

**Tompkins Planning Group
“Covenanting Council”
Pastoral Planning, Phase II
October 2002 – June 2005
Pastoral Plan**

**(Unanimously Endorsed by the Tompkins Region Covenanting Council and the
Pastoral Councils of the Seven Catholic Faith Communities, December 6, 2004.)**

Preface

*We know that all things work for good for those who love God,
who are called according to his purpose.* Rm. 8:28

It took many hours of study, discussion, agonizing and prayer to develop the Phase II pastoral plan for the Tompkins region. The Covenanting Council struggled with how to reconfigure parishes, offer a mass schedule respecting the diocesan constraints and meet the pastoral needs of the people. As this process unfolded, additional challenges presented themselves with the issuance of campus ministry guidelines and unscheduled pastoral reassignments.

Hopeful that God’s spirit worked within us, the Covenanting Council developed a plan which will effect significant changes in five of the seven faith communities involved. Individuals as well as faith communities will need to change habits and develop new ties through their journey as the people of God. As the Tompkins region embraces these changes, all are asked to pray that God will bless each of us with a steadfast spirit so we will be open to the new life springing forth.

Introduction

Pastoral Planning Phase I

In 1997-1998, the Covenanting Council completed Phase I of the diocesan “Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium” project. The following seven faith communities were included in the planning group: All Saints (Lansing), Cornell Catholic Community, Immaculate Conception (Ithaca), Ithaca College Catholic Community, Holy Cross (Dryden), St. Anthony (Groton), and St. Catherine of Siena (Cayuga Heights). Phase I addressed the need to reduce the number of priests in the region from seven to five. This resulted in the number of priests at Immaculate dropping from two to one and the sharing of one priest between St. Anthony and Holy Cross. All Saints, which had been a mission parish of St. Catherine, became an independent parish with a pastoral administrator. In 2000, the chaplain of Ithaca College, in addition to his campus ministry duties, took over as sacramental minister of All Saints. Phase I also resulted in the elimination of one weekend Mass at Holy Cross, Immaculate Conception, Ithaca College and St. Anthony, changes in Mass schedules and the sharing of sacramental programs between and among faith communities.

Pastoral Planning Phase II

Phase II of pastoral planning was initiated in October 2002. A major goal of the planning process was to ensure that faith communities throughout the diocese sustain or increase their vitality while adjusting to the declining numbers of priests and shifts in population. The diocese projects that the 160 parishes within the diocese will have only 62 active priests by 2025 (compared to 135 in 2002).

The Phase II Covenanting Council included the pastoral leader, a staff member and a lay member from each faith community, and diocesan liaison Karen Rinefierd. The original Phase II objective was to develop a plan to accommodate the diocesan projection that the number of priests serving the seven faith communities would be reduced from five to four in 2003 and from four to three in 2008. This figure was subsequently revised, with the diocese projecting four priests serving the Tompkins region through 2013.

Diocesan Constraints:

Before beginning the planning process, the diocese instructed the Covenanting Council – and all regional planning groups – to recognize and respect the following constraints in the development of its pastoral plan:

- 1) No priest will preside at more than three Masses of Sunday obligation (which includes Saturday Masses of anticipation) each weekend.
- 2) Every parish must have a weekly Sunday Eucharist as long as this is possible and practical.
- 3) No priest pastor, priest administrator, or pastoral administrator will be assigned to more than three parishes. No parish will have more than three worship sites per assigned priest.
- 4) A cluster of two or three parishes with a single pastor is not the norm in canon law. Typically the cluster should be moving toward becoming a single canonical parish.
- 5) Every parish, faith community, or worshipping community must meet the requirements and expectations appropriate to its nature.
- 6) Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest (SCAP) can only be used in short-term emergency situations.

Diocesan Suggestions Specific to the Tompkins Region:

In recognition of the distinctive features of the Tompkins region, the diocese suggested that the following be considered in developing its pastoral plan and in the ministry phase to follow:

- 1) Utilization of the services of priests studying at one of the colleges or visiting extern priests.
- 2) Working with campus ministry to consider the emerging role of local campuses in relation to parishes and ministry offered. (Guidelines are spelled out in the diocesan campus ministry document, “Sacramental Celebration and Campus Ministry.”)
- 3) Exploration of ways to recruit additional men to apply for admission to the diaconate formation program.

- 4) Development of a plan to ensure catechist formation and certification in each faith community.
- 5) Development of ways to create an integrated approach to young adult ministry with campus ministry.

Regional Tenets and Goals:

In addition to the diocesan constraints and suggestions outlined above, as the planning process evolved, the Covenanting Council defined the following tenets and goals to help guide the development of its plan:

- 1) Each of the seven Tompkins faith communities is viable. Based on the number of parishioners, Mass attendance, size and condition of facilities, and financial solvency, each of the seven Tompkins region faith communities is a viable entity and should be sustained.
- 2) Personalities should not influence the planning process. Recognizing that the implementation of the new pastoral plan in June 2005 will result in changes in priests' assignments, members agreed not to let personalities and personal relationships interfere with developing the best possible pastoral plan for the region.
- 3) At least one Sunday morning Mass should be celebrated at each parish. The Religious Education program at each of the five parish communities is an integral factor in its parish life and vitality. Since these programs are scheduled either before or after Sunday morning Mass, at least one Sunday morning Mass should be offered at each parish community.
- 4) Priests' physical and mental well-being must be safeguarded. Workloads at each faith community vary based on geographic size, number of parishioners, Mass attendance, other sacramental duties (number of funerals and baptisms) and special pastoral responsibilities (service to hospitals, senior care and correctional facilities, etc.), and should be considered in developing a priest-sharing plan. Also, a major portion of the region is rural, and driving times and distances must be considered in scheduling Masses.
- 5) Expansion of existing facilities should not be a prerequisite. Unless a particular faith community wishes to expand or renovate its current facilities, the pastoral plan should not be predicated on a faith community being required to expand or modify its facilities.
- 6) Insure the viability of the Tompkins region's "hub" parish. Due to its size, central location, and regional Catholic school, the vitality of the regional "hub parish," Immaculate Conception, should be insured.
- 7) Celebrate two Sunday Masses at Ithaca College. Since both Sunday Masses at Ithaca College are filled to capacity, the plan's assignment of priests and scheduling of Masses should provide for two Sunday Masses at Ithaca College.

Pastoral Plan

Priest Sharing:

After two years of deliberations, the Covenanting Council proposes the following priest sharing arrangement whereby four priests will serve the seven Tompkins region faith communities: one priest assigned by the diocese to serve as director of campus ministry and priest/chaplain at Cornell, one priest serving as pastor at Immaculate Conception, one priest serving as pastor at St. Catherine and part-time priest/chaplain at Ithaca College and one priest assigned as pastor of All Saints, Holy Cross and Saint Anthony. The All Saints/Holy Cross/St. Anthony position would be advertised in the spring 2005 reassignment period. The St. Catherine/Ithaca College position and the Immaculate Conception position would not have to be advertised. The search for a priest to fill the Cornell position is in progress.

Extra Priest Coverage for All Saints/Holy Cross/St. Anthony:

Due to the distances and time required to travel between and among All Saints/Holy Cross/St. Anthony, it would be impossible for one priest to celebrate Sunday morning Mass at each location at a reasonable time. To insure viable Sunday morning Mass times and religious education schedules, the diocese has committed to provide extra priest assistance in celebrating one Sunday morning Mass within this faith community cluster.

Mass Schedules and Staffing:

All Saints: A priest will be shared with Holy Cross and St. Anthony. Additional ministerial help may be hired with primary responsibility at All Saints. Sunday Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. A minimum of one weekday Mass and one weekday Communion Service will be celebrated. The Holy Day Mass schedule will be determined.

Holy Cross: A priest will be shared with All Saints and St. Anthony. A full-time pastoral associate will be hired. (Currently the full-time Holy Cross religious education coordinator fills this role.) A Saturday Mass will be celebrated on a six month rotation with St. Anthony. Sunday Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. A minimum of one weekday Mass and one weekday Communion Service will be celebrated. The Holy Day Mass schedule will be determined.

St. Anthony: A priest will be shared with All Saints and Holy Cross. A part-time pastoral associate may be hired, if needed. A Saturday Mass will be celebrated on a six month rotation with Holy Cross. Sunday Mass will be celebrated at 8:30 a.m. A minimum of one weekday Mass and one Communion Service will be celebrated. The Holy Day Mass schedule will be determined.

St. Catherine of Siena: The priest assigned to St. Catherine will also serve as part-time priest/chaplain at Ithaca College. Sunday Masses will be celebrated at 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Weekday Masses will be celebrated Monday at 5:30 p.m., and Tuesday through Thursday at 9:00 a.m. The Holy Day Mass schedule will be determined.

Ithaca College: The priest serving St. Catherine will serve as part-time priest/chaplain at Ithaca College. An additional campus minister will be hired to assist the current director of campus ministry. Sunday Masses will be celebrated at 1:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. when the majority of students are on campus (26 weeks per year). One Sunday Mass will be celebrated six weekends per year. No Masses will be celebrated when the majority of students are not on campus (20 weeks per year). The weekday Mass schedule will be determined based on the priest/chaplain's office hours. Thursday at 8:00 p.m. is a high priority. The Holy Day Mass schedule will be determined. An extern, if available, will preside – on a rotating basis – at one of the Sunday Masses during the 26 weeks each year when two Masses are scheduled, in recognition of the diocesan constraint that no priest may celebrate more than three Masses of Sunday obligation each weekend. If an extern priest is not available, then the priests assigned to Immaculate Conception and to All Saints/Holy Cross/St. Anthony will join in a rotation with the priest/chaplain of Ithaca College to celebrate two Masses on campus during those 26 weeks.

Cornell Catholic Community: Since a diocesan appointed priest/director of campus ministry will serve Cornell exclusively, no change in Mass schedule or staffing is anticipated. Sunday Masses will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. in Anabel Taylor auditorium, and at 9:30 p.m. in Sage Chapel during periods when the majority of the students are on campus (32 weeks per year). Mass will be celebrated on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. when the majority of students are not on campus (20 weeks per year). The Holy Day Mass schedule will be determined. It is hoped that the Cornell priest/chaplain will be open to discussing ways that he might assist his fellow pastors in the region during the 20 weeks when the majority of students are not on campus.

Immaculate Conception: Since Immaculate Conception continues to have its own priest, no changes in Mass schedule or staffing are anticipated. Weekend Masses will be celebrated Saturday at 4:30 p.m., and Sunday at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Weekday Masses will be celebrated on Monday and Thursday at 12:10 p.m., and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday at 7:00 a.m. The Holy Day Mass schedule will be determined.

Maintaining a Saturday Afternoon/Evening Mass in the Eastern Part of the Region:

The diocesan commitment to provide extra priest coverage for one of the Sunday Masses at All Saints/Holy Cross/St. Anthony will enable the priest/pastor serving this cluster to celebrate a Saturday afternoon/evening Mass at either Holy Cross or St. Anthony on a six month rotation. Without this commitment – and if no extern priests are available – the diocesan constraint that no priest may celebrate more than three Masses of Sunday obligation per weekend would result in the elimination of Saturday Masses at All Saints, Holy Cross, St. Catherine and St. Anthony. This would adversely affect approximately 500 parishioners who regularly attend these Masses. (Immaculate Conception would be the only faith community in the Tompkins region where Saturday Mass would be celebrated.) Holy Cross and St. Anthony are bordered by another diocese where Saturday Masses are readily available. The vitality of these parishes depends on offering a Saturday Mass at one of these worship sites.

Extern Prioritization:

With three colleges in the Tompkins region there is a high probability of having visiting, student priests available to assist assigned diocesan priests in offering additional weekend Masses. If an extern priest is available, the first priority is for the extern to join the rotation in celebrating one of the two Sunday Masses at Ithaca College. The next priority is presiding at one of the Sunday morning Masses in the All Saints/Holy Cross/St. Anthony cluster. A procedure will be developed to identify potential externs who are currently enrolled, or are in the process of applying, at one of the area's colleges.

Special Pastoral Responsibilities:

The following is a summary of special ministries currently served by the seven Tompkins faith communities including a summary of perceived future needs. Once the pastoral plan is approved, the Covenanting Council will embark on the ministry phase of the planning process to insure that pastoral workloads are balanced and all ministerial needs of the region are addressed and fulfilled.

Longview: Mass is celebrated monthly by the priest/chaplain of Ithaca College. A Communion Service is offered weekly by the students of Ithaca College. All Saints parishioners currently lead a Communion Service when Ithaca College is not in session. Anointing of the Sick and memorial services are celebrated as needed.

All Saints/Holy Cross/St. Anthony:

Lansing Older Adult Program: A representative of All Saints attends bi-monthly board meetings with other area clergy to address elderly programs and concerns in Lansing.

Lansing Better Housing: A staff member and parishioner of All Saints serve on the oversight board for administering a four million dollar Federal Grant to assist Lansing residents living in substandard housing.

Lansing Food Pantry: The parishioners of All Saints and those from other churches and community members manage the food pantry and distribute food once a month to needy families.

Woodsedge: The pastor of All Saints visits residents as requested for sacramental and/or other needs.

Oak Hill Manor: Mass is celebrated monthly by the pastor of Holy Cross, a Communion Service is offered weekly and Anointing of the Sick is offered twice per year.

Willowbrook Manor: A Communion Service is offered weekly by the parishioners of Holy Cross.

Dryden Ecumenical Pastors: The pastor or staff member of Holy Cross attends monthly meetings with other Dryden pastors and participates in two ecumenical services per year.

Dryden Kitchen Cupboard: The parishioners of Holy Cross provide financial/food support and participate along with members of other local churches.

Groton Nursing Home: Mass is celebrated monthly by the pastor of St. Anthony and Anointing of the Sick is offered twice per year. A Communion Service is offered weekly by St. Anthony parishioners.

Groton Senior Housing: The parishioners of St. Anthony offer a weekly Communion Service.

Groton Food Pantry: The parishioners of St. Anthony provide financial/food support and participate along with members of other local churches.

Cortland Hospital: The pastor of Holy Cross/St. Anthony visits patients on request.

Cemetery Oversight: The pastor and staff of St. Anthony are responsible for the management of property and maintenance of records at St. Patrick Cemetery in McLean and St. Anthony Cemetery in Groton.

Future Needs: Holy Cross, in collaboration with All Saints and St. Anthony, will develop a campus ministry program to serve Tompkins Cortland Community College and investigate the potential need to offer regular ministerial outreach programs for George Junior Republic, Dryden Group Homes, and Creamery Hills (Harford Senior Center). The parishioners of All Saints, in cooperation with Cornell and Ithaca College, will explore the possibility of expanding the ministry to the Lansing School for Girls.

St. Catherine/Ithaca College:

Hispanic Ministry: St. Catherine is working to re-establish a regular monthly Spanish Mass but this is dependent upon the availability of a Spanish-speaking priest. A Spanish prayer group meets weekly.

Korean Ministry: The Korean community enjoys a regular gathering following Sunday Mass at St. Catherine and also has a Korean prayer group. A Korean priest from Buffalo currently celebrates Mass in Korean twice per year with plans to increase to three or four times per year.

Tompkins County Public Safety Building: Pastoral ministry is offered weekly by the St. Catherine deacon.

Kendal: Pastoral ministry is provided by St. Catherine as requested.

Alterra: The pastor of St. Catherine celebrates a monthly Mass, and the parishioners of St. Catherine offer a weekly Communion Service those weeks when Mass is not celebrated.

Hospicare: The priest chaplain of Ithaca College administers the sacraments on request.

Future Needs: The Hispanic ministry and ministry to the Tompkins County Public Safety Building need to be continued and possibly expanded.

Cornell Catholic Community:

Reconstruction Home: A Mass is celebrated at Christmas. A weekly Communion Service is offered. Bi-weekly visits are made during the school year and monthly visits are made during the summer. The Anointing of the Sick is celebrated on request.

Lansing School for Girls: The Liturgy of the Word is offered twice per month during the school year and monthly during the summer. In cooperation with the parishioners of All Saints and students of Ithaca College, the possibility of expanding this ministry will be explored.

MacCormick Center: Christmas gifts are distributed.

Louis Gossett Center for Boys: Efforts to set up a regular ministry have failed due to security and/or problems within the center.

Immaculate Conception:

Cayuga Medical Center: The pastor conducts weekly visitations and is on first call for emergencies.

Community Food Pantry: The pantry is located at Immaculate and is staffed by parishioners of Immaculate and members of the community.

Immaculate Conception School: The pastor celebrates Mass on Holy Days, makes regular visitations and attends meetings.

Lakeside Nursing Home: Mass is celebrated monthly, a Communion Service is offered weekly, and Anointing of the Sick is celebrated twice per year.

McGraw House: A Communion Service is offered monthly.

Titus Towers: A Communion Service is celebrated six times per year.

Cemetery Oversight: The pastor and staff of Immaculate are responsible for the management of property and maintenance of records at Mt. Olivet and Calvary Cemeteries.

Future Needs: A plan will be developed to assign hospital responsibilities when the pastor of Immaculate Conception is not available.

Clustering/Consolidation:

One of the diocesan constraints which the Covenanting Council was requested to recognize and respect in the planning process is that a cluster of two or three parishes with a single pastor is not the norm in canon law. Typically the cluster should be moving toward becoming a single canonical parish.

All Saints/Holy Cross/St. Anthony:

Since the conclusion of Phase I of the pastoral planning process, Holy Cross and St. Anthony parishes have made steady progress in becoming more aware of each other's unique qualities and have made concerted efforts to do joint planning and scheduling. With the addition of All Saints to the cluster, time will be required for all three faith communities to develop relationships that will best utilize the gifts of each community. The pastoral staffs of the three communities will meet occasionally to facilitate planning and communications. The setting and implementation of mutual goals and the strengthening of inter-parish bonds will guide movement toward consolidation.

Cooperation between St. Catherine/Ithaca College:

With the pastor of St. Catherine taking on the additional responsibility of part-time priest/chaplain at Ithaca College, it will be necessary to integrate the St. Catherine schedule with that of Ithaca College. The following areas will need to be addressed: the coordination of Holy Week celebrations, Holy Day Masses, communal Penance services, as well as several special annual celebrations at Ithaca College (First-Year student weekend, Family weekend, Baccalaureate Mass); sharing of opportunities for adult faith formation and Young Adult Ministry; sharing of pertinent bulletin announcements; coordination and integration of some components of the RCIA process. One or two parishioners of St. Catherine, who are employed at Ithaca College, will continue to serve on the Ithaca College Catholic Community Advisory Committee. Other opportunities for working together will be explored.

Conclusion

Make every effort to preserve the unity which has the Spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force. Eph. 4:3

The Covenanting Council envisions this plan as a “work in progress” that will require adaptation, modification, and perseverance as the seven Tompkins region faith communities strive toward its implementation. The decline in number of priests is the primary motivating force behind the plan’s development. Since priest numbers are expected to continue to decline, we pray that church leaders will follow the example of Jesus and Paul: challenge tradition, ease constraints, embrace change, and allow creative ministry that will enable all God’s people to share His love and redemption.

The body is one and has many members but all the members, many though they are, are one body. Cor. 12:12