

Phase 2: Local Area Plan Report Form

To be completed by the Local Planning Area Facilitators.

E-mail completed report to the Office of Pastoral Planning: eneu@richmonddiocese.org by **May 31, 2008**.

A copy of this form can be downloaded from the Diocesan website

www.richmonddiocese.org/PlanningGuidelines.pdf

1. Local Planning Area: 2
2. Name of person completing this report: Ann Ruggaber
Phone # and e-mail address: 757-599-5115, alphadeltarug@verizon.net
3. Describe staffing allocation changes to accommodate the reduction or increase of active priests for your local planning area in the next 5 years. Include the names of parishes that will be clustered and the model selected (reference a model included under "Cluster Models" page 29 or describe a model that your Local Planning Committee developed).

We have adopted a cluster model as follows: There will be a coordinating council made up the four pastors and representatives from each of the four parishes to foster inter-parish cooperation and to continue to monitor Mass attendance, overlapping of programs, areas of need, surplus, etc., and to share information. Two clusters will work together more immediately:

CLUSTER ONE: St. Mark and Church of the Ascension

CLUSTER TWO: St. Matthew and St. Gregory the Great

For planning purposes, it is expected that each parish will have as a minimum one pastor, and St. Gregory the Great will have an associate as well as a pastor. Moreover, it is expected that the diocese will provide the LPA 2 Joint Coordinating Council with the opportunity to assess the impact of contemplated changes as early as possible in the planning process and that the diocese will consider and LPA 2 impact statement before any decisions are made that change current manning levels. At present, each parish would maintain its own pastoral and finance councils and staff. We recommend the addition of deacons to assist the clergy with baptisms, marriages, funerals, and other liturgies and ministries.

We do not foresee any other additional staffing needs at this time, although the coordinating council will continue to monitor this.

4. Describe other changes that are needed to support the staffing changes proposed.

In order for each priest to preside at no more than three Masses each weekend, the number of weekend Masses may need to be reduced from 18 to 15 unless satisfactory alternatives can be accommodated, such as drawing on retired priests. Current ratios of building size and attendance show that present levels of church attendance can be maintained with fewer liturgies. However, this situation may change as church attendance expands.

5. Describe other recommendations that will help parishes in your Local Planning Area provide better services and ministries through inter-parish collaboration.

We developed a mission statement for our LPA and coordinating council which was accepted by the four parishes: *“At the direction of our Bishop and in communion at the Lord’s table and with each other, we form a cooperative assemblage of Catholic parishes and draw on our individual gifts to better coordinate our parish ministries, provide mutual and efficient support to each other, and to enrich our parishioners.”*

The coordinating council will monitor the institutions within the four parishes, including a hospital, nursing homes, Bishop Sullivan High School, and Virginia Wesleyan College to make sure the priests have enough properly trained lay persons to assist in the needs.

The LPA planners will develop more detailed specifications for the qualifications, selection, orientation, and time commitment for the members of the coordinating council and how the council will proceed.

We recommend that the LPA parishes work together in these additional areas: Catechist training, spiritual direction, outreach to the unchurched, and that the four parishes increase their collaboration in the areas of adult formation, social ministry, ministry to youth and young adults.

6. If your Local Planning Committee did not reach consensus on these recommendations, please describe how closer your group is to consensus and explain the minority position and/or points of disagreement.

There was a consensus on the planning group, and the plan was accepted by the four parishes.

7. Please include any other information that will assist the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Commission in evaluating your Local Plan (i.e. support by parish leadership, special challenges, etc.).

Because of the high degree of collaboration already present, the parishes of LPA 2 are well on their way to implementing this proposal already.

The two clusters were selected because St. Matthew and St. Gregory parishes have a similar demographic, and both have schools which are already sharing some advanced classes, and the parishes have a similar style of liturgy. Ascension and St. Mark are geographically close and have similar infrastructure and style of liturgy.

Some candidates for the diaconate from cluster parishes have come forward already; as noted, we see further utilization of deacons in this model. If the St. Gregory/St. Matthew cluster goes from four to three priests as projected, the priests may need additional assistance with the sacramental celebrations in the two schools and in the parishes.

Map Showing Inter-Parish Collaboration for LPA 2

