

Five Year Plan

The 19th Ward/Bullshead/Corn Hill Planning Group

July, 1999

INTRODUCTION

The 19th Ward/Bullshead/Corn Hill Planning Group is comprised of: Emmanuel Church of the Deaf, Immaculate Conception, Newman Community at University of Rochester, Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward (Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Augustine and St. Monica), SS Peter and Paul, and the Monroe County Jail. These communities began working in December of 1998 on Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium. As we studied our common issues we saw a need to work together on two Synod goals: Lifelong Faith Formation and Consistent Life Ethic, which includes all social justice issues. The goal became the creation of a collaborative model. With this model, we hope to develop creative ministries and programs to reach out to our parishioners. We will invite them to live out their baptismal vows by taking active roles in worship, liturgy, ministry and service. We will extend the outreach efforts and ministry to serve our neighbors and the larger urban community.¹ In all of our collaborative efforts we will celebrate our diversity and our unity. The goal will be to maintain the independence of the individual faith communities and find ways, in our collaborative efforts to strengthen each other. We will measure our progress by the ways that we share the unique gifts of all the faith communities and of our people.

SACRAMENTAL MINISTRY: The Faith Communities wish to develop closer ties with one another in the celebration of the Eucharist.

GOAL: The communities will begin by asking the priests and homilists currently active in the Bullshead/19th Ward/Cornhill Planning Group to celebrate the Eucharist with another faith community once a month. Our hope is that this contact by the priests will increase unity among the churches. Additionally, the Faith Communities hope to find ways to share other ministers. This may also encourage parishioners to visit the other churches in the Group, and may smooth the transition to the time when there is one less priest in the community. It is anticipated that the Planning Group (PG) will eventually have to accommodate one less priest in making a Mass schedule. The Liturgy Committees, the Priests and the Implementation Team (see below) will also make recommendations for this schedule that will be feasible for the clergy (and other homilists). The goal in making the schedule will be to ensure that each faith community has the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist at least once, if not twice, per weekend.

ACTION Within three (3) months after approval of the Plan by the Bishop, the priests of the Planning Group will meet to discuss a schedule for rotation of the priests and other homilists to the other communities of the Planning Group on a monthly basis.²

¹ We should also identify ways that the Planning Group (PG) can create Urban/Suburban connections to share resources and talents. In the belief that urban and suburban churches have much to teach each other and share, these connections will, it is hoped, provide that opportunity.

² The Newman Community will be unable to rotate its priest before January, 2000. The Pastor of Saints Peter and Paul will not be available to participate in this rotation.

CREATION OF JOINT COMMITTEES

The Planning Group Leadership Team (PGLT) agreed that the following areas required immediate attention: Education, Social Justice, Evangelization and Finance. The PGLT determined that the following joint committees should be created:

FINANCE AND FACILITIES: The PGLT determined that many of the needs of the individual Churches of the Group could be addressed best through joint action. The PGLT also determined that financial cooperation would also be beneficial to the communities.

GOAL Each faith community's business manager, or representatives from their finance councils (as well as other interested and knowledgeable parishioners) will meet to discuss each parish's financial and facility needs. This committee will determine ways to address those needs that will maximize collaboration and minimize cost.³ Specifically, the Planning Group communities will achieve a consistent method of accounting to improve communication. Additionally, the communities will, wherever possible, arrange joint purchasing contracts to lower costs. This committee will also--over the five years of this Plan--decide on the need for a Director of Development (either part- or full-time) and a joint business manager. The Director of Development will focus on grant writing and fundraising activities to benefit and expand the faith communities of the Planning Group.

ACTION By one month after acceptance of the plan by the Bishop a Finance and Facilities Planning Group Committee will be formed to identify areas where collaboration is feasible and ways to share resources.

EDUCATION: The PGLT recommends that the faith communities of the Planning Group work together in a Joint Education Committee to address Synod Goal One, Life Long Faith Formation (LLFF).

GOAL: All Religious Education programs of the faith communities will be combined into one program at one location. A committee will be formed from religious educators and interested persons to provide ongoing supervision of the joint efforts in education and LLFF. The Education Committee will review children's religious education programs (including Youth Ministry and Sacramental Preparation) and make appropriate recommendations. The Committee will develop and implement consistent registration and payment standards. The Committee and the educators involved in the programs will determine where and when the sacraments will be administered with appropriate care and attention given to the needs of each community. The Committee will also identify and provide additional liturgical, educational and faith experiences (including RCIA) for persons of all ages.⁴ This Committee

³ One area for eventual collaboration and savings may be the creation of a joint bulletin for the Planning Group parishes and faith communities, issued monthly. The bulletin would include sections setting forth the Mass Times at each faith community, and listing parish events for the week/month/year. Each Parish/Faith Community could also issue a Weekly one page bulletin for the benefit of its community.

⁴ An area for immediate collaboration will be joint evenings of reflection or retreats or missions or bible studies combined with social and recreational activities, e.g. potluck dinners, brunches, etc. The goal will be to encourage parishioners to become acquainted with each other.

will also eventually--over the five years of this Plan--determine the need for a professional Director of Religious Education to serve the entire Planning Group. This hiring will not take place immediately.

ACTION: Within one month after approval of this plan by the Bishop, the Planning Group Education Committee will develop a plan of action to create Joint Sacramental Preparation Programs and Adult Religious Education. Parishioners and Staff currently involved in these ministries will be asked to meet and make the necessary preparations.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Representatives from each faith community will address Synod Goal Two, Consistent Life Ethic (CLE), which will include issues such as abortion, poverty, racism and discrimination, violence, war, capital punishment, and euthanasia.

GOAL: The communities will work together to explore faith based community organizing and will work with neighborhood resources, including but not limited to, Pride House, St. Peter's Kitchen, SWAN, Women's Place, Inter Faith Action, and the University of Rochester Community Service Network. A committee will be formed to raise awareness of social justice issues. The committee will contact local organizations to find volunteer activities for parishioners to do that will allow them to live out their baptismal call. This committee will help other groups (for example: help the Education Committee incorporate social justice into their curriculum). This committee will also eventually--over the five years of this plan--determine the need for a Coordinator of Social Ministry or Community Organizer to serve the Planning Group.⁵ This hiring will not take place immediately.

ACTION: Within three months after approval of the Plan by the Bishop, representatives of currently active Social Justice Committees and interested people from all of the faith communities will meet to examine current programs and initiatives. They will form a joint committee that will expand the efforts of the communities in all areas of Social Justice.

EVANGELIZATION: The PGLT identified the need for joint action in the area of evangelization.

GOAL: The Planning Group Communities will work together in a joint committee to coordinate evangelization efforts. This committee will seek training for this ministry from D.O.R., Inter Faith Action and other resources. This committee will eventually--over the five years of the Plan--determine the need for a Coordinator of Evangelization who will recruit and direct volunteers and guide the Planning Group in its evangelization efforts. This hiring will not take place immediately.

⁵ Catholic Family Center could be a resource to help facilitate the process of determining the need for a coordinator of social ministry or community organizer.

ACTION: Within three months after approval of the Plan by the Bishop, representatives from each faith community will form a committee to develop a ministry of evangelization for use by each community.

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Planning Group Leadership Team also identified the need for a committee to provide oversight and to facilitate communication. The Implementation Team will consist of representatives recommended by the Pastors and Parish Councils of the Planning Group. These individuals should be consensus-builders, and have some background in parish life, finance, education, outreach, evangelization, social ministry, liturgy or strategic planning and implementation. Each parish, except for RCC 19th Ward will send two members and its pastor to serve on the Implementation Team. RCC 19th Ward will send three members (one per parish) plus its pastor to serve on the Team.

The Implementation Team will review the plan for specific goals, assigning these goals to the committees outlined above, or to itself. The Implementation Team will also establish a calendar to review progress. The first goal or task of the Team, after creation of the committees and calendar will be specifically to address the question of priest configuration. The Team will solicit and use input from parishioners, Liturgy Committees and parish councils of the Planning Group and will have a recommendation for the Bishop within six (6) months after approval of this Plan by the Bishop.

As needed, the committees (or representatives thereof) will meet with the Implementation team to provide information and assistance. The Implementation Team will assist individual communities through collaboration and sharing of resources, both human and financial. It will monitor the progress and efforts of the communities, and provide a forum to share information. The Implementation Team will review and evaluate progress of joint standing committees and collaborative efforts. It will also identify other practical ways of collaboration. Implementation of this aspect of the plan may include the creation of a joint Communication Committee to facilitate sharing of information between the parishes and faith communities. The Implementation Team will be accountable to the Parish Councils of the Planning Group.

ACTION: Within one month after approval of the Plan by the Bishop, the Implementation Team will be formed. Its first task will be to create the other committees and set the calendar for implementation of the Plan. By the end of the first year the committees will have been formed and will have begun the process of implementing the goals outlined in this plan. Within six months after approval of the Plan by the Bishop, the Implementation Team will have a specific recommendation to the Bishop regarding priest configuration for the eventuality of one less priest for the Planning Group.

CONCLUSION

Each parish will continually evaluate itself for the ability to sustain the quality of its parish life and ministry. The Implementation Team will monitor implementation of the plan. It will also determine if further changes in configuration are appropriate, including but not limited to, staff reduction and merging of churches, subject to approval by the individual

parishes. The PGLT also strongly recommends that in searching for potential employees to serve the Planning Group Parishes jointly and individually, among the job requirements shall be proficiency in American Sign Language (ASL) and inculturation in Deaf culture, African-American culture and Young Adult culture. Additionally, the current staff of individual parishes are recommended to become proficient in ASL. This PGLT--SPC may continue in existence pending creation of the Implementation Team.

VISION

In the new millennium, we will have to be a different Church. Our vision is to make our Church the very best Church of Jesus Christ through collaboration and integration of our resources, talents, programs and staff.

VITALITY INDICATORS:

As representatives of Urban Faith Communities, the PGLT firmly believes that the numbers of persons in the pews and the numbers of weddings, baptisms and funerals are not necessarily an accurate measure of the life in a faith community. Rather the life of the community is measured in the love and caring each community member shows for the others and the ways in which the community lives out the gospel message of Jesus. The PGLT is mindful, however, that some method of measurement must be utilized. Among the measurement tools identified were the following: the Implementation Team will be measured by the willingness of each parish/faith community to collaborate sooner rather than later for the benefit of all. The Committees will be measured by their ability to successfully realize the goals established in the Plan. In terms of this plan, the Churches will be assessed on their ability to welcome diversity and to participate in the implementation of the Plan. Overall, the Plan's effectiveness will be measured by the ways in which the Churches are enabled and encouraged to help each other and to share our resources for the benefit of all.

SYNOD GOALS:

When it forms the individual committees, the Implementation Team will direct appropriate Planning Group committees to focus on specific Synod goals. In particular, the PGLT has suggested committees that will enhance the work of each faith community in the areas of Life Long Faith Formation and Consistent Life Ethic. Each community will also use the work of these committees to enhance the role of women in leadership positions and to foster participation in small Christian Communities among the parishes' members.⁶

⁶ The Synod Goals regarding Role of Women in the Church and Society and Small Christian Communities did not emerge as major common issues requiring group effort in the same way as evangelization and social justice concerns.