- While the formal organizational structure will be: SB; SJF; Cajetan, Christina and CK, the grouping will actively seek collaboration and participation from other local parishes for their ministry events.

Strengths:

- Assists in lack of pastors to assist with parishes without a pastor (currently four);
- Creates a built-in succession plan for the five parishes from: five pastors to four pastors; then three; and then two pastors covering all five parishes;
- Provides a gradual transition;
- Provides each parish the opportunity to become familiar with the other area pastors;
- Provides each pastor the opportunity to become familiar with the other area parishes / parishioners;
- Provides a manageable framework for the pastors;
- Retains parish and school identity and autonomy, while creating Evangelization activities;
- Allows for greater opportunities for lay parishioners to actively participate in ministries;
- Allows for each pastor to focus more on pastoral responsibilities rather than being consumed by parish administrative duties;
- Encourages shared parish ministries to increase and enhance Evangelization efforts;
- Increases the talent pool for lay parishioners, deacons and parish staff to assist in increasing and enhancing Evangelization efforts;
- Provides the opportunity for neighbors to connect like they have not connected before;
- Acknowledges the vitality of each parish and the strong catholic traditions on the South Side;
- Provides a positive formula for the Archdiocese to apply to other area groupings; and
- Provides the roadmap for future transition.

Challenges:

- Lack of acceptance by parishioners; reverse Evangelization;
- Requires greater demand of the pastors, with additional attention/time/organization by the four and then three and then two remaining pastors for overseeing multiple parishes;
- Requires one of the three pastors to be pastor of two parishes, *immediately*;
- Requires greater reliance upon a strong group of lay parishioners and deacons to be responsible for parish administrative duties/responsibilities;
- Uncertain outcome in implementing and executing the Collaborative Ministry Plan; and
- Long-term manageability, given the size and geography of the five-parish group.

This Collaborative Ministry Plan creates a one-community pastoral plan, which establishes the foundation to retain, maintain and increase Southwest Side Catholic strength through thoughtful and coordinated area-wide evangelization efforts, supported by area-wide ministries. This Collaborative Ministry Plan makes the Southwest Side community a destination location for Catholic families.