

Diocese of Steubenville
Pastoral Plan for Visitation Deanery - 2007

General Comments:

The consensus of the priests and parish representatives present at the March 5, 2007, Visitation Deanery Pastoral Council meeting was that the way “to arrange our parishes that will provide the best possible experience of a faith community for our people and the most effective ministry of the Church” was to keep all of the current 17 parishes and 1 mission in Visitation Deanery open for as long as possible. The current priests are willing to continue with current assignments and, in some cases, even accept additional ones in order to keep parishes open. We prefer that a parish “closes itself” - i.e. come to its own realization that it can no longer meet its current financial obligations or provide for necessary anticipated maintenance on its current facilities.

Timeline for implementation:

Implementation can begin immediately.

Parish Reconfiguration:

Below are the Parish Reconfiguration recommendations. Explanations for the listed options are explained in the minutes of the March 5, 2007 Visitation Deanery Pastoral Council minutes.

<u>LOCATION / CHURCH NAME</u>	<u>CURRENT STATUS</u>	<u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>
Beverly, St. Bernard	Parish	Remain as is Opt. 1 - Clustered with McConnellsville if no pastor available for McConnellsville
Caldwell, St. Stephen	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Belle Valley, Corpus Christi	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Cambridge, St. Benedict	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Byesville, Holy Trinity	Clustered Parish	Remain as is Opt. 1 - Consider closing Opt. 2 - Consider closing & building new church in Cambridge for Guernsey County
Lore City, St. Peter & Paul	Clustered Parish	Remain as is Opt. 1 - Consider closing Opt. 2 - Consider closing & building new church in Cambridge for Guernsey County
Churchtown, St. John the Baptist	Parish	Remain as is
Fulda, St. Mary	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Carlisle, St. Michael	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Little Hocking, St. Ambrose	Parish	Remain as is
Lowell, Our Lady of Mercy	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Harrietsville, St. Henry	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Marietta, St. Mary	Parish	Remain as is Opt. 1 - Remove parochial vicar if needed elsewhere
McConnellsville, St. James	Parish	Remain as is Opt. 1 - If no pastor is not available, McConnellsville is clustered with Beverly
Woodsfield, St. Sylvester	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Burkhart Station, St. Joseph	Clustered Parish	Opt. 1 - Cluster with Fulda Opt. 2 - Consider closing after 2008
Miltonsburg, St. John the Baptist	Clustered Parish	Remain as is
Sardis, St. John Bosco	Clustered Mission	Remain as is

Staffing: Currently the 17 parishes and 1 mission are being staffed by 12 priests. The projection is that Visitation Deanery will be allotted only 11 priests by 2010. Meeting that projection seems very possible and does not present any major difficulties.

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Shared Programming of Ministry: More collaboration is happening and is planned. For example, CCD programs in Noble County are being combined. Opportunities for marriage preparation classes are being advertised and shared throughout the deanery. There is great cooperation in scheduling and assisting at penance services.

Vocations Promotion: Parishes are cooperating with the Vocations Office by displaying materials, publicizing seminary visitation opportunities, arranging for regular visits and presentations by members of the Vocations Office. In addition, pastors and DRE's encourage attendance at the Youth Rally (which includes a strong vocations component) held at St. Ambrose Church in October.

Other: We realize that administering multiple parishes can take a toll on many priests. We recommend that the diocese consider instituting a training course for pastoral administrators or business administrators who could relieve pastors of many non-sacramental and non-pastoral duties. Such a training course would include a study of Canon Law and familiarity with diocesan procedures. Likewise, we recommend instituting the diaconate program in the diocese as soon as possible. Although it may be years in the future, the presence of a resident deacon may enable some parishes to remain open.