



# Implementation Update #9 Winter 2018

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## **What the World needs now...is collaborative action!**

Recently, I heard an instrumental rendition of the Dionne Warwick 1966 hit song "What the World Needs Now is Love, Sweet Love." In this moment could this song title offer a message of hope in the New Year? Too often the words of songs just become part of our memory and are not fleshed out in reality. During the past year our focus has been on implementing Bishop O'Connell's "Faith in our Future" decisions. The Bishop's decisions were an invitation to bring God's love to the people of the Diocese of Trenton in Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean and Burlington Counties through vibrant parish life. How do we make sure these decisions are not just words (like the song lyrics), but are "fleshed out" in reality?

As we begin 2018, early reports indicate some amazing things are taking place. Through collaboration, cohorts have held regional liturgical celebrations, decided on shared youth ministry programs and shared staffing of parishes. Some parishes are working toward linkage or merger that should strengthen their ability to serve the people of the parishes. Renewed vibrancy can breathe new life and excitement into worship and outreach ministry to meet the needs of the young and the old, the poor and those on the peripheries. Parishes collaborating with each other can bring both the Bishop's decisions and the message of that 60's song to life.

In his first World Day of Peace message (2014), Pope Francis wrote:

**"In the heart of every man and woman is the desire for a full life, including the irrepressible longing for fraternity which draws us to fellowship with others and enables us to see them not as enemies or rivals, but as brothers and sisters to be accepted and embraced."**

In the New Year, it is our hope that "Faith in our Future" can draw us together in a common bond of fellowship allowing us to move outward beyond our parish boundaries, and offering the possibility for unlimited and creative thinking as we move into the future.

[Click here to read: "Welcoming and accompanying the unchurched" Janet E. Smith OSV Newsweekly](#)

Don't forget:

- Every parish should be in some active collaboration with one or more of its cohort partners.
- Cohort subcommittees should be meeting as often as needed to sustain progress toward cohort goals. The Cohort Implementation Team should meet at least quarterly to monitor progress, resolve issues, and share ongoing visioning.
- "Parish Review" Documents (where requested) and Merging Parish Name Selections should be submitted by March 24, in advance of Holy Week.
- Year 1 Evaluations and Action Plans for Year 2 of Implementation are due to the Planning Office by May 15, 2018.