



## **SOUTH SEATTLE DEANERY PASTORAL PLANNING PROCESS**

### **Archbishop Sartain's Response to our proposed Pastoral Plan**

*After more than two years of consultation and conversation in the spirit of prayer, the 17 parishes\* in the South Seattle Deanery submitted a Pastoral Plan to Archbishop Sartain on December 15, 2016. The proposed plan envisioned how our faith communities will best support missionary discipleship both in the present and in the future. Below is a summary of his comments at a recent gathering of Pastoral Leaders in the Deanery:*

- I'm grateful for the many hours of dialogue undertaken by the deanery and the comprehensive inclusion of many leaders and parishioners in the process. Truly a collaborative effort. You have done well! I know the participants appreciated the help of facilitator Dan Celucci of Catholic Leadership Institute.
- I especially appreciated the concept of "Missionary Disciples" woven throughout the plan. In fact, taking the same charge from Pope Francis is what led our recent reorganization of core areas in chancery structure: we are now organized to focus on these three prime goals: Evangelization, Discipleship, and Formation.
- The original charge of reducing the number of priests serving the deanery by three was not only met but surpassed to identifying five possible reductions. As I have said from the beginning of our planning process, it is my hope to be able to assign a priest pastor to every community, but the priest placement board will review annually the number of priests available and if necessary implement leadership models such as you recommend.
- Very helpful to have identified sub-deaneries and parish partnerships, and while the leadership models recommended may be implemented over years as needed, implementing the sharing of staff and programs can begin immediately.
- I agree with the recommendation to shift Vietnamese Martyrs Parish to the South King Deanery but would like the parish to continue participating in the Rainbow School coalition.
- In order to reduce stress on pastors and other priests serving the deanery, it would also be important to begin to reduce the number of Masses in the deanery. This of course needs to be a deliberate and consultative process with the parishioners, parish leadership, and the Archdiocese.
- One recommendation asks for the "creation of parish viability benchmarks that can help a community objectively assess if they have the financial and human resources necessary to remain independent." I think that is a very good idea. It will be important to consider these factors when reviewing the viability of the parish partnerships. As regards parish partnerships, I ask that you review the proposed parish pairings in light of the financial condition of each parish, including financial capacity, indebtedness, and other factors, to be sure that the pairings are realistic and workable.

- The recommendations in your report must be placed in the context of the needs of the whole Archdiocese. As the planning results of other deaneries emerge in the coming months and year, it will be critical that we look at the whole to ensure that the comprehensive needs of the entire Archdiocese are being addressed. It is important to avoid a “congregationalist” approach, in which a particular parish community considers only itself and not the needs and realities of other parishes in its deanery and throughout the Archdiocese. The Catholic approach is “universal,” not “congregationalist.”
- I personally remain committed to the formation of lay ministers and parish leaders, and to creative models of parish administration as needed. As an archdiocese, we will continue to emphasize the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. My entire priestly ministry has been in a landscape of collaboration between clergy and lay ministers, and our focus will continue to be so. It is not a matter of “either/or” but “both/and.” Quality priestly vocations from our local parishes are there, and thanks be to God they continue to come forth. A critical aspect of our discipleship is to intentionally encourage them.
- Finally, I thank you for the very hard work represented in your plan, and I am pleased with it. We’ll continue moving forward with the ideas I have suggested today, and even more progress will come about.

### ***Next Steps***

The South Seattle Deanery leadership, in collaboration with archdiocesan services, will continue to meet to follow up on the Archbishop’s recommendations and begin implementing the Deanery’s Pastoral Plan with consultation and collaboration with parishioners and staff.

*\*The parishes in the South Seattle Deanery include Christ Our Hope, Holy Family, Holy Rosary, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Mount Virgin, St. Edward, St. George, St. James Cathedral, St. Joseph, St. Mary, St. Patrick, St. Paul, St. Peter, St. Therese, Vietnamese Martyrs (Tukwila), and St. John Vianney (Vashon Island).*