

**Pastoral Planning Task Force:
Report and Recommendations to Bishop Robert W. Muench
March 2016 (Revised March 2017)**

APPENDIX A

***Specific Pastoral Planning Strategies Currently Being Implemented
in the Diocese of Baton Rouge***

(Bishop Muench has accepted the recommendations presented to him by the Pastoral Planning Task Force and asked that the process of implementation begin. What follows in this appendix is a listing of the recommendations that are being or have been implemented thus far. Each paragraph below includes a reference to the *Task Force Report*, currently available in its entirety on the website for the Diocese of Baton Rouge: www.diobr.org).

1. **(A Corporate, Diocesan-Wide Reduction of Masses: See Part I, Paragraph 1.a)**- clergy and laity alike are of the understanding that it will, at times, be appropriate to reduce the number of Masses celebrated, based on the number of priests available, demographic shifts in population and Mass attendance. Of primary concern, along with the spiritual welfare of the lay faithful, is the health of our priests. Such changes have already been made in various parts of the diocese and are being considered in other areas. Here are a few examples:
 - a. **St. Isidore and St. Pius X**- a change from 2 Saturday Vigil Masses to 1.
 - b. **Sacred Heart (Gramercy), St. Joseph (Paulina), and St. Michael (Convent)**- a change from 8 Masses on the weekend to 6.
2. **(Weekend Assistance for Priests: Part I, Paragraph 2)**- it was strongly recommended that a resource be established to assist priests in securing help with weekend Masses when an emergency or health issue arises. Such a resource could also help priests who simply need time off for vacation but have difficulty finding a replacement. The Office of the Chancellor of our diocese, currently served by Fr. Paul Yi, has been established as this resource. When an emergency or health issue arises, priests may contact Fr. Yi to assist them with securing a replacement for 1 or more weekend Masses.
3. **(Parish-to-Parish Tithing: Part 1, Paragraph 3)**- the *Task Force Report* recommends the category of “extraordinary income” (income to a parish that is taxable to the diocese) be broadened to include “any income received by a parish from another parish.” Toward the goal of greater financial collaboration, Bishop Muench immediately approved this recommendation.
4. **(Fraternity and Mentoring Programs for Priests: Part II, Page 2, Paragraphs 1 and 2)**- a mentoring program for priests ordained 3 years or less has been revised and implemented. Younger priests have been paired with older priests who serve as a mentor and guide for them during these early years of priesthood.
 - a. **First Time Pastors**- the mentoring program will be especially beneficial for priests serving as pastor for the first time.
 - b. **Parishes with a School**- The Catholic Schools Office, in collaboration with the Task Force, is developing a pilot formation day to assist first time pastors of parishes with schools in this regard.

5. **(Hispanic Ministry Training for Seminarians: Part II, Page 13, Paragraph 6)**- given the significant Hispanic population in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and other dioceses in the State of Louisiana, Notre Dame began a new mandatory program this year to teach seminarians Spanish beginning in First Theology. Notre Dame also provides classes on Ecclesial Spanish.
6. **(Foreign Born Priests in the Diocese of Baton Rouge: Part II, Page 13, Paragraph 7)**- a program and protocol for the reception, orientation, development and evaluation of foreign born priests who serve in the diocese has been established, in collaboration with the Diocesan Personnel Board and the Priest Continuing Formation Committee.
7. **(Financial Support for Parish Administrator Positions: Part II, Page 12)**- formation of an exploratory committee to study the feasibility of parish-to-parish financial support for business administrator positions where necessary and appropriate.
8. **(Parish Pastoral Support Committee: Part III, Paragraph 2)**- originally termed in the *Task Force Report* as a “Parish Transitioning Committee”, the diocese has established what is known as the *Parish Pastoral Support Committee*. At present, this Committee consists of 25 to 30 volunteers from throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Trained by SSA Consultants of Baton Rouge, the purpose of the Committee is to assist parishes, priests, and parish leadership in discerning the best structural and pastoral ministry model for their particular community, given the fewer number of priests available and changing demographics in their area. The Committee is divided into smaller *Parish Resource Teams*, each consisting of 3 to 5 members. Each team is connected with a particular pastor and parish or group of parishes and guides them through a process of gathering input and seeking consensus regarding possible structural changes. Each Team enters into the process with a clearly stated goal and a process that is clearly outlined in the *Parish Pastoral Support Committee Resource Guidebook*. Currently, there are 5 Teams facilitating this process in 5 areas of the diocese:
 - a. **St. Isidore and St. Pius X Parishes (Baton Rouge)**
 - b. **St. Anne, Assumption, and St. Philomena Parishes (Napoleonville, Plattenville, and Labadieville)**
 - c. **St. Elizabeth and St. Jules (Paincourtville and Belle Rose)**
 - d. **Our Lady of Peace, St. Philip, and St. James (Vacherie and St. James)**
 - e. **Sacred Heart, St. Joseph, and St. Michael (Gramercy, Paulina, and Convent)**
 - f. **St. Joseph, Immaculate Heart of Mary, and St. Francis Xavier Cabrini (Grosse Tete, Maringouin, and Livonia)**
 - g. **St. Louis King of France and St. Thomas More (Baton Rouge)**
9. **(Other Areas of the Diocese of Baton Rouge: Part III, Paragraph 4)**- as implementation of the recommendations contained in the Task Force Report continues, other needs and creative ideas continue to emerge. For example:
 - a. **The North East Deanery**- the priests of the North East Deanery of our diocese recently met and developed a pastoral plan and a set of recommendations for that entire deanery and presented it to Bishop Muench and the Task Force. These recommendations are currently under review.