

MEMO

TO: COHORT CORE TEAMS

FROM: MICKEY LENTZ

RE: PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

DATE: June 17, 2015

The Archdiocesan Planning Commission spent May 27-28 working together studying your materials with all the good work you have done since November of 2014. The Planning Commission reviewed the goals Archbishop Tobin had set for *Connected in the Spirit* as it began its deliberations.

1. To enhance the vibrancy of parish life in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
2. To foster an appreciation for and participation in Sunday Eucharist and the Sacraments.
3. To promote good stewardship so that parishes are viable now and into the future.
4. To maximize the availability of quality Catholic School education throughout the Archdiocese.
5. To ensure that parishioners have opportunities for quality lifelong Christian Formation, including supporting new initiatives for youth and young adults and promoting vocations to ordained and lay ministry.
6. To strengthen service to those who are marginalized.
7. To build a greater sense of unity among the many cultures in the Archdiocese.
8. To realign parishes considering the number of priests available to serve, financial resources and demographics.
9. To increase collaboration among all entities in the local, national and universal Church.
10. To advocate for peace and justice in the Church and in the world.

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 by September 14, 2015.

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 Bloomington, Seymour and Connersville Deaneries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis by late December 2015. 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.

Attached is the personalized form to use as your Response Form. This has been customized for your convenience and is based on the violet sheet on the last page of the third section of your planning binder. We ask you to refrain from making any major decisions at the parish level until you have completed Steps 4 & 5 of the process.

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.