

KEY COMPONENTS

WHAT IS ON MISSION FOR THE CHURCH ALIVE?

On Mission for *The Church Alive!* is a consultative strategic planning process that invites participation from clergy, lay ecclesial ministers, parish volunteers and all the faithful. The purpose of the consultation is to foster viable, sustainable, and vibrant parishes and schools that support the mission of evangelization.

DESIRED OUTCOME:

The desired outcome of the process is to ensure that our parishes and schools are mission driven and vibrant centers of Word, Worship and Service that create faithful disciples of Christ who are alive in faith and actively give witness to and share that faith. This will require: The desired outcomes of the process include:

- Fostering the baptismal call to holiness to be more like Christ in proclaiming Good News, living in justice and faithfully serving others' needs.
- Growing the Church by sharing the joy of the Gospel and the message of salvation.
- Increased support and formation so that priests and deacons can best exercise the ministry of Holy Orders bestowed upon them.
- Increased formation for lay ministers in leadership development and evangelization.
- Realignment of parish structures and regionalization of elementary schools.
- Ministerial strategies that promote growth through evangelization and lifelong catechetical formation.
- Staffing models that increase collaboration on all levels, e.g., between clergy and lay leaders, between parish staff and diocesan staff, etc.
- Increasing vocations.

FIVE KEY COMPONENTS:

1. Full Parish Participation

- a. All parishes, elementary schools, and diocesan high schools will participate in the planning initiative sponsored by Bishop Zubik. Parishes and schools will conduct their local consultations according to the diocesan timeline.
- b. It is a priority of Bishop Zubik that *On Mission for the Church Alive!* be conducted in a spirit of prayer and consultation. *On Mission for the Church Alive!* will incorporate elements of Bishop Zubik's first pastoral letter entitled *The Church Alive!* and his most recent pastoral letter *The Church Evangelizing!* These documents provide inspiration for the future of the Church of Pittsburgh.

2. Sources of Information

- a. *On Mission for the Church Alive!* will utilize parish and school data submitted to the diocese in the annual statistical and financial reports. Additional data will be utilized from MissionInsite (data that provides demographic information specifically tailored to churches). Other data may be required with the expectation that all parishes will comply with requests.
- b. The General Secretariat in collaboration with the Catholic Leadership Institute will use this information to create district models that assist parishes and schools in the consultation process. (A "model" is a description of how a district could potentially look in the future with respect to parish structure including buildings and mass times; ministerial strategies including evangelization, stewardship, and worship: leadership structures including clergy assignments and lay staffing.)
- c. The information will be distributed to individual parishes, clusters, districts and vicariates for the purpose of study and feedback.

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3. Adherence to *On Mission for the Church Alive!*

- a. Every parish and school is expected to adhere to the planning process involving prayer, step by step consultation, and recommendations.
- b. The role of the pastor, deacon administrator and/or parish life collaborator in the process is paramount. They will be asked to provide spiritual guidance and leadership, comply with the communication plan, recruit leadership for parish meetings, and support the overall diocesan initiative. The pastor, deacon administrator and/or parish life collaborator is urged to demonstrate a positive attitude regarding the process and strongly encourage parishioners to embrace efforts in evangelization.
- c. Parishes will be supported by professional consultants and the diocesan Secretariat for Leadership Development throughout the process. This includes counsel, training and coaching of parish leaders and communication materials.

4. On Mission Commission

- a. The On Mission Commission will oversee the process of recommending to Bishop Zubik how parishes can best deliver vibrant sacramental celebration, ongoing formation for discipleship, and compassionate pastoral care in the context of changing circumstances including demographics, financial conditions and the projected number of priests.
- b. The Commission will design and oversee the process of recommending how schools can best deliver gospel centered, academically excellent, affordable, and accessible Catholic school education in the context of changing circumstances, emerging needs, and financial wherewithal.
- c. Parish and school planning must complement each other.
- d. The overall goal of the Commission is to make recommendations to Bishop Zubik by December 2017. These recommendations about the future of parishes, schools and Catholic ministries will be based on a collaborative, courageous and compassionate process. The process strives to create structures and conditions that will support vibrant parishes and schools, sustainable for the next generation. To that end the Commission will tap and extend God's many gifts, manage challenges, and bring forth new ways to serve the Church and the world.
- e. The Commission will ensure that all of the methods, processes, and outcomes of the planning process are directed toward cultivating missionary disciples in our parishes and schools.
- f. The Commission will design, implement and oversee an integrated communications strategy by creating channels for both delivery and feedback. A series of key messages will be developed and parish leaders will be equipped to convey them so that *On Mission for The Church Alive!* is accurately communicated to and understood by parishioners, the wider community, the news media and on social media.
- g. The Commission will assess the leadership needs required to staff existing and new parish structures. As a result, new leaders will be called forth and provided with ongoing formation and training.
- h. The Commission will recommend sustainable funding options for places where the Church needs to be, but where local resources may not sustain a parish or school.
- i. The Commission will recommend strategies to achieve, and remove impediments to, the fiscal health and stability of parishes and schools and provide analytic support.

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5. Guiding Principles of *On Mission for the Church Alive!* Planning Process for Recommendations

- a. Recommendations are made in light of making the Church present and the Gospel preached everywhere it needs to be.
- b. Recommendations are seeking to effect transformational change to current structures, ministerial strategies and staffing.
- c. Recommendations are directed toward renewal and growth.
- d. Recommendations are prophetic, calling us to have the courage to be who we are to be in Christ and to implement necessary changes to advance the message of the Gospel and grow our local Church.
- e. Recommendations are made in light of the Church's teaching, discipline and law.

SEQUENCE FOR THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR PARISHES AND SCHOOLS (TIME-LINE)

Preparation

- a. People of God engage in Prayer.
- b. General Secretariat begins collection of materials, data, reports, and resources necessary for parish, cluster and district study.
- c. Design and Oversight of Communications strategies.
- d. Meetings with leadership including: clergy, lay ecclesial ministers, and parish leadership bodies.
- e. Development of clergy and LEM surveys.

Design

- f. Commence discussions on long-term strategy to recruit and form LEMs for parish models.
- g. Ongoing alignment of diocesan structures and processes to the needs of parishes and schools in light of the vision of *On Mission for The Church Alive!*
- h. Development of district composites.
- i. Recruitment and training of parish leaders for consultation process.
- j. Development of possible models for parishes.
- k. Introduce consultation process to the People of God.

Consultation with Clergy and Faithful

- l. Convene district meetings with pastors, deacon administrators, parish life collaborator and parish leaders.
- m. Each parish engages in consultation.
- n. Clusters meet to discuss parish feedback and direction.
- o. Revise draft models based on parish, cluster, and district feedback.
- p. Review revised models with clergy.
- q. Convene final district meetings on revised models.
- r. Plan forums and workshops with priests who have experienced multi-parish assignments, mergers and/or closures for pastors, parochial vicars, parishioners, and staff.

Refinement of District Models

- s. July 2015-June 2016: Steering committees generate and refine 2-4 potential models for each of the 21 Districts
- t. September 2016 – June 2017: Consultations and Feedback from clergy and lay faithful at the District, Cluster, and Parish Levels
- u. June 2017 – December 2017: Refinement of models by Commission.
- v. December 2017: Commission makes final recommendations to Bishop Zubik
- w. Beginning in January 2018 Bishop Zubik prayerfully considers recommendations.
- x. Bishop Zubik consults with his councils.
- y. Bishop Zubik announces decisions.
- z. Implementation Phase begins.