

1 PROPOSED NORTHWEST ONTARIO COUNTY PLAN  
2 *Recommended in June 2005*  
3  
4

5 Welcome to the Catholic Community of Northwest Ontario County. We are the  
6 parish communities of St. Bridget/St. Joseph, St. Dominic, St. Felix, St. Francis, St. Mary  
7 and St. Patrick. We attest to the strength of the faith in this area and the continued  
8 growth our communities are experiencing. Having completed five years of praying  
9 together, mutual support and living in these communities, we are ready to offer another  
10 plan for five (and ten) years of life together. This plan is submitted, building on activities  
11 that have been shared and that will continue.  
12

13  
14 INTRODUCTION  
15

16 Our parishes have an on-going commitment to continue the following: the  
17 Planning Group (pastoral leader plus two lay representatives from each parish) meets  
18 monthly and is supportive and understanding of the philosophy of collaboration. The  
19 Pastoral Leaders meet every six weeks for communication and support. Pastoral  
20 Visitation teams are in place and regularly visit the three hospitals, nine health care  
21 facilities, hospices, and private homes. Pastoral Visitation teams are also in place and  
22 regularly visit the Ontario County Jail. Annual Lenten retreat days take place for our  
23 Catholic Community. The parishes have combined Confirmation preparation and  
24 celebrate twice yearly. The six parishes share in RCIA enrichment days. A Pastoral  
25 Planning newsletter has been developed and is circulated quarterly. The four full-time  
26 assigned priests sacramentally care for the sick in hospitals and health care facilities as  
27 well as inmates at the jail. These activities reflect the cooperation of leaders, staff  
28 persons, and the people of the communities. We build on these exciting adventures as we  
29 present this plan.

30 As we expand our pastoral plan in light of diocesan guidelines, these are the  
31 fundamental value statements on which we have built our plan:

32 Value One calls forth the responsibility of our six communities to provide  
33 Catholics with the sacramental ministry and faith formation essential to supporting and  
34 growing lives of faith and service according to the mind and heart of God.

35 Value Two invites us to understand that, through worship and parish life in our  
36 region, our faith communities will be tangible signs of Christ's presence in our world.

37 Value Three reminds us that parish life in our region should be restructured in  
38 such a way that the gifts of the people will continue to be honored, drawn upon and  
39 shared. The spaces where we gather for worship, faith formation and community life will  
40 be welcoming, safe and open to all. Parishes must be financially able to sustain and grow  
41 essential ministries and facilities.

42 Value Four reflects the fact that beyond our parishes, the pastoral needs of all who  
43 live, work, suffer, and study in our region will be served, with outreach beyond our  
44 borders.

45 To insure that these values are addressed, the structure and relationships of  
46 parishes and personnel will be developed according to the following steps:  
47

THE PLAN

From July of 2005 until June of 2007, the Sunday Eucharist will be celebrated sixteen times per weekend. This is the current number of Masses in our six churches. During this time, a plan will be developed to reduce this number from sixteen to thirteen. Thirteen Masses presumes four assigned priests and the assistance of a retired priest. A process will be developed whereby the assigned priests will preside at Sunday Eucharist in parishes other than their assignment twice each year.

The pastoral leaders of each parish will continue to meet regularly as well as continuing to serve on the Northwest Ontario Planning Group. Two representatives from each parish will also serve as active members of this Planning Group. This group will provide leadership in implementing this plan as well as act as a sounding board for recommendations for future growth and development.

During 2005-2007, the pastoral leader, working in conjunction with the Pastoral Council and the Finances Council of their parish, will continue to make decisions for that parish, which are appropriate to the situation. It is a courtesy to inform the Pastoral Planning Group of such decisions. Parishes in our region agree not to incur new debt from discretionary spending that would be carried over into the next phase of the plan.

A Communication Coordinator will be chosen to insure that valuable and pertinent information is provided to the Catholic Community of Northwest Ontario County in a timely way. This person will also oversee a committee of volunteers from each parish assisting in sharing information on specific issues regarding emerging needs of each cluster/parish.

The following working committees will be established with membership drawn equally from each parish. There will be two sets of these committees. One will serve the parishes of St. Dominic, St. Felix and St. Francis. The other will serve the parishes of St. Bridget/St. Joseph, St. Mary and St. Patrick.

1. Committee for Faith-Community Growth, Unity and Ministry (hospitality, social activities, retreats, youth ministry, social justice, etc.)
2. Buildings Assessment Committee
3. Leadership Building Group (trained in group process, attentive listening techniques, psychology and theology of Church)
4. Committee for Sacramental Life (developing unity of sacramental life among disparate communities – creating, ritualizing and celebrating life)

The work of these groups will help the transitions necessary for the implementation of this plan.

93  
94  
95 ST. DOMINIC, ST. FELIX, ST. FRANCIS

96 St. Dominic, St. Felix, St. Francis parishes will work to get to know each other in  
97 anticipation of becoming one cluster under one pastoral leader. Their current Pastoral  
98 Councils will meet jointly at least semi-annually beginning in September 2005 to  
99 shepherd the process on behalf of their communities. The current finance councils will  
100 meet jointly at least semi-annually beginning in September 2005 to share information and  
101 possible strategies for the future. By July of 2006, a new Pastoral Council will be formed  
102 with three members from each parish. This Council will begin preliminary work (by-  
103 laws, selection process, mission) and will be seated when the new cluster under one  
104 pastoral leader is formed in July 2007

105 In January 2007, St. Dominic, St. Felix and St. Francis parishes, by agreement,  
106 will formally petition the Bishop to become one cluster under one pastoral leader and  
107 take all necessary steps leading up to this by July 2007. Based on capacity of existing  
108 churches and Mass attendance, four Masses will be necessary until the facility options of  
109 the new cluster are explored and implemented.

110 In July 2007, St. Dominic, St. Felix and St. Francis will celebrate becoming one  
111 cluster with a new pastor or pastoral administrator. A staff will be assembled depending  
112 on what the new cluster needs and can afford. A key to carrying out the work of the  
113 Committee for Faith-Community growth, Unity and Ministry would be to include a  
114 Parish Life Coordinator on this staff. The recommendations of the working committees  
115 of 2005-2007 will be given to the newly formed Pastoral Council.

116 In the years 2007-2015, St. Dominic, St. Felix and St. Francis cluster will become  
117 one parish.

118 ST. BRIDGET/ST. JOSEPH, ST. MARY, ST. PATRICK

119 The St. Bridget/St. Joseph and St. Mary parishes will work to get to know  
120 each other. Their current Pastoral Councils will meet jointly at least semi-annually  
121 beginning in September 2005. They will also develop a working plan for their merger as  
122 a cluster of two parishes with one pastoral leader.

123 The St. Bridget/St. Joseph, St. Mary and St. Patrick parishes will work on  
124 facilities assessment to address the need for adequate worship space – this may include  
125 but not be limited to St. Patrick’s long-term need to build or enlarge, St. Bridget/St.  
126 Joseph’s need to enlarge, and St. Mary’s parking limitations. They will also work to  
127 identify ministries that can be shared, what mutual benefits are possible by working  
128 together, and how pastoral staff will further participate in the shared ministry of this  
129 region. While not at this time clustering with another parish, St. Patrick will continue as  
130 an active partner with the other parishes of the Catholic Community of Northwest  
131 Ontario County. St. Patrick will continue to discern and address its needs in relation to  
132 the rapid growth of its community.

133 In July 2007, the St. Bridget/St. Joseph and St. Mary parishes will celebrate  
134 becoming a cluster with a new pastor or pastoral administrator and will begin working  
135 even more closely together. A staff will be established according to need and finances  
136 available. A new Pastoral Council representing both parishes will be formed. The  
137 working committees will offer their recommendations to the new Pastoral Council.

138 In the years 2007-2015, St. Bridget/St. Joseph and St. Mary cluster will become  
139 one parish with two worship sites.

ALL PARISHES

Within the first year, the pastoral leaders and sacramental ministers of the region will meet to establish procedures for working together for the coming year (e.g., a convener of the group and a coordinator for sacramental ministry). Together, these leaders will assure continued support for St. Mary's School, ministry at Finger Lakes Community College, and work through emerging questions in the parishes and the region.

During 2007 through July 2008, the communities will live together, test and measure the plan. Recommendations from the work committees, pastoral planning group and pastoral leaders will be addressed.

Within the first year, each cluster and parish will look for ways of continuous feedback to evaluate pastoral life. One way to do this is through a town meeting. Recommendations for the future will be welcomed.

These two new parishes and St. Patrick's will grow as a community with pastoral presence in each village and city. During this time, consideration will be given to maintaining current facilities or expanding existing facility/facilities or building a new facility or other options as they become apparent.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while the pastoral leaders work in specific parishes they will also work collaboratively in Northwest Ontario County. These leaders will meet every six weeks for prayer, support and sharing. Collaboration will be encouraged among communities. This plan presumes a commitment to the on-going ministries in which the parishes are already involved. Further, the plan looks to gather all the staffs annually for enrichment. Pastoral Leaders and the Planning Group will look into the feasibility of sharing services where possible. Plans will be developed for more extensive sharing of gifts, talents, programs and prayer among communities.

There is much joy in the service of People of God in the Finger Lakes. This plan offers the conscious efforts of the present Planning Group to look to the future and insure not only the service but also the joy of service through prayer, vision, collaboration, and cooperation.