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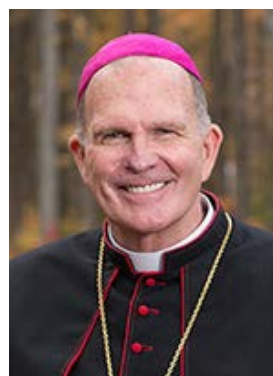
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1/25/2017

## Bishop David M. O'Connell's pastoral letter on our future together



Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M.

From the Bishop  
Pope Francis

### INTRODUCTION

As we move into a New Year, the time is right for us to adjust our vision to “new things” for our Diocese. While what “has been” in our past experience is comfortable, we are a living, changing Catholic community, a changing local Church that is, in St. Augustine’s words, a “beauty ever ancient, ever new (Confessions, X).”

Our ancient faith always remains beautiful, true and eternal although times and circumstances have changed and require us to develop “new ways” to foster, promote and witness to our faith in order to address and re-engage an ever-changing environment. Such adaptation has been the case throughout the Catholic Church’s 2,000-year history and we must now seize the moment again, in our time, in the Diocese of Trenton, “ever new,” as we look forward with “Faith in Our Future.”

## THE INSPIRATION OF POPE FRANCIS

I begin this letter with excerpts from two homilies given by our Holy Father Pope Francis several years ago:

“The law of the Spirit ‘leads us on a path of continual discernment to do the will of God,’ and this scares us. A fear that has two temptations: the first is that of ‘going back,’ saying that up to this point is fine, but ‘no farther’ and so in the end, ‘let’s stay here.’... this temptation of ‘going back,’ because we are safer there. But complete safety is in the Holy Spirit, who carries you forward, who gives you this trust. In this moment in the Church’s history, we can neither go back nor go off the road (Pope Francis, Homily at Casa Santa Marta, June 12, 2013).”

“Jesus tells us that new wine requires new wineskins. In the Christian life, and also in the life of the Church, there are old structures, outdated structures, they have to be renewed! And the Church has always been attentive to this...It always allows itself to be renewed according to places, times and persons. The Church has always done this work, right from the beginning! ...Don’t be afraid of this! Don’t be afraid of the innovation of the Gospel. Don’t be afraid of the innovation that the Holy Spirit works within us! Don’t be afraid of the renewal of structures! ...If we are afraid, we know that our Mother is with us and, like children who are a bit afraid, let’s go to her and she — as the most ancient antiphon says — ‘guards us with her mantle, with her protection as mother’ (Pope Francis, Homily at Casa Santa Marta, July 6, 2013).”

## THE CONTEXT

In recent years, dioceses all over the country have had to come to terms with the changing realities in the life of the Catholic Church and its faithful. It is no longer the Church of “our parents or our grandparents;” it is not even the Church that many of us knew growing up. This realization has not always been “comfortable” or easy — it never is — but change and adaptation have always been necessary for our faith not only to remain strong but also, and more importantly, for our faith to grow stronger. We must acknowledge and endure the “growing pains” that accompany any process of change but we cannot be overcome or discouraged by them. God’s grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit have always seen the Catholic Church through change, and so it will be now and into the future if we open ourselves to God’s grace with a living faith.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE DIOCESE OF TRENTON

To help us understand the current situation in the Diocese of Trenton, let us consider some important facts gathered directly from its 107 parishes. These facts are sobering but, as Bishop, I do not believe that we are in irreversible or terminal danger. I do believe, however, that we have some genuine causes for concern. Here is why.

In the Diocese of Trenton, it is estimated that there are between 673,500 and 774,000 Catholics living in the 107 parishes in our four counties, with 267,416 registered households. In the past, the Catholic population was estimated at 830,000. The average parish size includes approximately 2,500 of these registered households, with the lowest parish count of 250 households and the highest parish count of 7,436 households.

Present statistics drawn from annual parish reports reveal a weekend Mass attendance of between 17% and 18% of Catholics in the Diocese. Sadly, the numbers have steadily declined within our lifetime.

Participation in the Sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation and Marriage has also declined. Surprisingly, even the number of Funeral Masses, once considered a faith obligation of families of deceased active Catholics, has also decreased.

That having been said, the Gospel has not changed; the Church’s teachings have endured; and obligations incumbent upon Catholics — for example, the commandment to “keep holy the Sabbath” — have remained in place, but their compelling importance in the daily life of Catholics today has diminished or, at least, wavered significantly. Add to that the declining

enrollments reported each year in our Catholic schools and parish religious education programs and we discover a generation or two of Catholics who are largely unfamiliar with the tenets of the Catholic faith. We cannot neglect youth and young adults in the Diocese and our parishes. They are the best, the only, hope for our future.

National research studies among baptized Catholics born after 1980 dramatically bear out the developments we see locally. When society replaces faith and religion with secular alternatives that are directly opposed to Church teaching and practice, Catholics do not know how to respond, defend against or resist such alternatives. They have become “cultural Catholics” or “Catholics in name only.” This is not to say that they are not good people doing good things but, rather, they are simply uninformed about their faith and the influence that faith should have in their lives as Catholic individuals and as Catholic communities within the local Church.

As a consequence, we also see that young Catholic men and women are no longer pursuing priestly or religious vocations as in the past in the kind of numbers needed to minister to and serve Catholics who DO want to practice their faith, who DO hear the Gospel at Mass, who DO receive the Sacraments, who DO reach out in service to the poor and DO perform the Church’s works of mercy. Currently, there are 163 active Diocesan priests serving Catholics in the Diocese, and 266 religious women and 57 religious men. At the same time, priests and religious currently serving in the Church but reaching retirement age seem to be the only numbers steadily increasing. Twenty-three priests have retired in the last five years and 63 priests are eligible for retirement in the next 10 years.

With these sobering spiritual realities confronting us in the Diocese of Trenton and beyond, and the constantly shifting Catholic demographics within the four counties of the Diocese — Monmouth, Burlington, Ocean and Mercer — it simply does not make any sense to cling to sentimental memories of “the way we were;” or to nostalgically fantasize about a return to “the good old days.” Time moves forward and it is not possible to go back. We must forge ahead to meet and embrace the future with a living, dynamic and active faith.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

In addition to these spiritual circumstances, we must also acknowledge that the economy has not been on our side in most of the parishes of the Diocese. Families have also experienced similar financial burdens in their homes. Parishes — our “spiritual homes” — are not much different. The costs of operating our Catholic churches, schools and institutions continue to escalate while the condition of physical plants and buildings deteriorate in many of our 107 parishes, regularly draining already limited resources with expenses that parishes just cannot afford.

While the Annual Catholic Appeal helps fund Diocesan operations one year at a time, it, too, has experienced a significant downturn. For the first time since 1992, the Diocese has embarked upon a major fundraising campaign, “Faith to Move Mountains,” the sole purpose of which is to endow the wide-reaching spiritual works as well as the “mountainous” material needs of the Diocese and its parishes for a future that we “can have faith in.”

The Catholic Church in our Diocese is not simply about raising money, as some suggest. It is impossible, however, to continue to support current ministries to our parishioners or to establish any new faith-based initiatives without the resources necessary to provide what people want and need from the Catholic Church. On average, only 42% of registered households in the Diocese give financial support.

We also need to be aware of the multicultural realities that are part of the changing landscape of the Diocese. Statistics indicate that our Catholic population is now 15% Hispanic or Latino requiring ministries specific to these growing numbers. Six of the 10 parishes with the greatest number of Baptisms in the Diocese have significant Hispanic populations. Attendance at Masses celebrated in Spanish has increased by 45% over the last four years. Currently, in addition to English and Spanish, Mass is celebrated in 10 other languages throughout our four counties.

## **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

So what do we do? Giving up is not an option. The Lord Jesus assured "Where two or three gather in My name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20)." Losing faith is not an option. The Lord Jesus promised "I will be with you all days even to the end of time (Matthew 28: 20)." Surrendering to societal or cultural trends is not an option. The Lord Jesus proclaimed "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14: 6)" and, in another place, "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16: 18)."

Some within the Church have concluded that Catholics should simply accept the "fact" that we are destined to become less, to become a smaller Church. While statistics and other data might suggest such a view, the Church's duty to undertake a "new evangelization" argues against it. I believe that it is not so much a case of growing smaller or "becoming less" as a Church, a Diocese or a parish; I believe it is a case of "doing more WITH less." The challenge before us all is to figure out "how."

## **FAITH IN OUR FUTURE**

As Bishop, I consulted other bishops and considered the experiences of their dioceses, seeking successful Models and effective strategies used to address similar challenges we face here. I then interviewed and engaged a Seattle-based Church consulting firm, The Reid Group, with its proven record of success working with various dioceses in the United States for over 20 years, among them the Archdioceses of Indianapolis, New York, Newark, and Seattle as well as the Dioceses of Orange, Orlando, Peoria, Rochester, St. Petersburg, Syracuse and Scranton. Their mission is "to help leaders and organizations transform their challenges into opportunities" for the strengthening of their own institutional mission. Although most of their clients faced similar challenges as the Diocese of Trenton, I directed the firm "not to impose 'boiler-plate' strategies" upon us but, rather, to work with our pastors and parishes to develop recommendations specific to our own Diocese.

I launched an initiative called "Faith in Our Future" in the Diocese almost two years ago with consultation of the Diocesan Curia, the Episcopal Council and the Diocesan Presbyterate. Rather than initiating a "top-down" approach, I sought from The Reid Group a "grass roots" team effort involving the laity as well as the clergy throughout the Diocese.

Twenty-five "Cohorts" or small teams of neighboring parishes utilizing lay leaders as well as clergy were established by pastors to surface a "sense of the faithful" regarding the future direction of all our 107 parishes. The Reid Group provided training to the members of these 25 Cohorts, under the guidance of recently retired pastor Msgr. Leonard Troiano and Diocesan Director of Pastoral Life and Mission Mrs. Terry Ginther. The Cohorts then used various means to gather information and data from our parishes including surveys, questionnaires, town hall meetings, small group discussions and other conversations focused on the future direction of the Diocese. The effort was unlike anything the Diocese has ever seen. To avoid any controlling influence or intervention by the Bishop, I was asked to remain neutral throughout the entire process until the Cohort recommendations were processed by a Diocesan-wide Planning Commission (DPC) created by Msgr. Troiano and Mrs. Ginther.

Following many months of discussions, conversations and even lively debate within and among the Cohorts and the DPC, a series of "final recommendations" were presented to me by the DPC in late November 2016. I shared these recommendations with all the priests of the Diocese in meetings held in each of the four vicariates — Monmouth, Burlington, Ocean and Mercer Counties — and with both the Diocesan Curia and the Episcopal Council in separate meetings throughout December 2016. The task then fell to me, as Bishop, to make decisions regarding the recommendations and input I received. These recommendations became for me the subject of much prayer, reflection and soul searching prior to finalizing them.

I chose the date of Jan. 25, 2017, to make my decisions public because of the important feast the Church celebrates on this day, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul whose entire life was changed by his encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

An Implementation Commission will be established to guide and encourage parishes in the process of putting my decisions in place and monitoring their progress. Msgr. Troiano and Terry Ginther will coordinate the process and will be the contact persons at the Chancery for any questions. It is important to note that the recommendations and decisions offered through the "Faith in Our Future" initiative are a "first step" in the reorganization of the Diocese, a "work in progress." Once implemented, these decisions, no doubt, will give rise to other decisions and changes as the future of the Diocese unfolds.

## PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES FOR DECISIONS

Following the lead and example of Pope Francis in developing “principles” for the reorganization and revitalization of the leadership of the universal Church, I have identified my own set of principles and priorities for the task at hand. These include:

- (1) evangelization, the all-important and all-encompassing effort to bring the Gospel prayerfully and effectively to the parishes and people of the Diocese for our future;
- (2) collaboration, the strategic Model chosen by the Cohorts and DPC, to ensure that parishes work together with programs, staffing and resources to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of the people of the Diocese for the sake of evangelization;
- (3) stewardship, the effort to establish the best possible use of parish resources, assets, facilities and properties — “doing MORE with less” — for the sake of evangelization;
- (4) accountability, the process of providing transparency in the management of the Diocese and all its parishes for the sake of evangelization, and
- (5) service, spiritual and pastoral “in-reach” and outreach to the populations that need to be served by the parishes of the Diocese, especially the sick, the elderly, the poor, the immigrant, youth and young adults, families and Catholics who have become estranged from the Church, again, for the sake of evangelization.

## DECISIONS

As Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, I now announce the following decisions concerning the recommendations presented to me preceded by “working definitions” so that their meaning can be properly understood:

### WORKING DEFINITIONS

**COLLABORATIVE PARISHES Model:** Parishes within a Cohort enter into formal, collaborative relationships, working together on specific, agreed-upon shared areas of ministry, shared programs, shared staffing, shared resources; parishes remain distinct with their own pastor, pastoral and finance councils, finances, census and sacramental books; collaborative parishes work together whenever possible to do what a single parish cannot do effectively alone.

**LINKAGE PARISHES Model:** Two or more parishes within a Cohort share one pastor for all parishes involved but remain distinct with their own pastoral councils (linked parishes may prefer to share a pastoral council together) and finance councils (must remain separate), finances, census and sacramental books; whenever appropriate and possible, linkage parishes work together to share ministries, programs, services, etc. Linked parishes should collaborate with other parishes in the Cohort.

**MERGED PARISHES Model:** Two or more parishes within a Cohort merge to become one new parish in order to minister more effectively to one newly combined population with one pastor; the new parish may have more than one worship site with each church site retaining its current name; all organizations, ministries, programs, finances, assets and liabilities belong to the one new parish; one new staff is formed; one new finance council and one pastoral council are formed; a new name may be established to be approved by the Bishop or the combined names of both parishes can be used. Merged parishes should collaborate with other parishes in the Cohort.

**PERSONAL PARISH Model:** According to canon law (canon 518), a personal parish may be established by reason of rite, language or nationality of the Christian faithful of some territory. A personal parish is subject to all Diocesan policies and is primarily responsible for the faithful for whom it exists. Personal parishes should collaborate with other parishes in the Cohort.

**CENTERS FOR MINISTRY:** Specialized ministry among ethnic or language groups will also be provided by designating

“centers” in different parishes around the Diocese. The designation as a center for a particular ministry (for example, a Center for Hispanic ministry) means that, in addition to its responsibility for the residents of its territory, the parish provides both ministerial outreach and liturgical celebrations for the named ethnic or language group. Although not guaranteed in each case, every effort will be made to assign at least one priest from the ethnic or language group to minister to them.

### **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

The current and future status of Diocesan or parish Catholic schools will continue to be evaluated by the Diocesan Department of Catholic Schools and the individual schools themselves according to the “School Sustainability Study” issued in 2013.

### **PASTORAL CARE IN INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS**

Pastoral care for Diocesan or parish Catholic high schools will be determined by the Bishop in the appointment of priest personnel.

Pastoral care for Catholic students on non-Catholic college or university campuses will be determined by the Bishop in the appointment of priest personnel and will continue to be supervised by the Diocesan Office of Pastoral Life and Mission.

Pastoral care for Catholic patients and residents in non-Catholic hospitals and other non-Catholic health related facilities will be determined by the Bishop in the appointment of priest personnel in consultation with pastors in whose territory these institutions exist. Parishes should continue to provide pastoral care, as needed or upon request, to their own territorial parishioners in these institutions.

Pastoral care for Catholic residents in prisons located in the Diocese will continue to be arranged whenever possible by the Diocesan Coordinator for Prison Ministry.

## **BURLINGTON COUNTY**

### **Cohort 1**

**? Corpus Christi, Willingboro • Jesus the Good Shepherd, Riverside • Resurrection, Delran**

1. Collaborative Model for all three parishes in the Cohort
2. Jesus the Good Shepherd Parish will suspend all operations at St. Peter Church and will use St. Joseph Church, Beverly, only, no later than July 1, 2017
3. Jesus the Good Shepherd Parish designated as a Center for Hispanic and Portuguese Ministry, no later than July 1, 2017

### **Cohort 2**

**Our Lady of Good Counsel, Moorestown • Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Maple Shade • Sacred Heart, Riverton • St. Charles Borromeo, Cinnaminson**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort

### **Cohort 3**

**Holy Eucharist, Tabernacle • St. Joan of Arc, Marlton • St. Mary of the Lakes, Medford • St. Isaac Jogues, Marlton • St. John Neumann, Mt. Laurel**

1. Collaborative Model for all five parishes in the Cohort
2. Continue current Linkage Model for St. Isaac Jogues and St. John Neumann Parishes

#### **Cohort 4**

**St. Andrew, Jobstown • Assumption, New Egypt • St. Ann, Browns Mills • Our Lady Queen of Peace, Hainesport • Sacred Heart, Mt. Holly • Christ the Redeemer, Mt. Holly**

1. Collaborative Model for all six parishes in the Cohort
2. Linkage Model between St. Andrew and Assumption no later than July 1, 2017; Merger Model no later than July 1, 2018
3. Continue current Linkage Model for Christ the Redeemer and Sacred Heart Parishes with Christ the Redeemer designated as Center For Hispanic Ministry
4. St. Ann designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry, no later than July 1, 2018

#### **Cohort 5**

**Sts. Francis and Clare, Florence Township • St. Katharine Drexel, Burlington • St. Mary, Bordentown**

1. Collaborative Model for all three parishes in the Cohort
2. Linkage Model for Sts. Francis and Clare and St. Mary, no later than July 1, 2017; Merger Model, no later than July 1, 2018

### **MERCER COUNTY**

#### **Cohort 6**

**Our Lady of Sorrows-St. Anthony, Hamilton • St. John, Allentown • St. Gregory the Great, Hamilton Square • St. Raphael-Holy Angels, Hamilton • St. Vincent de Paul, Yardville**

1. Collaborative Model for all five parishes in the Cohort
2. Linkage Model for St. John and St. Vincent de Paul, no later than July 1, 2019
3. Our Lady of Sorrows-St. Anthony designated as a Center for Haitian Ministry
4. Periodic review of St. Raphael-Holy Angels; potential suspension of operations of Holy Angels Church as early as July 1, 2017.

#### **Cohort 7**

**St. Ann, Lawrenceville (Church of the Korean Martyrs at St. Michael, Trenton will be treated separately) • St. David the King, West Windsor • St. Paul, Princeton • St. Anthony of Padua, Hightstown • St. Hedwig, Trenton**

1. Collaborative Model for all five parishes in the Cohort
2. St. Hedwig designated as a personal parish for Polish Catholics, effective immediately
3. St. Paul and St. Anthony of Padua each designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry, no later than July 1, 2017

#### **Cohort 8**

**St. James, Pennington • St. Alphonsus, Hopewell • St. George, Titusville**

1. Continue current Linkage Model for all three parishes

#### **Cohort 9**

**Blessed Sacrament-Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd, Trenton • Our Lady of Good Counsel, West Trenton • Incarnation-St. James, Ewing**

1. Collaborative Model for Our Lady of Good Counsel and Incarnation-St. James
2. Collaborative Model for Blessed Sacrament-Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd with Sacred Heart, Trenton, in Cohort 10 beginning July 1, 2017, leading to Merger Model for Blessed Sacrament-Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd with Sacred Heart, no later than July 1, 2018, with Gospel Mass transferred to Sacred Heart, beginning July 1, 2018

#### **Cohort 10**

**St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral, Trenton • St. Joseph, Trenton • Divine Mercy, Trenton • Our Lady of the Angels, Trenton • Sacred Heart, Trenton**

1. Collaborative Model for all five parishes in the Cohort
2. Continue current Linkage Model for St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral and St. Joseph; both parishes designated as Centers for Hispanic Ministry
3. Our Lady of the Angels designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry;
4. Merger Model of Divine Mercy and Sacred Heart, no later than July 1, 2017; Spanish Mass transferred to Our Lady of the Angels

### **MONMOUTH COUNTY**

#### **Cohort 11**

**St. Catherine of Siena, Farmingdale • St. William the Abbot, Howell • St. Veronica, Howell**

1. Collaborative Model for all three parishes in the Cohort

#### **Cohort 12**

**St. Robert Bellarmine Co-Cathedral, Freehold • St. Joseph, Millstone • St. Rose of Lima, Freehold • St. Thomas More, Manalapan**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort
2. St. Rose of Lima designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry; continue Vietnamese Mass in consultation with pastor according to availability of Vietnamese speaking priest

#### **Cohort 13**

**St. Benedict, Holmdel • St. Catharine, Holmdel • St. Gabriel, Marlboro • St. Mary, Colts Neck**



1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort

#### **Cohort 14**

**St. Joseph, Keyport • Jesus the Lord, Keyport • Holy Family, Union Beach • St. Clement, Matawan**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort
2. Merger Model for St. Joseph and Jesus the Lord, no later than July 1, 2018
3. Potential Linkage Model for Holy Family Parish with the newly merged St. Joseph/Jesus the Lord to be determined no later than July 1, 2019
4. St. Joseph/Jesus the Lord designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry, no later than July 1, 2018

#### **Cohort 15**

**St. Ann, Keansburg • Our Lady of Perpetual Help-St. Agnes, Atlantic Highlands • St. Catherine, Middletown • St. Mary, Middletown**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort
2. Potential Linkage Model for St. Ann and St. Catherine to be determined no later than July 1, 2018

#### **Cohort 16**

**Holy Cross, Rumson • Nativity, Fair Haven • St. Leo the Great, Lincroft • St. James, Red Bank • St. Anthony, Red Bank**

1. Collaborative Model for all five parishes in the Cohort
2. St. Anthony, designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry, no later than July 1, 2017

#### **Cohort 17**

**St. Jerome, West Long Branch • St. Mary, Deal • St. Dorothea, Eatontown • Christ the King, Long Branch • Precious Blood, Monmouth Beach • St. Michael, West End (Immaculate Conception, Eatontown, will be treated separately)**

1. Collaborative Model for all six parishes in the Cohort
2. Merger Model for St. Jerome and St. Mary, no later than July 1, 2018
3. Linkage Model for St. Dorothea and Precious Blood, no later than July 1, 2019
4. Christ the King designated as a Center for Hispanic and Portuguese Ministry, no later than July 1, 2017

#### **Cohort 18**

**Holy Innocents, Neptune • Mother of Mercy, Asbury Park • St. Anselm, Wayside**

1. Collaborative Model for all three parishes in the Cohort
2. Mother of Mercy Parish designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry and a Center for Haitian Ministry

### **Cohort 19**

**Ascension, Bradley Beach • St. Elizabeth, Avon • St. Rose, Belmar • St. Catharine-St. Margaret, Spring Lake • St. Mark, Sea Girt**

1. Collaborative Model for all five parishes in the Cohort
2. Merger Model for Ascension and St. Elizabeth, no later than July 1, 2019
3. St. Mark designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry, no later than July 1, 2017

## **OCEAN COUNTY**

### **Cohort 20**

**St. Denis, Manasquan • Epiphany, Brick • St. Martha, Point Pleasant • St. Peter, Point Pleasant Beach**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort
2. Status of Epiphany to be reviewed no later than July 1, 2018

### **Cohort 21**

**Sacred Heart, Bay Head • St. Pio of Pietrelcina, Lavallette • St. Catharine of Siena, Seaside Park • Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Seaside Heights**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort
2. Linkage Model for Sacred Heart and St. Pio of Pietrelcina, no later than July 1, 2019
3. Merger Model for St. Catharine of Siena and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, no later than July 1, 2018
4. Provision of ministry to Hispanic Catholics by bi-lingual priest in consultation with the Conventual Franciscan Order, no later than July 1, 2018

### **Cohort 22**

**Visitation, Brick • St. Dominic, Brick • St. Mary of the Lake, Lakewood • St. Anthony Claret, Lakewood**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort
2. Shared facilities between St. Mary of the Lake and St. Anthony Claret, no later than July 1, 2018; Linkage Model for St. Mary of the Lake and St. Anthony Claret, no later than July 1, 2019; Merger Model for St. Mary of the Lake and St. Anthony Claret, no later than July 1, 2020
3. St. Anthony Claret designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry, no later than July 1, 2017

### **Cohort 23**

**St. Aloysius, Jackson • St. Monica, Jackson • St. John, Lakehurst • St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Whiting**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort

2. Status of St. Monica to be reviewed periodically, beginning July 1, 2018

#### **Cohort 24**

**St. Joseph, Toms River • St. Justin, Toms River • St. Luke, Toms River • St. Maximilian Kolbe, Toms River**

1. Collaborative Model for all four parishes in the Cohort
2. St. Joseph designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry, no later than July 1, 2017

#### **Cohort 25**

**St. Barnabas, Bayville • St. Mary, Barnegat • St. Theresa, Little Egg Harbor • St. Pius X, Forked River • St. Francis of Assisi, Brant Beach**

1. Collaborative Model for all five parishes in the Cohort
2. St. Barnabas designated as a Center for Hispanic Ministry, no later than July 1, 2017
3. Designation of a Center for Hispanic Ministry in the southern part of Ocean County to be determined no later than July 1, 2018
4. Periodic review of St. Francis of Assisi in consultation with the Franciscan Order

Let us all continue to pray for our Diocese, for its parishes and for one another.

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