

MEMO

TO: *CONNECTED IN THE SPIRIT* COHORT CORE TEAMS

FROM: ANNETTE “MICKEY” LENTZ, Chancellor, Archdiocese of Indianapolis

RE: PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

DATE: JUNE 29, 2016

The Archdiocesan Planning Commission spent June 1, 2016 working together studying your materials with all the good work you have done since November of 2015.

The Planning Commission reviewed the goals Archbishop Tobin had set for *Connected in the Spirit* as it began its deliberations. (Binder, Section I, page 2).

In the context of prayer, reflection, discussion and discernment based on the criteria set for vibrant parishes, the Planning Commission is presenting each Cohort with Preliminary Recommendations about the proposed structure of their parish for the future, along with some further recommendations. The Planning Commission has expressed appreciation for all the work done by the parishes and the Cohorts. They affirmed specifically admirable work that the parishes and Cohorts shared with them.

In many cases the Planning Commission affirmed the model which the Cohort Core Team had suggested and often added recommendations. In some cases, after serious deliberation and considering the good of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis as a whole, the Archdiocesan Planning Commission recommended a model different than what the Cohort Core Team had suggested. In all cases the Commission provided a rationale for their Preliminary Recommendations.

The first three steps in the *Connected in the Spirit* process are completed.

- STEP #1 -- Conversation** at the Archdiocesan, Parish and Cohort level
- STEP #2 -- Suggestion** of a particular Model (Linked Parishes, Merged Parish, Partnership Parishes, In Solidum/Team) with a rationale to the Archdiocesan Planning Commission by the Cohort Core Team.
- STEP #3 -- Preliminary Recommendations** of the Archdiocesan Planning Commission with a rationale back to the Cohort of Parishes.

Currently, we are asking you to begin **Step #4, Conversation** about the Preliminary Recommendations at the Cohort level. What can you affirm about the Preliminary Recommendations? What are your concerns, questions and best thinking?

Step #5 is your response to the Preliminary Recommendations. The **Response** is made by the Cohort Core Team to the Archdiocesan Planning Commission. The focus of the response is on the particular Model or Models recommended by the Archdiocesan Planning Commission. The **Response** will also involve the Cohort Core Team expressing its rationale for its response. We encourage you to publish the Preliminary Recommendations in your parish bulletins and have

parish meetings or have Cohort meetings of parishioners so all are aware of the Preliminary Recommendations. Many parishes will want to use Archdiocesan Parish Facilitators for these meetings. Please call your Reid Group Consultant as soon as you know your dates for meetings so we can try and get you a trained facilitator.

Your Response Form is due electronically to Cathy Mayer (cmayer@archindy.org) by September 15, 2016.

In late September or early October the Planning Commission will meet in the context of prayer and reflection and review the Cohort Responses as well as any previous data submitted by the Cohorts and make final recommendations to the Archbishop. The Archbishop will consult with the Priests' Council and other advisory bodies; pray about the recommendations and the advice he gets from the Priests' Council and others and make a decision about the reconfiguration of parishes in the New Albany and Tell City Deaneries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis by late autumn or January 2017. After he issues his directives, there will be a time of planning for implementation which is expected to unfold over the next 3-5 years.

Please remember that these recommendations are preliminary. The Planning Commission has given you its best thinking, considering the goals of the ***Connected in the Spirit*** planning process and the criteria established to continually increase parish vitality and have communities of the faithful which reflect the presence of Christ in the world and respond to God's call to be witness to the world and build the reign of God. Nothing is yet determined. It is now your opportunity to further reflect and determine your final response.

You are now asked to study the Preliminary Recommendations in light of the goals of ***Connected in the Spirit***--the key goal being vibrant parishes. Please communicate the Preliminary Recommendations to the parishes in your cohort and meet as often as needed to discern your response to the Commission. There is a Response Form for your use found in your ***Connected in the Spirit*** Planning Guide in the third section on p. 21-22. This is also available electronically on our website.

Please feel free to call Mickey Lentz or your Reid Group consultant with questions or concerns. Thanks again for your work to date and your best thinking as we move through these next steps.

God bless!

ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS
CONNECTED IN THE SPIRIT
PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

REGION Tell City

COHORT 2

PARISHES

St. Martin of Tours
St. Isidore the Farmer
St. Meinrad
St. Boniface

CITIES

Siberia
Perry County
St. Meinrad
Fulda

Appreciation

We appreciate the prayer, reflection and work which you have put into *Connected in the Spirit* to date. We also appreciate the time and effort given to evaluating your parishes and your Cohort based on the Criteria and for making a Suggestion for a model or models for your Cohort.

Commendations

We commend you for:

- Carefully reviewing and assessing your individual parishes.
- The spirit of cooperation and great work you are doing in sharing resources.
- Your attention to ministry for the poor.
- Your strong and dedicated volunteers.
- Your desire to improve and be vibrant parishes.

Preliminary Recommendations

We acknowledge your desire to implement **Model One: Linked Parishes** and understand that your rationale is based on the following factors:

- St. Meinrad and St. Boniface already operate as linked parishes.
- St. Martin and St. Isidore already share a priest and you acknowledge that you can link councils, programs/services, etc.
- Linking will allow parishes to share resources and to strengthen your rural, faith-filled communities in northeastern Spencer County and Central/Northern Perry County.
- The geographical location of St. Martin and St. Isidore allows for smooth linkage.
- All parishes are viewed as “financially sound” and have no outstanding debt.

We have taken seriously the information provided by the cohort and considered your proposed models and rationale. Based on our study of the Cohort reports, the challenges identified in the Parish Summary Reports, the Cohort Evaluations, and the Goals and Criteria of *Connected in the Spirit*, we concur with your evaluation and recommend the following:

Model Two: Merged Parishes

Between St. Martin of Tours and St. Isidore at the St. Isidore site. There may be an additional worship site at St. Martin of Tours. (Masses as needed per weekend with occasional funerals and weddings) which will be evaluated every two years after the merger, based on geography, attendance, fiscal realities and the availability of priests.)

Model Three: Partnership Parish

Between St. Meinrad, St. Boniface, and St. Isidore the Farmer.

We further recommend that as a Cohort you:

1. Plan and implement a common evangelization program.
2. Look at ways to improve shared staffing.
3. Share a common sacramental preparation program, including RCIA.
4. Combine Parish councils in linked parishes.

Rationale

We make these recommendations based on your own study and concepts found on your Cohort Evaluation and Suggestion Forms:

1. Your desire and ours to have a strong Catholic presence in your area now and in the future.
2. The declining number of registered families at St. Isidore and St. Martin of Tours.
3. Minimal sacramental participation at St. Martin.
4. Your close geographic proximity.
5. The fact that you are unnecessarily duplicating efforts by having stand-alone programs and trainings for catechists and liturgical ministers.