

# Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium: Phase II

## Introduction

### Overview

Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium: Phase Two (PPNM2), beginning in 2002-03, will involve all parishes and faith communities in the Diocese. Roughly one third of the groups will create a five-year plan during the first year; the second third will do so in the second year; and the final third in the third year. By the end of 2004-05 all planning groups will have completed new five-year pastoral plans. This new round of planning will differ from PPNM in the following specific ways:

1. The process will be leaner and less cumbersome.
2. Diocesan Pastoral Planning Council has provided advice to the Bishop on the planning process.
3. There will be more extensive use of technology and telecommunications.
4. The planning horizon will remain five years but the plan will need to be consistent with the long-term future as evident in ten year projections.
5. There will be a clearer description of relevant diocesan and Church policies.
6. There will be a statement of the principles guiding the assignment of priests to pastoral ministry in the Diocese.
7. To the extent possible the process will accommodate the differences among parishes in terms of type, size, and/or location.
8. The expectations of the Bishop will be more explicit in terms of pastoral issues and concerns to be addressed by each planning group.
9. The planning process will be more firmly and intentionally rooted in faith sharing and spirituality so as to recognize that planning flows from our faith in God.
10. There will be a greater effort to ensure clear, complete and consistent communication among the planning group council, pastoral leaders, parish staff members, pastoral councils, and parishioners at large, as well as appropriate input from all.

At the same time, many aspects of PPNM will continue into PPNM2.

1. The process of pastoral planning will continue to be based on the values of the Diocese of Rochester.
2. Geographically based planning groups will continue to provide the framework for pastoral planning.
3. Pastoral planning will continue to focus on the identification of pastoral needs and the development of creative responses to them.
4. The principle of subsidiarity will continue to be central. While the

- Bishop will be more explicit in the identification of issues and concerns, responses will come from local parishes and faith communities.
5. The planning process will continue to build the infrastructure of collaboration.

### **Purpose of Pastoral Planning**

The goal of pastoral planning is to create, sustain, and/or increase the vitality of parishes and faith communities in the Diocese of Rochester so that the mission of the Diocese can continue in changing times and in response to changing circumstances. We seek to become the church described in Bishop Matthew Clark's vision statement.

A realistic appraisal of what vital parishes and faith communities will be like in the future must accord with those aspects of the future that we can realistically expect. In addition to changing demographic and economic conditions, we expect that the number of diocesan priests available for active assignments will decline 60 percent by 2025 to 62. Everything else being equal, such a drastic decrease will require us to renew our understanding of parish, faith community, the role of priests, the role of deacons, the role of lay ecclesial ministers, sacraments and, indeed, almost every aspect of our ecclesial life. Pastoral planning is not focused on solving the "priest shortage" but rather on identifying and implementing responses to pastoral needs in a church in which there will be substantially fewer priests. To focus only on the number of priests can lead to an overemphasis on structural and legal issues rather than pastoral ones.

### **Mission of the Diocese of Rochester**

We, the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Rochester, joyfully embrace our baptismal call to worship God, to preach the good news of Christ, to build up the community of faith and hope in the Holy Spirit, and to serve those in need.

As pilgrims nourished by the Eucharist for our journey of faith, we work with other churches and with all who seek harmony within the human family to advance the reign of God.

Continuing our diocese's century-old tradition of courage and creativity, and responding to the Second Vatican Council's call for the ongoing conversion of the Church, we strive to meet the needs of our community in this time and this place.

### **Values of the Diocese of Rochester**

- To be a collaborative Church
- To call forth lay leadership
- To utilize fully the richness of our diversity

- To be open, trusting and respectful in our dialogue with one another
- To engage in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and cooperation

## **Bishop's Vision Statement**

"The Church... seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ Himself ... to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgment, to serve and not to be served." (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes: The Church in the Modern World*, Par. 3)

When a bishop articulates the vision of a diocese, he does so not as the lonely prophet but rather, trusting in God's Holy Spirit, as one who clothes with words what he sees and hears in the hopes and dreams of the people he serves.

What kind of church do we want to be as we enter into the new millennium? We long to be a faith-filled community ever richer in wisdom, talent and love. We long to be a community known for its warm hospitality, for its love of learning and study, for its vibrant catechesis, for its joyful worship, for its compassionate service. Keeping the bond of union with Pope John Paul II and all the bishops, we long to be a church that reaches out in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

In our vision, we want to be a welcoming community that actively includes all members, and share the Gospel of grace with those who have fallen away or who do not belong to any church. It is to be a local church that prizes a diversity of cultures and gifts and uses those gifts to the fullest extent allowed in our tradition. It rejoices that through baptism "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians, 3:38) It is a church of families and individuals, of priests and lay leaders. It is black and white, yellow and brown. It is both rich and poor, rural and urban, enjoying large assemblies but creating everywhere small intentional communities in which faith can grow and flourish in a very personal way.

As we approach the millennium, we dream of a church where old and young alike thirst for the Word of God. Faithful to the Catholic tradition, it will be a community that lives out its beliefs in a daily spirituality and applies moral norms to the demands of everyday life. It is a people that celebrates life and love, healing and forgiveness through the sacraments. It is a worshipping community that praises God through the conscious, full and active participation of the entire assembly. It is a people that understands the importance of the Sunday Eucharist to the life of faith, and embraces it as the foundation of all other activities.

We long to be a community that is ready to wrestle with the difficult issues of the day with a radical spirit of faith. We long to be a healing community that shares the "hopes and joys, the griefs and the anxieties of the people

of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted" (Vat. II, GS, 1) We want to be a people that lives out the gospel of life, feeding the hungry and visiting the prisoner, sheltering the homeless and caring for the dying, offering hope to the addicted and support to those with burdensome pregnancies. It is a people that does not fear to raise a prophetic voice in pursuit of justice and peace for all.

Trusting that such a vision is no idle dream but the very promise of the Gospel, I challenge our local Church, in the spirit of the Synod, to work with me in making plans to move us toward this ideal.

+ Matthew H. Clark  
Bishop of Rochester  
December 15, 1996

## **Process**

### **Bishop's Expectations**

At the beginning of the planning process, the Bishop will provide each group with his expectations of the issues to be addressed in both the short run (five years) and the long run. These expectations will be different for every group reflecting past experience and the context of the particular planning group. For example, expectations will differ depending on whether the planning group is composed of urban parishes serving vulnerable populations, urban parishes serving members who live principally within parish boundaries, urban parishes serving suburban residents, suburban parishes, parishes located in medium-sized cities, exurban parishes, or rural parishes, as well as whether the planning group includes prison, campus, or migrant ministries. These expectations will be based on the documents of Vatican II, reviews by Pastoral Center ministries, canon law and diocesan legislation regarding the five pillars of a faith community/parish:

1. Word
2. Worship
3. Community
4. Service
5. Temporalities

### **Communications**

A formally organized communications process will be required for each planning group. The content will be both planning issues and progress reports. The key audiences will be parish staff, parish leadership, parish pastoral councils, and parishioners. This process will be implemented at the planning group level but will be consistent with and supported by a diocesan communications effort. The Diocesan Office of Communications will be proactively involved with each planning group and will provide both *pro forma* and individualized support

## **Part One: Configuration**

Based on the experience with PPNM, each planning group will focus initially on configuration issues in developing its pastoral plan. While configuration issues will vary from group to group, in general they deal with the following:

1. Structure: number, relationship, and location of parishes and Sunday worship sites
2. Sunday Mass schedules within the parishes and faith communities of the planning group
3. Sacramental ministry and pastoral care
4. Financial implications

Effective work on collaborative pastoral ministry can only take place once configuration questions have been settled. To the greatest extent possible, groups will move toward plans that address the short-term (five-year) projections in a way that is consistent with the longer-term (10-25-year) future. These plans will be consistent with the constraints established by the Bishop.

The following table presents an overview of the configuration planning process which can be used as a model and tailored to the needs of each planning group. This also includes the major communications support activities that are crucial to a successful planning process.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Configuration</b>	<b>Communications</b>
July		<i>Communication from Pastoral Planning Office to 2002 planning groups:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>final copy of PPNM2 process</i></li> <li>• <i>instructions regarding what the planning group council needs to do now to be ready for the fall</i></li> </ul>
summer/ early fall	2002 planning groups determine whether the planning group council will address configuration or whether a separate configuration committee will be formed; if there will be a separate committee, its members are chosen (including pastoral leaders and 1-2 reps from each faith community)	<i>members are chosen for a planning group communications committee—writing, graphic design, and web site design skills needed within the committee</i>
Aug./ Sept.	Briefing sessions for pastoral leaders and planning group council chairs	
late Aug./		<i>All information for 2002 planning groups is available in PDF format on</i>

Sept.		<i>the pastoral planning web site. Communications handbook is provided to planning group communications committee.</i>
Sept. /Oct.	<p>Full-day orientation workshop for each 2002 planning group council including members of configuration and communications committees and members of parish pastoral councils, and parish staff from each parish/faith community. Planning Group Council membership will ordinarily include the pastor/pastoral administrator/chaplain, one staff member (if appropriate,) one non-staff member of the parish pastoral council, and one other non-staff parishioner. If it is not appropriate to appoint a parish staff member, an additional parishioner will be appointed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Agenda:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prayer and faith sharing</li> <li>• Spirituality and change/leading change/being faithful leaders</li> <li>• Appreciative inquiry</li> <li>• Bishop's expectations for each planning group</li> <li>• Constraints</li> <li>• Information (demographic, church)</li> <li>• Projections (5 years, 10 years)</li> <li>• Discernment of gifts</li> <li>• Planning to plan: path forward</li> <li>• Leadership</li> </ul>	
Sept. /Oct.	<p>Configuration committee holds initial meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Agenda:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Getting to know us</li> <li>• Prayer service</li> <li>• Process overview, timeline overview (if not already done at full-day workshop)</li> <li>• Choose chair, vice-chair, recorder</li> <li>• Members share thoughts about</li> </ul>	<p><i>Pulpit announcement by pastoral leader and configuration (or communications) committee member:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What is PPNM2 &amp; why are we engaged in pastoral planning</i></li> <li>• <i>Formation of configuration committee &amp; naming of local representative (or planning group council members)</i></li> <li>• <i>To whom to address questions</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Bulletin insert/flier prepared by the communications committee:</i></p>

	<p>the committee &amp; its mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion re. Bishop's letter outlining issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>timeline for configuration work in the planning group</i></li> <li>• <i>Bishop's expectations</i></li> <li>• <i>demographic and church information presented to the parish/faith community and to the planning group</i></li> <li>• <i>projections (5 years, 10 years)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Pastor/pastoral administrator's bulletin column and homilies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>historical perspective: how local community/parish life has changed in the past in response to new circumstances</i></li> <li>• <i>faith themes: death and resurrection, Spirit in our midst guiding us and spurring our creativity, faith in times of change (the Israelites moving from slavery through the desert into the Promised Land; the prophets and Israel in exile)</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Written communications on parish/planning group web sites.</i></p>
	<p><b>Agendas for several introductory meetings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial prayer (not pro forma prayer)</li> <li>• Review data and its implications</li> <li>• Discuss implications of 2008 and 2013 projections</li> <li>• Share questions, fears, feelings, comments are hearing from parishioners</li> <li>• Discuss perceived obstacles to reconfiguration &amp; possible benefits</li> <li>• Become familiar with current models of parish/planning group configuration and possible models of pastoral leadership</li> <li>• Decide if any additional information is needed regarding parishes/faith communities or local area</li> </ul>	

	and acquire it	
	<p><b>Agendas for actual configuration work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue substantial prayer</li> <li>• Brainstorm possible configuration models</li> <li>• Continue to share questions, fears, feelings, comments are hearing from parishioners</li> <li>• Evaluate possible configuration models</li> <li>• Choose 1-3 best possible configuration models</li> </ul>	<i>Models are confidential until fine-tuned.</i>
Oct./ Nov.	<p>Workshops on Spirituality &amp; Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parishioners</li> <li>• Pastoral leaders</li> <li>• Pastoral council members</li> </ul>	
	<p>Once the planning group council or configuration committee has decided upon the 1-3 best possible configuration models, there should be a joint pastoral council and parish staffs meeting (or there can be separate meetings, a joint pastoral council meeting and a joint parish staffs meeting)</p> <p><b>agenda:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• welcome</li> <li>• introduction of configuration committee (&amp;/or planning group council) members &amp; communications committee members</li> <li>• prayer service</li> <li>• presentation of 1-3 best configuration models</li> <li>• small group discussion of advantages &amp; disadvantages of each</li> <li>• possible prioritization of models</li> <li>• group generates questions they have about the proposed configuration models &amp; the entire pastoral planning process</li> </ul>	<p><i>Handout prepared by communications committee given to pastoral councils &amp; parish staffs:</i></p> <p><i>“Next Steps in Pastoral Planning”</i></p> <p><i>“Next steps” on parish/planning group web sites.</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>configuration committee/planning group council analyze feedback from pastoral councils and parish staffs; make revisions to proposal &amp; perhaps choose top model; write draft proposal</li> </ul>	
		<p><i>Mailing to all pastoral council members and staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Summary of feedback from joint council/staff meeting</i></li> <li><i>Copy of draft proposal</i></li> </ul>
		<p><i>Mailing to all parishioners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Copy of draft proposal</i></li> <li><i>FAQ based on questions generated at joint council/staff meeting</i></li> </ul>
		<p><i>Communications committee prepares:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Facilitator's Guide for parish listening sessions</i></li> <li><i>Parishioner feedback form</i></li> <li><i>Pulpit announcement</i></li> <li><i>Communications committee (or configuration committee) selects those to do pulpit announcements &amp; facilitators for parish listening sessions</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Pastor/pastoral administrator may use bulletin column and/or homily on subject of re-configuration</i></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Pulpit announcement (by pastoral leader &amp; member of configuration or communications committee)</i></li> <li><i>Listening sessions after Masses at all parishes</i></li> </ul>
	Configuration committee/planning group council review feedback from parish listening sessions and make any needed revisions to draft proposal	
		<p><i>Mailing to pastoral councils &amp; parish staffs: summary report of responses received during listening sessions</i></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Distribution of revised proposal to pastoral council members.</i></li> <li><i>Proposal available on parish/planning group web sites.</i></li> </ul>
		<p><i>Distribution of revised proposal to</i></p>

		<i>pastoral council &amp; parish staff members.</i>
	Individual pastoral councils meet to discuss & possibly approve draft proposal.	
	Planning group council (plus perhaps configuration committee) holds joint meeting with all pastoral council members to discuss & work out remaining issues and come to consensus on draft proposal.	
		<i>Pulpit announcement (by pastoral leader and planning group council member) &amp; bulletin insert:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Update on pastoral planning process</i></li> <li>• <i>Basic components of final proposal</i></li> <li>• <i>Explanation of any substantial changes in proposal</i></li> <li>• <i>What's next</i></li> </ul>
	Planning group council prepares and sends letter and final proposal to Bishop Clark	<i>Copies of final proposal available for parishioners who are interested &amp; available on parish/planning group web sites.</i>
	Celebration, review & evaluation of the process for members of configuration and communications committees.	
	<p>Once Bishop Clark accepts the plan, the configuration transition process begins.</p> <p>Each parish/faith community initiates local and collaborative pastoral planning on key pastoral concerns in the areas of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staffing,</li> <li>• ministries,</li> <li>• facilities and</li> <li>• finances.</li> </ul>	

### **Affirmation of the Proposed Pastoral Plan**

The affirmation of the pastoral plans will be based on the extent to which they effectively address the short and long term issues identified by the Bishop.

### **Implementation**

The Bishop will appoint a vicar for pastoral planning in each planning group. These vicars will be accountable for the implementation of the pastoral plan for

each group and for increasing appropriate collaborative ministry within the group. Typically a vicar will be a priest pastor of a parish within the planning group. When a planning group is a single parish, there will not be a vicar appointed.

### **Part Two: Parish and Collaborative Pastoral Planning**

At the conclusion of the configuration work, each parish and faith community within the planning group will initiate local and collaborative pastoral planning focused on the key pastoral concerns of the communities. For most 2002 Planning Groups this work will begin in fall 2003. There will be training and support from the Diocese for each parish/faith community pastoral council and for the planning group council for this pastoral planning activity. The process will focus on the identification of pastoral needs and concerns and then the development of creative and practical responses to them. Collaboration both within and among parishes/faith communities will be highly valued. Each pastoral plan will support the mission of the parish/faith community in the areas of word, worship, community, service, and temporalities. Within each area, the plan will describe plans in terms of staffing, ministry programs, facilities, and finances.

#### **Leadership Support**

Evaluation of the first round of pastoral planning indicated that the quality of leadership was an important variable in the success of the planning process. Therefore it is important that PPNM2 give conscious attention to supporting the lay and ministerial leadership of this process. To begin this development process, the pastoral leaders of the entities in each planning group along with the co-chairs of the planning group council or leadership team will meet with the Regional Coordinator, the Planning Group Liaison and the Director of Pastoral Planning for a briefing on PPNM2. Following this briefing session, pastoral leaders will meet with the Director of Pastoral Planning during the configuration process to focus on leadership issues. The sessions will contain both content instruction and facilitated group discussion of current leadership challenges. The Planning Group Liaison will provide support to the lay leadership of the planning group, the configuration team, and the communications team.