



TOGETHER IN FAITH

LORD JESUS, AS YOU COMFORTED
AND CHALLENGED THE DISCIPLES
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS,
BE WITH OUR CHURCH OF DETROIT.

OPEN OUR HEARTS
TO THE WISDOM OF YOUR SPIRIT
SPEAKING THROUGH ONE ANOTHER
AS WE DELIBERATE TOGETHER
ON THE FUTURE OF OUR PARISHES
AND SCHOOLS.

MAY ALL OUR EFFORTS BE TO
YOUR GLORY AND THE BUILDING UP OF
THE KINGDOM AS YOU LIVE AND REIGN
WITH THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT,
ONE GOD, FOREVER AND EVER.
AMEN.

Archdiocese of Detroit/Pontiac Area Vicariate
Preamble, Focus Areas and Action Plans/Scenarios
Final Report submitted on May 23, 2005

I. Preamble: Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges

Introduction

The “Together in Faith” journey is an important step in the Pontiac Area Vicariate (PAV) planning process. It has helped us, Vicariate Pastoral Council, Priests, Pastoral Ministers and all agencies and institutions of the Vicariate, to become more aware of our giftedness, opportunities and challenges which will characterize our journey for the next five to ten years. The focus areas requested by the Archdiocese for final decisions can be understood only in the context of what we learned as a Vicariate during these last six months.

Vicariate Components

The Pontiac Area Vicariate is presently made up of 9 individual parishes, three parishes clustered as the Pontiac Catholic Community, 3 K to 8 schools, and a high school. The PAV also includes the Oakland jail ministry, four hospitals, chaplaincies for three retirement homes, social agencies located in Pontiac and ministries which are vicariate-wide such as Genesis Ministry as well as two religious communities. All the components of the Vicariate participated in the “*Together in Faith*” study.

What did we learn?

The population trends of the Vicariate have changed in the last ten years. A significant increase in the Northern part of the Vicariate (North of Rochester and Lake Orion) continues. A slight population decrease in the Pontiac area is registered, recognizing the fact that the present census methodology tends to undercount the Hispanic population. In line with the overall PAV population increase, each parish has seen an increase in registered parishioners. Pontiac registers a slight decrease of the parishioners, acknowledging that the number of registered parishioners does not reflect the influx of the Hispanic population.

The ratio of priest to people is for the Vicariate of 1 for 4,200 and the ratio of staff to parishioners is 1 to 990. Both ratios are higher than the average for the archdiocese.

While three parishes have a significant debt, in general most parishes’ financial statements indicate a relatively sound business plan. However the trend of the last five years indicates clearly that administrative expenses are increasing far quicker than revenues from offertory collections.

The schools, which in large part have been the object of a substantial restructuring through the Vision 2000, are meeting all their enrollment goals and forecast a secure future, contingent on continuing funding from supporting parishes.

The agencies (Catholic Social Services, CCRT and the Jail Ministry) located in Pontiac play an important role in support of the most neglected population of the Vicariate.

Opportunities

The prayerful reflections and discussions on the present data, undertaken by the Vicariate Pastoral Council and the pastors with the pastoral ministers, have helped us to identify several key opportunities.

1. The Pontiac Experience

The Pontiac Catholic Community is providing the Vicariate with a road map to the future. The changes taking place in the ethnic composition of the community, the demands for sacraments which are so vital to the Hispanic community and the restructuring of traditional parishes in a cluster called the Pontiac Catholic Community will provide us with many lessons learned. This situation offers an opportunity for the rest of the Vicariate to partner with and support this community as it implements its restructuring.

2. Hispanic Ministry

The influx of Hispanics in the Pontiac area has also increased the awareness of accelerating the development of Hispanic ministry in the Vicariate: it is an opportunity to serve a profound catholic community with all its diverse customs and rituals. Hispanic ministry cannot be only the responsibility of the Pontiac Catholic Community, but must be shared by the entire Vicariate community.

3. Growth in the Northern part of the Vicariate

The population growth in the northern part of the Vicariate both creates challenges and provides some opportunities. The demands for more sacramental (masses and space) and pastoral needs at St. Joseph Lake Orion, as well as St. Andrew, will require different models of communities and relationships to more established communities – either through the creation of Missions, or the building of new Churches. The present reality of shortage of priests and the financial conditions of the Archdiocese are going to require creativity and willingness to change on the part of all members of the Vicariate.

4. Past experiences

The Pontiac Area Vicariate has gained valuable experiences in working together and in partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit. Vision 2000 which helped the expansion and restructuring of the Vicariate schools demonstrated our ability to work together. The Pastoral Plan of the Vicariate includes several vicariate projects supported by the Pastoral Ministers Association (PMA) including youth ministry, spirituality, Catholic Community Response Team (CCRT), the Marist Academy, Lower Division at the St. Benedict Campus and lay ministry training. A program such as Genesis Ministry, which spans five vicariates has demonstrated our ability to work together and again in partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit. We have today a well established structure, which supports the coordination of projects in the Vicariate and beyond.

Challenges

While opportunities are easier to identify and seize, it is also clear that we are facing some serious challenges. Resistance to change at all levels of the Vicariate is very real. All habits die hard, and the squeeze on financial and human resources is real. We have identified three main challenges which will require a new way of thinking, understanding and living the experience of Church:

1. Creating a Vision for the Future

The reality of the future is not perceived as “real” by the different Vicariate communities, except for the Pontiac Catholic Community who already has faced it and is making fundamental changes. Since most parishes have been in an expansion mode, it is very difficult for most of the communities to visualize a future without the same number of priests, the same level of sacramental services and the same financial support. Either because of a lack of openness about financial operations or a lack of communication regarding the ordained ministry situation, or simply because of an innate desire to deny reality, most communities do not foresee a future much different from what they know today. The sense of urgency which is so critical to effect any change is not present.

2. Growing our parochial gift into an Area Church

Consistent with the concept of self-sufficient community, most parishes gave themselves an “A” or “B” – in any case a satisfactory grade. The vicariate in the last few years has demonstrated a willingness to work together on several projects. However, at the level of most parishioners, the notion of “**Area Church**” – of interdependence and partnership between the different communities in a certain geographical area is clearly not at the forefront of their thinking. While each community has a strong sense of its mission, has developed its own style of celebrations and relationships, concern for the community next door is not a priority. While we would need coordination, sharing resources, unification of efforts and reduction of inequalities in terms of available resources, it is not a predominant concern for most members of the vicariate. The definition of vicariate as offered by the Archdiocese (“*a geographical area consisting of a cluster of parishes where support, pastoral planning and resources can be identified and shared for the benefit of the faithful within its*”

boundaries”) is not operational in the day-to-day experiences of the communities. The challenge is to find a creative way to **maintain the sense of local community around the notion of parish and at the same time create a sense of a larger community where we can share resources, giftedness and concerns “for the benefit of the faithful within its (Area Church) boundaries” and further develop the partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit.**

3. Calling youth/young adults to our communities

Most parishes recognize that involvement of youth, young adults and young families is lacking in a significant way. In spite of many efforts, and for many diverse reasons, our Catholic communities have not been very successful in involving young members in the different ministries of the Church. The “graying” of the communities is an issue for the future ministries, both at the level of parishes as well as at the level of the Vicariate.

It is in the context of these opportunities and challenges that the focus areas are identified to provide a road map for the future of the Vicariate.

II. Focus Areas

Sacramental Nature of Vicariate

Focus Area One:

Responding to a reported significant decrease of “use” of Sacraments in established parishes in the last five years amidst increasing populations and knowing that the number of priests that will be assigned in the Pontiac Area Vicariate Parishes in the next three to five years will be two or more less than at the present time, as a Vicariate, we need to strengthen our understanding of the Gift of Sacraments as an essential component of our faith life in the Catholic Church, how Sacraments are the essential celebration of the different moments of the cycle of life and how the priests as a whole in the vicariate will service sacramentally the needs of all the parishes.

Focus Area Two:

Responding to the demand for Sacraments from the Hispanic community, as Vicariate, we need to find ways of supporting the development of Hispanic ministry in all the parishes of the Vicariate.

Focus Area Three:

We need to address the issue of growth in the Northern part of the Vicariate where the present available set-up is insufficient to respond to the sacramental and pastoral needs of a growing population, i.e. St. Joseph Parish in Lake Orion and St. Andrew Parish in Rochester.

Focus Area Four:

Responding to the decline of ordained ministers and to the current stand of the Church on who will be ordained and who can perform some sacramental functions, it is imperative that we as Church reevaluate the needs of the different communities and how we will respond to them. This is especially necessary in order to respond to the demands of hospitals and retirement homes for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

Strategic Nature of Vicariate

Focus Area One:

Recognizing that the notion of Area Church/Vicariate is weak, as a Vicariate, we need to (1) provide education, information and communication and (2) initiate dialogue among the communities regarding the needs of the Vicariate with special attention to the present needs of the Pontiac Catholic Community and the population growth in the northern part of the Vicariate.

Focus Area Two:

Recognizing the need to link one's faith life with the market place/every day living, as a Vicariate, we need to increase the development of Christian Services by coordinating the different activities of the parishes, especially in support of the creation of joint approaches to the needs of the social agencies located in Pontiac.

Focus Area Three:

Recognizing the "graying" of the Church, as Vicariate/Area Church, we need not only to support existing programs and increase the coordination among the parishes, schools, agencies and institutions for the development of programs, but we need imagination to find ways to involve and engage youth, young adults and young families in the life of the parish communities and the life of the Vicariate.

Sustainable Nature of Vicariate

Focus Area One:

Recognizing the relatively low participation in the stewardship process, as a Vicariate, we need to engage in a coordinated and structured Vicariate-wide education program of all the components of stewardship – time, talent and treasure – as an essential element of a faith response to the call of the Gospel.

Focus Area Two:

Recognizing the present (and future) situation regarding the lack of ordained ministers as well as the burden put on existing priests, as a Vicariate, we need to continue questioning the present stand of the Church regarding ordained ministry including the role of the permanent diaconate, and undertake a Vicariate-wide effort for engaging and developing lay women and men ministers to support all sacramental and pastoral activities in our communities.

Focus Area Three:

Recognizing the importance of Catholic education, as a Vicariate, we need to find creative ways to support the financial needs of the Catholic Schools. We need to continue working with these schools for better integration in the pastoral and sacramental life of the parishes and look for ways to make the Pontiac Catholic Community an integral part of the dream.

III. Focus Areas with Action Plans/Scenarios

- I. **Sacramental Nature of the Vicariate:** Celebration of Sacraments, understanding of sacramentality, liturgical life and pastoral responses to the needs of the communities.
 - a. **Focus Area One: Responding to a reported significant decrease of "use" of Sacraments in established parishes in the last five years amidst increasing populations and knowing that the number of priests that will be assigned in the Pontiac Area Vicariate Parishes in the next three to five years will be two or more less than at the present time, as a Vicariate, we need to strengthen our understanding of the Gift of Sacraments as an essential component of our faith life in the Catholic Church, how Sacraments are the essential celebration of the different moments of the cycle of life and how the priests as a whole in the vicariate will service sacramentally the needs of all the parishes.**
 - i. **Action Plans:**
 1. **Adult Education:** In partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit contract the services of a qualified catechetical leader to develop during the 2005/2006 program year a Vicariate-wide curriculum/educational process around the topic of sacramentality to be approved by the Vicariate Catechetical Leaders for implementation in the following years in order to raise consciousness and deepen understanding of sacramentality and sacraments for all adults.

2. **Priests as Celebrants of Sacraments:** During the 2005/2006 program year the priests of the Vicariate will form a “study” group in order to address the issue of quality and needs of sacramental celebrations (learning from best practices) and to implement the recommendations of this group including meeting the sacramental needs requiring a priest and the sharing of priests throughout the vicariate, i.e. weekend Masses, reconciliation etc.
 3. **Priests as Pastors with Parish Administrators:** During the 2006/2007 program year the priests of the Vicariate along with the Vicariate Pastoral Council will form a study group to examine which parishes would best be clustered together in our vicariate and/or with parishes in surrounding vicariates that might be served liturgically by one pastor but served liturgically with support from other priests in the vicariate with the possibility of being administered by deacons and/or pastoral administrators.
- b. Focus Area Two: Responding to the demand for Sacraments from the Hispanic community, as Vicariate, we need to find ways of supporting the development of Hispanic ministry in all the parishes of the Vicariate.**
- i. **Action Plans:**
 1. **Gathering of Hispanic Catholics:** During 2005/2006 Program Year the Pontiac Catholic Community in partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit especially the Hispanic Ministry Liaisons for PAV will prepare a gathering to be celebrated sometime in the 2006/2007 Program Year of people of Hispanic origin from the Vicariate around a specific religious celebration in order to bring down barriers between the different parts of the Vicariate.
 2. **Liaison with Hispanic Ministry:** By the end of the 2005/2006 Program Year each parish and school in the vicariate will be asked to appoint “liaison” person (Spanish language required) to link the Hispanic ministry events with each parish and school community (information, invitation to participate, etc).
- c. Focus Area Three: We need to address the issue of growth in the Northern part of the Vicariate where the present available set-up is insufficient to respond to the sacramental and pastoral needs of a growing population, i.e. St. Joseph Parish in Lake Orion and St. Andrew Parish in Rochester.**
- i. **Action Plans:**
 1. **Case for a New Parish:** During the 2005/2006 program year the priests and staffs of St. Andrew Parish and St. Joseph Parish (Lake Orion) will work with the Vicar and the Vicariate Pastoral Council to prepare a case for establishing a new parish in the north end of the vicariate, which would include sections of both St. Andrew and St. Joseph Parishes and present the case to the Archdiocese of Detroit by Fall of 2006.
 2. **Vicariate Mass in Northern Part of the Vicariate:** the St. Joseph and Christ the Redeemer Pastors will study during the 2005/2006 Program Year the possibility of having a ‘vicariate’ scheduled Mass in the Northern part of the Vicariate to respond to needs of Lake Orion (St. Joseph and Christ the Redeemer) and elicit the support of the priests of the Vicariate to be Presiders.
- d. Focus Area Four: Responding to the decline of ordained ministers and to the current stand of the Church on who will be ordained and who can perform some sacramental functions, it is imperative that we as Church reevaluate the needs of the different communities and how we will respond to them. This is especially necessary in order to respond to the demands of hospitals and retirement homes for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.**
- i. **Action Plans:**
 1. **Vicariate approach to pastoral care:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year in partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit contract the services of a qualified

vicariate pastoral minister to establish a vicariate-wide, comprehensive, training program for pastoral ministers funded by the Archdiocese of Detroit and the Vicariate for implementation by 2006/2007 Program Year. Call upon existing resources to set up and facilitate the training which would be offered several times per year. Establish a Clearing House/Centralized Office to administer the pastoral needs of the vicariate. All calls for pastoral care would be directed to this office. Professional ministers would be “on call” and volunteers could be contacted as needed.

2. **Share with & Petition AOD:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year have the above mentioned contracted vicariate pastoral minister to prepare a report and share it with the AOD regarding the great need for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick at our four hospitals and many nursing/senior homes in the vicariate and formally request from AOD permission for deacons and/or pastoral ministers who minister to the sick and homebound in hospitals and retirement homes to administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

II. Strategic Nature of the Vicariate : ability of a community to be clear about its mission which includes service both to the Vicariate/Area Church communities as well as to the geographical communities.

- a. **Focus Area One: Recognizing that the notion of Area Church/Vicariate is weak, as a Vicariate, we need to (1) provide education, information and communication and (2) initiate dialogue among the communities regarding the needs of the Vicariate with special attention to the present needs of the Pontiac Catholic Community and the population growth in the northern part of the Vicariate.**

i. Action Plans:

1. **Communication:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year the *Together in Faith* Oversight Committee will prepare and publicize in a common format all relevant information gathered from the Parish/School/Agency/Institution Evaluation Inventories to create both an awareness and a felt need of the Area Church as Vicariate. This would be presented in the fall of 2005 at a joint meeting of the Vicariate Pastoral Council, Parish Council, School and Agency Boards and the Pastoral Ministers Association.
2. **Vicariate Mission Statement:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year the Vicariate Pastoral Council will review the Vicariate Mission Statement in light of the new information to reflect the needs and the goals of the Vicariate. This will be done by the VPC in cooperation with the Parish Councils as well as all the Pastoral Ministers' Association of the Vicariate.
3. **Create Awareness:** During the next five Program Years the Vicariate Pastoral Council will encourage an awareness of the Church as Vicariate/Area Church among the Clergy by asking priests to celebrate liturgies at different parishes and sharing their experiences with their communities.
4. **Create experiences:** During the 2006/2007 Program Years and beyond under the leadership of the Pastoral Ministers' Association create experiences around common project(s) at a Vicariate level based on the needs that have been identified through the PEI, SEI and AIEI's as well as around real needs of the community at large.

- b. **Focus Area Two: Recognizing the need to link one's faith life with the market place/every day living, as a Vicariate, we need to increase the development of Christian Services by coordinating the different activities of the parishes, especially in support of the creation of joint approaches to the needs of the social agencies located in Pontiac.**

i. Action Plans:

1. **Support CCRT:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year CCRT with a trained volunteer from each parish once a month:

- Each parish will identify one to twelve volunteers
 - Identify volunteers by September 30th, 2005
 - Establish a Training program for the volunteers (Who, What, Where, etc) by September 30th 2005
 - PMA CCRT Sub-Committee and CCRT director will oversee action plan
 - Both the PMA and the VPC will evaluate the action plan in June 2006
2. **Identification and Coordination of Christian Service activities:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year Christian Service coordinators/volunteers will devote time at PMA meetings to identify Christian Service activities at each parish:
- Will identify common programs/activities in each parish
 - Will encourage **joint** participation
 - Will get pastors' support
 - Will begin in Fall 2005
 - Will evaluate progress in June 2006 by PMA
 - Will identify lead responsibility (coordinators of Christian Service will identify the person responsible for making sure this activity happens) by June 2005.
- c. **Focus Area Three: Recognizing the “graying” of the Church, as Vicariate/Area Church, we need not only to support existing programs and increase the coordination among the parishes, schools, agencies and institutions for the development of programs, but we need imagination to find ways to involve and engage youth, young adults and young families in the life of the parish communities and the life of the Vicariate.**

i. Action Plans:

1. **Inventory and Sharing:** Under the supervision of the Vicariate Youth/Young Adult Focus Group and in partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit contract the service of a part time minister who will:
- **Work with each Parish and School, individually, to inventory their youth, young adult and young family programs** including how each parish welcomes, trains and engages its youth/young adults in all of the Worship Ministries/Activities and share with the Area Church what they are doing, by December 2005.
 - **Study** the conditions (number, workload, compensation) of youth ministers in the Vicariate and make appropriate changes by March 2006 (contract renewal)
 - **Coordinate** during the 2006/2007 Program Year from inventory of action 1, the PMA Youth/Young Adult Focus Group to find means to network and link programs and people and resources, involving the Parishes, Catholic Schools and Agencies/Institutions of the Vicariate.

III. **Sustainable Nature of Vicariate:** ability of a community to sustain itself from a financial and human resources point of view so we can continue and grow in the future.

a. **Focus Area One: Recognizing the relatively low participation in the stewardship process, as a Vicariate, we need to engage in a coordinated and structured Vicariate-wide education program of all the components of stewardship – time, talent and treasure – as an essential element of a faith response to the call of the Gospel.**

i. Action Plans:

1. **Communication:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year under the supervision of the Vicariate Web Master and/or Vicariate Vision 2000 AA create a “Vicariate letter” (3-4 times a year) whose purpose would be to share information regarding each of the communities in the Vicariate. Type of information to be shared:
- Financial information (with special emphasis on needs)

- Demographics
- Description of different ministries, underlining “success stories”, best practices
- Vicariate-wide needs (financial as well as needs for volunteers)

2. Education around Stewardship:

- During the 2005/2007 Program Years the parish/school/ agency /institution Pastoral Ministers and Business Managers Focus Group with the help of the AOD Development Department will contract the services of a qualified Pastoral Minister/Business Manager for the Vicariate who will:
 - i. study what other dioceses and other faiths are doing to spread the concept of stewardship to their communities (look at success stories)
 - ii. establish a “Vicariate Day” of stewardship: a specific Weekend would be chosen and every parish would preach and invite parishioners to “sign up” for commitment of time, talent and treasure. This would be done by reemphasizing both the tradition of service of the Church as well as communication of explicit needs – both at the Parish and Vicariate levels.
 - iii. **Sharing our successes through “best practices” study:** establish a study on “best practices” regarding financial management, recruitment and formation of volunteers, recruitment and formation of pastoral ministers. Adopt best practices when and where it makes sense and provide better service to the communities.
 - iv. Help train parish, school, agency and institution Business Managers for their roles as ministers within the church setting.

b. Focus Area Two: Recognizing the present (and future) situation regarding the lack of ordained ministers as well as the burden put on existing priests, as a Vicariate, we need to continue questioning the present stand of the Church regarding ordained ministry including the role of the permanent diaconate, and undertake a Vicariate-wide effort for engaging and developing lay women and men ministers to support all sacramental and pastoral activities in our communities.

i. Action Plans:

1. **Coordination of Programs:** During the 2005/2006 Program year the Part Time Minister (Cf. Strategic Focus Area 3) under the supervision of the Youth/Young Adult Focus Group:
 - Coordinate at the Vicariate level the two programs for call to Ministry (“Try It On” and “Mission Possible”).
 - **Lay Ministry:** Coordinate at the Vicariate level a specific program for lay ministry with the following components:
 - i. Invitation. Affirmation and selection process
 - ii. Available education programs and possible assistance with tuition
 - iii. Compensation which is just and attractive
 - iv. Creation of a “satellite” for education in/near the Vicariate for seminary-based courses for lay ministry students and exploration of available on-line courses”.
2. **Role of Deacons:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year Vicariate Pastoral Council will invite our Permanent Deacons in the Vicariate in partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit to study and redefine at the Vicariate level the role of deacons with petition to AOD for extending their role regarding administration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in hospitals and retirement homes.

c. Focus Area Three: Recognizing the importance of Catholic education, as a Vicariate, we need to find creative ways to support the financial needs of the Catholic Schools. We need to

continue working with these schools for better integration in the pastoral and sacramental life of the parishes and look for ways to make the Pontiac Catholic Community an integral part of the dream.

i. Action Plans:

1. **Coordination of youth ministry with schools:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year the Vicariate Pastoral Council will challenge youth ministers and all the Vicariate Catholic Schools to work together to create/coordinate meaningful activities for youth and utilize volunteers from the parishes to work with them.
 2. **Development activities:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year the Vicariate Pastoral Council will engage parishioners with “development” experience to support Vicariate Catholic Schools by providing counsels and time to raise money for the schools.
 3. **Study of Marist Academy, St. Benedict Campus:** During the 2005/2006 Program Year the Vicariate Pastoral Council in partnership with the Archdiocese of Detroit will work with the Marist Fathers and Brothers to help meet the needs of the Pontiac Catholic Community, especially the Hispanic and African-American community, through providing elementary school seats and scholarships at Marist Academy, St. Benedict Campus, Waterford, MI.".
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Submitted by the Pastoral Council of the Pontiac Area Vicariate, Area Church:

Signed by:

Art Seidler, Chair

Rev. Jerome A. Brzezinski, Vicar

Date: _____

We stand before you, Holy Spirit conscious of our sinfulness, but aware that we gather in your name. Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts. Give us light and strength to know your will, to make it our own, and to live it in our lives. You desire justice for all; enable us to uphold the rights of others; do not allow us to be misled by ignorance or corrupted by fear or favor. Unite us to yourself in the bond of love, and keep us faithful



to all that is true. As we gather in your name may we temper justice with love, so that all our reflections and discussions may be pleasing to you, and earn the reward promised to good and faithful servants. Guide us by your wisdom, support us by your power, for you are God, sharing the glory of Father and Son, one God, for ever and ever. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen