

North Macomb Vicariate Together in Faith Phase Two Final Recommendations with APC Recommendations

Overall NMV Response to APC Recommendations:

A. We appreciate the APC's review of our Phase II Planning. We do note, however, that by trying to piecemeal our planning document into your own format of nine questions, it does affect some things. In particular, the "best practices" question is not fully appreciated by the APC's document. We tried to include such best practices under each major area which was being looked at. Refer below to our "Current NMV Collaboration" under each of them for a full listing of best practices.

B. We have listed the APC recommendations under each section below in a separate box. Where we as a vicariate believed a response was needed, it is provided there. Most of these are minor, since the APC either confirmed our planning and collaboration or made minor suggestions for the future.

C. Thank you for the "APC Recommendations for Parishes and Vicariates," which are referred to often. Upon review of them we find many items that are already in place in our vicariate. You will find them under our pastoral plan below where we highlight "Current NMV Collaboration." We also find items worthy of further consideration by us. We are bringing these to the attention of all the parishes in the vicariate and to the Vicariate Council with its commissions and committees. We will be able to use them as a platform for discussion in our future pastoral planning.

D. **Summary Questions:** In most cases our response to these questions is a matter of referring to what is already in our plan. These questions have been addressed or will form the basis for ongoing vicariate planning in the years ahead. In others, however, it is not a case of "summarizing" but of completely re-doing or at least greatly extending the planning process well beyond the scope envisioned. In particular we note that question #5, if it is indeed intended to be taken seriously, would require the involvement of all the parish pastoral and financial councils of the vicariate, in consultation with feedback from all the parish members. And question #4, for our vicariate, is also a longer term issue and beyond the scope of the current NMV Together in Faith planning committee.

1. Do each of the parishes, individually or together as a Planning Group, address the seven Mission Priorities of the Church of Detroit? What is the most significant, creative initiative you will implement? Considering the finite financial resources of each of the parishes in this group, how will you implement these programs?

NMV Response:

We believe the pastoral plan for the vicariate covers all seven, with the support of all the parishes. As to the most significant/creative initiative we point to the collaboration already in place for Hispanic ministry, bi-annual vicariate Mission, and support of lay leadership formation. We look forward to continuing all of these and expanding collaboration in the areas of parish leadership formation and evangelization.

2. How will this planning group create a climate that is supportive of and nurtures vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life?

NMV Response

Please see our section #8D below, where the APC affirmed our response in this area.

3. In your understanding of the Mission of the Church, how is your Planning Group responding to cultural diversity, particularly of the growing Hispanic community?

NMV Response:

Please see our section #8A below, especially our concern that support, including financial, needs to be shared on a broader basis than just this vicariate. And our concern with more accurate data.

4. (Refer to questions 5, 7 and 8). How is your planning group ensuring that all Catholic parents within your planning group can send their children to a Catholic school? Please provide details on location, financial support, transportation, marketing and recruitment.

NMV Response:

See #6 below. St. Lawrence is viable and strong. We have no vicariate-based details on financial support, transportation, marketing and recruitment. As noted in our section #6 we are committed to helping St. Lawrence School stay strong and, should numbers and finances allow it, looking at a regional elementary school in the future on the eastern side of the vicariate. We do note with disappointment, however, the APC's negative response to supporting Austin Academy.

5. (Refer to questions 4 – 8). Assume that all parish boundaries in the planning group were to be erased and all current parish level functions were to be consolidated and administered in another way within the next 5 to 10 years. What specific plan does the group propose to continue the mission of the Church in this new configuration?

NMV Response:

See the introductory paragraphs above. Given the size and energy of the current parishes we do not think a 5-10 year window results in any changes and believe each of the parishes are necessary for the Church to continue its mission in this area in a growing way.

6. (Refer to questions 4 – 8) Given that all of the data points towards a 30 – 35% net reduction of available priests within the next 10 years, please identify the changes to Mass schedules that can be implemented in the next six months, and the mergers and “In Solidum” or other parish configurations planned for this group.

NMV Response:

Given the relatively full nature of all the Masses currently offered in the vicariate and the size of the church seating arrangements, we do not see any change in weekend Mass schedules in the next six months.

7. (Refer to questions 5, 7 and 8). How can the financial resources in this group support the number and condition of the existing sites? Considering the Mission of the Church of Detroit, how many sites do you need, and for what purposes?

NMV Response:

Please see our section #7 below along with the financial data for the parishes. We believe each parish is able to maintain wide-ranging, active parish outreaches in all areas. The parishes with debt believe their debt is serviceable except for one parish (St. Francis/St. Maximilian). Because that parish covers such a large area projected to grow greatly in population in the next 25 years, is a cornerstone for Hispanic ministry of the area, has had to deal with both the disappointment of not having a site for St. Maximilian over the years and then the challenge of merging two very different communities into one parish, we believe the Archdiocese should work with them to help service that debt.

Introduction:

Nine parishes form the North Macomb Vicariate: St. Lawrence, Utica; St. Isidore, Macomb; St. Kieran, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. John Vianney, Shelby Township; SS. John and Paul, Washington Township; St. Clement of Rome, Romeo; St. Francis/St. Maximilian, Ray Township; St. Mary Mystical Rose, Armada. Because of the many ways we already collaborate, all the parishes met as one planning group in the Together in Faith phase two planning process.

The external and internal data, though limited, did indicate that the North Macomb Vicariate will continue to grow in population over the next twenty five years, with a relatively stable number of school age children and a greatly increasing senior population in all the parishes. The largest growth in population will continue to be on the eastern side of the vicariate, especially in terms of school age children. We would like to have had more data in several areas, such as the Catholic population and ethnicity within our vicariate. We are disappointed that data on our Hispanic population was nonexistent. We are concerned that one of major focus areas of TIF Phase One, namely Hispanic Ministry, has likewise been completely eliminated from the questions and data for Phase II. We believe that the Hispanic population will continue to grow significantly and that Hispanic Ministry be included in all archdiocesan, regional and vicariate pastoral planning. Seating capacity of the church buildings looks to be adequate, although a number of parishes need to adapt at Christmas and Easter with either extra Mass times or use of technology in overflow areas. Sacramental trends within the vicariate seem to reflect the overall population trends.

As a result, there is much in our phase one planning that can be carried over into this phase two: greater focus on evangelization; better implementation of young adult ministry at the parish and vicariate level; continued and expanded attention to Hispanic ministry; dealing with the diminishing number of priests and the ability of ultra large parishes to maintain their ministries and identity and Catholic spiritual richness in the face of that; a continued focus on supporting Catholic education and how best to do that; and the need for a parish, vicariate and diocesan commitment to training lay ministers. Two areas where there has been some change from phase one planning are: a clear slowdown in the exponential rate of growth previously experienced, and the perceived need for enlarging worship spaces has been lessened in some parishes and eliminated in others.

As we shared our core values, we affirmed the following: we all want to be parishes where the Eucharist is celebrated in a lively, dynamic way; unity is experienced and diversity respected; service and outreach are essential and visible; formation is experienced as life-long; stewardship is embraced in its fullest sense; and evangelization becomes stronger and better. As we shared our hopes and dreams, the following emerged: in addition to debt reduction and building considerations, several parishes expressed a desire for better communication including use of new technology, greater involvement of all parish members, and welcome home programs – all areas of Evangelization; addressing the physical, social, and spiritual needs of our youth, young adults, and young families; and seeking increased resources for Christian Service outreach. Three parishes also indicated a desire for enhanced ecumenical involvement.

All these emphases will show up in our assessment below, as we look at the main focus areas. We also noticed in the course of the planning process some areas that were not specifically covered in the six major areas focused on, which will need the attention of not just this vicariate but the archdiocese as a whole. These are looked at as well at the end.

1. Evangelization:

A number of our core values and hopes clustered around the idea of evangelization. We know this is an area that needs continued and greater emphasis in our parishes and vicariate. Some parishes have a functioning Evangelization Committee; some do not. But all the parishes are engaged in many ways of faith formation, outreach, service, making their presence known and other forms of evangelization. We formed a vicariate Evangelization Committee last year (2010), which has begun to meet and plan for future collaborative efforts. The vicariate budget includes some commitment to make this happen. However, we do recognize the challenge of bringing evangelization efforts to life in all our parishes. We recognize that many of our registered members do not actively participate in Eucharist or active parish life and believe those members and groups of people are the obvious starting point for evangelization efforts in our vicariate.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- “Welcome Home” program (yearly, several week series of evenings focused on Catholics who are no longer connected to parishes, for whatever reason; currently shared between St. Kieran, St. Lawrence, St. Isidore, and St. Francis/St. Maximilian)
- “Onward to the Kingdom” (bi-annual Lenten “mission” in which all vicariate parishes participate; wide publicity, open to Catholics and non-Catholics alike)
- NMV Evangelization Committee (sub-committee of the Lay Leadership Commission with an annual budget, tasked with helping parishes move forward in evangelization efforts)

Planning for the Future:

- Expanding “Welcoming Home” to other vicariate parishes, perhaps on a rotating basis
- Developing workshops and training opportunities and resources to help form parish members in evangelization and help parishes form/strengthen evangelization committees
- More effective use of communications media/technology in promoting all that the Catholic Church (and our vicariate parishes) already do
- Main attention to be directed at groups/populations that are less connected to current parish life (young adults, non-church going members, etc.)

APC Response

- ✓ **We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future**
- ✓ **We support more attention to be directed at groups/populations that are less connected to current parish life.**
- ✓ **Refer to the APC recommendations for parishes and vicariates.**

NMV Response to APC: We Agree

2. Youth and Young Adults:

Both of these age groups are important to the parishes in the vicariate, but we believe it is best to focus on each in a separate manner.

A. Youth

Ministry to and with our youth is fairly active in all parishes of the vicariate. Several parishes have very active youth groups. Youth are involved in many service opportunities; most parishes offer opportunities for youth retreats, participate in the annual Rainbow weekend, and engage in a “youth ministry” model of formation, with staff and/or volunteers dedicated to youth formation. Most participate in some way in the World Youth Days. Several parishes emphasized how important it is to integrate the youth into all the liturgical and formational ministries of the parish or to have intergenerational formation events, so that the youth are

not isolated from ongoing parish life. The demographic data indicates that the number of youth will remain fairly steady in the vicariate for the next 25 years.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- High school ministry events on an inter-parish basis (for example St. Francis/St. Maximilian and SS. John and Paul)
- Junior high conferences (St. Kieran, SS. John and Paul and St. Francis/St. Maximilian currently collaborate)
- Youth minister meetings to share information and support
- Youth event added to the bi-annual “Onward to the Kingdom” Lenten Mission

Planning for the Future:

- Increased multi-parish or vicariate-wide high school and junior high school events

B. Young Adults

All the parishes of the vicariate recognize this area as a challenge and a priority for the future. As we look at our Eucharistic celebrations we recognize that this age group is present in fewer numbers than other age groups. In our phase one planning this area was listed as a priority and we budgeted resources to supported the Archdiocesan models of collaborative young adult ministry: first, on a shared vicariate basis (Central Macomb and North Macomb vicariates, connected to a campus ministry hub at Macomb Community College) and then more recently on a regional basis (Northeast region). These models for young adult ministry have had very limited success and so we recognize the need for developing more local initiatives, especially on a collaborative, multi-parish basis. We agreed that the 18-35 year age span is perhaps too broad of focus to group together and thought that the post-high school 18-mid 20s group—who have not yet settled down in terms of career, vocation, or family—is key. We do recognize that for many in this age group their journey into adulthood does at times, unfortunately, lead them to distance themselves from the institutional church. Therefore, some of the ways mentioned by parishes involve connecting whenever possible (involve in summer Vacation Bible, gatherings at holiday times, etc.) and keep the connection open (college emails, bulletins sent, etc). We need to continue to work on ways of transitioning from youth group and youth ministry involvement to young adult involvement. As with youth, several parishes indicated the importance of and efforts toward connecting young adults to ongoing parish life and ministries.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- Participation in the regional initiatives for young adult ministry (St. Kieran open gym; St. Therese young adult Mass; formation events, retreats), including supportive funding

Planning for the Future:

- Multi-parish planning of young adult-focused events and activities, with the initiative coming from within the vicariate rather than an archdiocesan liaison
- Better sharing of ideas and use of communication methods for keeping young adults and parishes in contact

APC Response

- ✓ **We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future**
- ✓ **We recommend every parish have access to a youth and young adult staff person to address their issues in a successful manner.**
- ✓ **Refer to the APC recommendations for parishes and vicariates.**

NMV Response to APC: We Agree**3. Christian Service Outreach:**

The number, amount and scope of initiatives listed by parishes, when we were sharing about what is currently happening in this area, is remarkable. Yet, all parishes continue to see this area as one that can, will, and should grow. St. Therese and St. Francis/St. Maximilian have maintained a practice of tithing all its income and then using that money to help many area outreaches. Other parishes indicated a desire to move in that direction. All parishes commit time and resources to Christian Service outreach. Several parishes have active St. Vincent de Paul groups; some have food pantries (St. Mary, St. Francis/St. Maximilian, St. Isidore, St. Therese, Agape Center at St. Clement); several parishes which do not have their own give significant financial and other support to these pantries and to Samaritan House, a non-profit agency in the area. SS. John and Paul has developed a monthly Special Needs Ministry open to anyone. Several parishes participate in jail ministry, conduct prayer and communion services in nearby nursing homes, have parish connections to Habitat for Humanity. All give financial support to a number of organizations, both local, regional and beyond. There are several active Knights of Columbus councils in the vicariate, which also do their own outreach and service. Most of the parishes participate in the Macomb County Rotating Emergency Shelter (MCREST) outreach (St. Clement provides 24-hour housing and care for McRest). Some participate in the Macomb County Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers (MCIVC) outreach.)

As we looked at the demographic data, the projected rise in the number of seniors caused the greatest discussion. We recognize that there are many non-faith based outreaches in place for this age group and do not want to duplicate those services. However, we also believe we will need to devote more energy and resources to the aging population, as it grows larger. This needs to be done in a way that takes nothing away from the focus on young adults and families. We also acknowledged that we can do more in the area of advocacy and legislative initiatives than we are currently doing.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- Agape Center at St. Clement in Romeo
- Hispanic ministry support through funding and volunteers
- Food pantry support
- MCREST support
- Giving/Sharing Tree Projects
- Vicariate Christian Service Coordinators meet regularly

Planning for the Future:

- Study of needs of seniors in our parishes and current resources, leading to collaborative initiatives in ministering to seniors on multi-parish or whole vicariate level
- Develop a cooperative multi-parish model for legislative advocacy
- Develop opportunities for people with disabilities to participate more fully in parish activities and ministries

APC Response

- ✓ We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future
- ✓ We recommend that you address your common concern as identified in the External Data Review:
 - Careful not to duplicate Community Senior Services.
 - More/better contact with homebound seniors.
 - Need to recruit younger people into ministries, in order to replenish the aging population
 - Provide the Sacrament of Anointing to all in need.
- ✓ Refer to the APC recommendations for parishes and vicariates.

NMV Response to APC:

- ✓ We note the APC suggestions above
- ✓ To be clear, we believe the Sacrament of Anointing is currently provided to all in need and will continue to do so.
- ✓ Concern was expressed regarding the wording of the definition of Christian Service as well as the Vision Statement. The following were suggestions approved by consensus of the North Macomb TIF committee:
- ✓ Definition of Christian Service:
 - ✓ *“To empower the members of the Catholic community to fulfill the Church’s mission of love, justice, freedom and peace by communally responding, in an organized way, to societal and individual needs. Through acts of justice, work to address the root causes of social issues. Through acts of charity, strive to help people address their present situations and attend to their immediate needs. By loving our neighbors through these acts of justice and charity, the loving and faithful of the Archdiocese of Detroit will build up the body of Christ.”*
- ✓ Vision Statement:
 - ✓ *“To build and nurture a Catholic community where people find the spirit of Jesus at work, through the acts of charity and justice from the loving and faithful of the Archdiocese of Detroit.”*

4. Lay Leadership:

Most of the parishes in the North Macomb Vicariate are quite large. All are very active and require well-formed professional and volunteer ministers in order to do what they do. The vicariate designated that lay leadership formation be a priority in the phase one planning of Together in Faith and continues to see this as a priority. The yearly vicariate budget includes reimbursement to parishes that help fund their lay leaders’ formation. Several parishes provide yearly formation opportunities for those involved in liturgical ministries. Catechetical certification is encouraged by all the parishes. There are a

number of professional lay ecclesial ministers employed by the parishes in the vicariate, who are either currently certified or in the process of certification by the archdiocese. One parish (St. Therese) is an extension site for some Sacred Heart Seminary classes.

Our vicariate is also fortunate to have the Capuchin Retreat Center located within our boundaries. Our parishioners are welcome there, as are all others, to participate in any of the center's programs or to come to in order to relax, pray and enjoy the beauty of God's gift of nature through the four seasons. The facilities of Capuchin Retreat are available for meetings, workshops and retreats, on a regular basis or for a single event.

Given the size and/or the active nature of our vicariate parishes, along with the projected lower numbers for active priests, we recognize the need for continued attention to this area. As already mentioned in phase one planning, even if the number of priests becomes quite low, we do not see further merging or clustering where parishes try to combine leadership groups as the answer (see comments under Section #7 below). Rather, we believe each parish has sufficient lay leadership (many also have diaconal leadership), that it can and should continue to function as an independent parish, with its own leadership groups intact. We believe, if it becomes necessary, that we have leaders sufficiently formed to lead, if permitted, Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- NMV yearly budget supporting lay formation classes and conferences
- Staff day during the bi-annual Onward to the Kingdom
- Financial support for lay leaders in Hispanic ministry
- Regular peer meetings of business managers, youth ministers, catechetical leaders
- Interaction with the Capuchin Retreat Center to supplement and augment programs of mutual interest and concern
- Protecting God's Children/Called to Serve Training

Planning for the Future:

- Vicariate-wide formation and training conferences for lay leadership involved in liturgical, formational, commission and conciliar ministries
- Continue Protection God's Children/Called to Serve Training and expand to include sessions in Spanish for the benefit of the adult/teen Hispanic population

APC Response

- ✓ **We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future**
- ✓ **We recommend that you implement Vicariate-wide formation and training conferences for lay leadership involve in liturgical, formational, commission and conciliar ministries.**
- ✓ **Refer to the APC recommendations for parishes and vicariates.**

NMV Response to APC: We agree

5. Stewardship and Administration:

The vicariate named stewardship in its fullest sense as one of its core values. It sees that stewardship of time and talent active especially in the areas of Christian Service, liturgical and formation ministries, and parish leadership with commissions and councils. Many of the parishes have an annual Sunday focus on time and talent, highlighting the many areas where gifts of time and talent can be used and asking for new volunteers. All use their Sunday bulletins as part of an ongoing focus on stewardship.

A few parishes have both an active Stewardship Commission and Finance Council. A couple of parishes are in the processing of transitioning to that model. One mentioned the desire to do so, so that people would trust more the information provided by the parish. SS. John and Paul mentioned that they have a subcommittee of their Stewardship Commission conduct a yearly, partial audit in order to give parish members confidence of the finances.

The financial status of the parishes in the vicariate is, for the most part, quite strong. Several have significant savings. Four parishes (SS. John and Paul, St. Francis/St. Maximilian, St. Clement, and St. Isidore) have debts. St. Francis/St. Maximilian indicated a need for some type of debt relief, if it is to continue to meet the demand for expanding areas of ministry. It is awaiting a response from the Archdiocese. St. Clement and St. Isidore are in process of paying off their debt. Although SS. John and Paul has the resources to service its debt, it appealed the amount of its debt, based on an issue of justice, and is awaiting a response from the Archdiocese. No parish indicated a willingness to use some of its resources to help with the debt or building or other project specific to another parish. Several have significant savings but are looking at longer-term commitments (St. Lawrence to its school's future; St. Kieran's to its Legacy project).

Four parishes have a desire to do some type of building/expansion when the time/resources are right (St. Mary, St. Therese, SS. John and Paul, St. Kieran). Two parishes (St. Therese and St. Kieran) expressed an interest in pursuing a regional educational resource center. All the parishes agreed that there needs to be discussion on how St. Lawrence School can be seen as more of a regional asset.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- Regular peer meetings of business managers

Planning for the Future:

- Vicariate-wide parish leadership conferences for professional and volunteer lay leadership involved in liturgical, formational, commission and conciliar ministries, with an emphasis on the time and talent components of stewardship
- Establishment of Parish Finance Councils in all parishes.
- Perform periodic parish financial audits
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APC Response

- ✓ **We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future**
- ✓ **We are concerned that the following parishes did not meet their CSA goal:**
 - **St. Maximilian Kolbe (\$7,204)**
 - **St. Lawrence (\$68,799)**
 - **St. Therese of Lisieux (no data for FY10-11)**
- ✓ **We are not sure the LDP status and payables owed to AOD & MCC since 12/31/10.**

NMV Response to APC:

We are concerned that the CSA data for the parishes listed above is inaccurate. Please refer to the data from the AoD website for accurate information. It is also a concern that the APC may have been given inaccurate data.

- ✓ **We have made the various parish planning representatives aware of the concern expressed above.**

6. Catholic Schools:

The issue of Catholic Schools was an area of major concern to the parishes in the vicariate. We currently have one Catholic elementary school within the vicariate at St. Lawrence, and a Catholic high school with the soon-to-open Austin Academy. Much discussion was focused on a perceived need for another Catholic elementary school in the eastern or northeastern area of the vicariate. This perception is supported by the School Age Population projections for 2010-2035 in the External Data for the vicariate. Such a school, if it came to fruition, would conceivably be operated on a region-based model, as opposed to a specific parish-based model. One parish suggested exploring a partnership with the new Austin Academy in any such new school endeavor.

However, there were concerns about the practicality of such an endeavor. All parishes voiced a desire that the establishment of another Catholic elementary school not be to the detriment of the already existing school at St. Lawrence. A first step in a vicariate-wide support of Catholic schools would need to look at the existing schools at St. Lawrence and Austin Academy and how they could be supported by all the parishes of the vicariate. It was likewise voiced that the taking over of an existing building would be logistically and financially more desirable than new construction, if a second elementary school became a reality. Transportation needs and their costs would also need to be addressed and resolved. Similarly, the need to enhance access to our Catholic Schools for the poor in our area, especially the growing immigrant population, would need our examination and facilitation.

As we move toward greater vicariate support of Catholic schools, it will be important that we not lose sight of the importance of the students' connection with their home parishes. Some of the questions that we will need to address are: What should be the relationship between the school, the parish, and the families? Where would sacramental preparation most appropriately take place? Should the scope of the discussion inherently include faith formation in general?

Current NMV Collaboration:

- Several parishes in the vicariate subsidize part of the tuition for their students who attend St. Lawrence School (St. Therese and St. Isidore do so for any Catholic school)
- Several parishes make/made a financial commitment to the new Austin Academy (St. Therese, St. Lawrence, St. John Vianney, St. Isidore, and St. Francis/St. Maximilian)

Planning for the Future:

- Form a vicariate committee to work with St. Lawrence on how to maintain its vitality yet be embraced more as a regional school
- Ascertain how the accessibility to a Catholic elementary school can be enhanced for those parishes in the northern part of the vicariate
- Continue to promote Austin Academy
- Develop model for parish communities to provide financial support to parents sending children to Catholic education
- Encourage outside organizations to consider collaborating in Catholic school funding and aid, including scholarships.

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APC Response

- ✓ **We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future**
- ✓ **We question the promotion of Austin Academy at this time of financial crises.**
- ✓ **We recommend that you address your common concern as identified in the External Data Review:**
 - **Search for resources for transportation to existing Catholic schools, especially during this economic crises.**
 - **Maintain concern and commitment to keep St. Lawrence School viable for the future.**

NMV Response to APC:

- ✓ **We find it odd to question the promotion of a Catholic high school when the issue of access to Catholic schools is a top priority.**
- ✓ **We find it disappointing and confusing to question the promotion of Austin Catholic Academy when we have been working on this project with the AoD for the past ten years.**
- ✓ **We have in our plan already the need to form a subcommittee on how to interact with the efforts of St. Lawrence to address these issues.**

7. Clustering or Other Parish Configurations

The parishes of the North Macomb Vicariate do not have any specific merging, clustering or other arrangements to offer. The parishes do not believe clustering is practical for the following reasons: there has already been a merger of St. Francis/St. Maximilian; the extremely large size of six of the parishes in the vicariate; the location of the parishes in relation to the geographical territory covered by the vicariate; the number of Sunday Masses currently needed for the existing parishes and the relative full attendance at many of those Masses; and the projected continued growth for all the parishes.

If an emergency arises we believe it is best to find a temporary administrator for the interim period. The parishes all have well-trained and sufficient staffing to continue the parish's ministry during the interim. If necessary, any parochial vicars within the vicariate might be asked to help with the sacramental ministry in such an emergency. Even in the longer term, the parishes are prepared to function as fully active parishes in the absence of a priest. As mentioned in phase one planning, we prefer to look in the direction of maintaining parish identities, even if it means that there could come a day when some Sunday Masses are unable to be celebrated, due to the absence of a priest celebrant for each Sunday. Clustering is not envisioned by the parishes as a way to share resources, combine leadership groups, or work in tandem with one other designated parish. Rather, it would be more of an emergency situation. Even if longer term, it would not lead to merging parishes but to maintaining their separate and full identities.

However, because each parish has been asked to state a "cluster partner" the parishes in our vicariate offer the following:

SS. John and Paul: St. Kieran, St. John Vianney, and St. Clement would be the geographically closest parishes to cluster with. However, all of us have at least four relatively full Masses as well as only one full-time priest in each (the others currently share an associate pastor but are preparing for the future to be one priest parishes). Therefore, in terms of reducing the number of weekend Masses or easing the sacramental burden on a priest, clustering adds no help. Merging makes no sense to us, because we are in the process of raising funds to build, in order to handle the growth that is happening. Presently at 1225 registered households, we believe we will grow to at least 1800 families in the next 25 years.

St. Lawrence: Clustering for St. Lawrence, due to its size, would not be practical. That is not to say that in the future, if pressed, we wouldn't consider a cluster with a smaller parish to the south such as St. Matthais, St. Jane Frances de Chantal or St. Ephrem outside our vicariate.

St. Isidore: Our cluster partner from the first go-around of Together in Faith has always been St. Therese of Lisieux. This is because of the proximity and has its origins in the fact that a large piece of territory from St. Isidore was "carved" away for the establishment of St. Therese.

St. Therese of Lisieux: At this time, due to the large size of St. Therese and that each of the contiguous parishes to St. Therese are also large, we do not see the feasibility of clustering with any partner in NMV. If it was necessary to find a cluster partner, we believe it should be a significantly smaller parish and be in geographical proximity to St. Therese.

St. Kieran: We do not feel that there will be a need to cluster within our vicariate during the near future. We are open, however, to clustering based on demand and geography with a parish like SS. John and Paul in Washington Township.

St. John Vianney: Ss. John and Paul, St. Kieran, or St. Therese because of their geographic proximity and the compatibility of programs and services of each of the parishes.

St. Francis/St. Maximilian: With the large number of people living in our parish boundaries and the need for a second worship sight in the southern end of our parish, we see no need to consider clustering or merging with another parish in the foreseeable future. In addition the expected growth in the vicariate is mostly projected for the area of our parish further reducing the feasibility of merger. In terms of an emergency partner, we already collaborate with St. Mary Mystical Rose with the Knights of Columbus. Therefore, we see them as a logical choice to partner with. However we concur with the general sense of the vicariate regarding each parish of the vicariates ability to function as a separate and viable entity going into the next twenty years.

St. Clement of Rome: If a cluster partner has to be chosen, SS. John and Paul in Washington Township would be the choice.

St. Mary Mystical Rose: We feel if there ever is a need to cluster with another parish the most logical possibility would be either Holy Family Church in Memphis or St. Francis/St. Maximilian Kolbe.

APC Response

- ✓ **We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future**
- ✓ **On the short term this plan is viable, the future priest shortage is really not addressed. We recommend the Archdiocese establish a task force to address this situation.**

NMV Response to APC:

- ✓ **We concur that any significant change in parish configurations would need the impetus of the Archdiocese.**

8. Further Areas for Planning and for Future Consideration

A. Hispanic Ministry on a Regional Basis

Hispanic ministry on a more regional basis has been supported by the North Macomb Vicariate for a number of years. With the help of grants from the Parish Empowerment Fund we have been able to hire full time pastoral workers, one through St. Francis/St. Maximilian to work out of their center and one through the vicariate as a whole, working especially out of the Agape center at St. Clement. The PEF grant has paid for the salary of such workers. The vicariate has funded the benefits, as well as some of the program expenses. This past year we were able to hire two part-time pastoral workers to begin to expand contact with Hispanic families throughout the area. Unfortunately, the PEF grant for 2011-12 has reduced its funding significantly for this ministry in our area, and we will need to plan on what to do in the face of that.

However, this does raise a wider, regional and Archdiocesan issue. The two centers that serve Hispanic ministry in our vicariate are actually trying to serve a much larger regional Hispanic population. Unfortunately because of many factors including distance, transportation and resources, the large majority of Hispanic Catholics in Macomb County are not being ministered to. We believe that this ministry goes way beyond our one vicariate and requires much better Archdiocesan coordination engaging all vicariates of the region to better meet the needs of this severely underserved population.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- Support including some funding for two centers (St. Francis/St. Maximilian, St. Clement)

Planning for the Future:

- Looking at how much increased funding the vicariate can pick up for Hispanic ministry, given the reduction in PEF grants. NB: For fiscal year 2011-12, the PDF grant has been cut in half.
- Working with the Archdiocese to involve neighboring vicariates in a collaborative approach to Hispanic ministry, including equitable funding.
- Help each parish to grow in its ability to be more welcoming of the Hispanic population within its own area.

APC Response

- ✓ **We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future, especially helping each parish grow in its ability to be more welcoming of the Hispanic populations within its own area.**
- ✓ **We recommend that this vicariate receive the data needed for planning Hispanic ministry from the Archdiocese, perhaps a task force is need to explore further this issue.**

NMV Response to APC:

- ✓ **We note that the APC says nothing about involving neighboring vicariates and planning on a more regional basis, which would include equitable funding from all parishes/vicariates, not just NMV. Nor does it seem to take as seriously as we believe it should the significance of the cut in PEF grant funds for Hispanic Ministry in our vicariate.**
- ✓ **We are encouraged by the APC call for better data to be supplied and for a task force established to further explore this important area of ministry for the Archdiocese.**

B. Ecumenical Initiatives

One area not addressed by the planning questions was that of ecumenical initiatives. In discussing this area, some parishes in the vicariate have participated in such initiatives over the years (prayer events, shared Christian service outreach, etc.). It was pointed out by some that Christian churches share a common concern for the state of the current culture and some of those concerns and issues might form the basis for common action. We are listing it here, both to remind ourselves as a vicariate of the need to do more exploring of this area and to encourage the Archdiocese to initiate more on a diocesan or regional basis.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- No specific vicariate initiatives at present, other than some Christian service outreaches such as MCREST and Giving/Sharing Tree
- Participation by St. Therese and St. Francis/St. Maximilian in the Listen, Learn and Live Programs sponsored by the Macomb Interfaith Center for Racial Justice

Planning for the Future:

- Developing one or more ecumenical prayer opportunities in the vicariate
- Expand Christian service endeavors that can be done on an ecumenical basis

APC Response

✓ **We affirm your current planning for the future.**

✓

NMV Response to APC: We agree

C. Catholic Education and Formation in Total

The phase two planning sessions and questions kept the issue of Catholic schools always in the forefront. But we did note that the wider scope of overall education/formation seemed to take a back seat. We don't want that focus on life-long formation to be lost. In fact, many of the parishes listed such life-long formation as one of their core values. In addition, most of our school-age children will not be attending Catholic schools, and so we need to be conscientious in looking at how to make our Christian formation programs as strong as possible for them. This includes strong involvement in religious education, youth ministry, sacraments, liturgical ministers, Christian Service outreach, and parish life.

Some of our parishes have begun to add intergenerational formation events to their more age-specific sessions. All parishes have in place sacramental formation programs, as well as opportunities for school-age children to receive Catholic Christian formation. Catechetical leaders meet on a regional basis regularly and all topics for full catechetical formation are offered in the course of the year, using the various parish sites.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- Regular meeting of catechetical leaders and offering certification topics

Planning for the Future:

- Sharing more adult formation opportunities as a vicariate or on multi-parish level
- Develop a Speakers Bureau for the region of available speakers and topics

APC Response

- ✓ We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future
- ✓ Are there other ways to support life-long formation, for example: Vicariate Retreat, Bible Studies, Liturgical Formation, etc.?

NMV Response to APC:

- ✓ As mentioned under our section #4 above, we are already engaged in or recognize the need to engage in some of these efforts.

D. Vocations

With the anticipated shortage of priests, what efforts are being made to promote and foster all vocations – priesthood, diaconate, religious life, and professional lay ministry? Within the NMV, only two parishes seem to have active vocations committees. In one of those parishes, the Vocations Committee consists of their Knights of Columbus Council. What collaboration efforts within vicariates are feasible to promote and foster new and current vocations? In phase one planning we expressed a desire that the Archdiocese be proactive in exploring the issue of inviting married men to priesthood. We recognize that this is a wider issue than just the one diocese, but continue to encourage the Archdiocese to be open to encouraging that reality.

Current NMV Collaboration:

- An occasional Vocations' Mass/event

Planning for the Future:

- Strengthening vocation awareness efforts in all the parishes, including the formation of vocations' committees to foster all vocations

APC Response

- ✓ We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future

NMV Response to APC: We agree

E. Environmental Stewardship

A number of the parishes have begun to develop programs on environmental awareness. As a vicariate, however, we have not yet explored how we might cooperate on this more fully.

APC Response

- ✓ We affirm your current collaboration and support your planning for the future
- ✓ We recommend the development of programs on environmental awareness

NMV Response to APC: We agree

Conclusion:

As we continue to move forward, addressing the areas for future planning listed above, we will need to come to agreement on how to fund some of these initiatives, especially greater expansion of Hispanic ministry, vicariate-wide parish leadership, formation, and evangelization events. Because we already have a fairly significant shared budget, we believe we will be able to work out the details of further support. Because many of the items for future planning are fairly “high level” items, we will need to form committees that in turn will help turn such items into more concrete and specific goals and objectives. An important one in this regard will be the committee looking at the issue of Catholic school support and the visioning of a more regional understanding of Catholic schools. Likewise, the needs of the rapidly growing senior population that is projected for the vicariate will need to be assessed and addressed and concrete strategies developed. This needs to be done in parallel with increased initiatives for our young adults/young families.