

## Talking Points for the Road to Renewal for Pastors/Administrators

### When did the Road to Renewal begin?

The Road to Renewal began when Bishop Scharfenberger called a committee together to begin looking at how to help our Diocese move forward amidst present challenges, and respond to the COVID pandemic.

### What are the objectives of the Renewal?

1. Strengthening our parishes for ministry. We must recognize that the People of God are the Church and that our parishes are the place where the people encounter Jesus.
2. Foster an encounter with Jesus in the sacraments! Every family of parishes needs to be a center of prayer, spiritual nourishment and a safe place to encounter Jesus.
3. Respond in love to the brokenness of the world, caring for the poor, vulnerable and wounded.
4. Develop a model of continuing formation of clergy and laity to help the church respond to the signs of the times.
5. Demonstrate fiscal responsibility of the gifts that have been entrusted to us as parishes and as a Diocese, making sure we are prudent stewards.

### What is a Family of Parishes?

A family of parishes will be a grouping of parishes that come together to form a family. Each family will contain 3 – 6 parishes that will make up their family.

### What are the advantages of the Diocese moving into the Family of Parishes model?

1. We recognize that each parish has gifts and talents that can benefit other parishes. This model allows parishes to bring their best to the family, so all parishes in the family can benefit.
2. Collaboration between parishes is important for a strong future. This model allows for a collaborative approach between parishes and ministries. Parishes can work together towards a common goal.
3. Priestly ministry becomes shared within the family. With the declining number of priests available, this model has parishes collaborate by sharing mass schedules and sacramental life. This means priests can focus their attention on sacramental ministry, working more closely with their brothers within the family of parishes.
4. Better utilization of financial resources. With parishes working together in a family, shared staff and resources will contribute to financial stability and savings.

### Will parishes close?

The goal of families of parishes is to strengthen parishes! There is no plan to close parishes.

### Will all of our money be taken by the 'family'?

Each parish will maintain its own identity. Therefore, each parish will still have its own name, trustees, finance council, etc. so that it can function. The assets and liabilities of a parish are the responsibility of that parish. There will not be a pooling of assets or liabilities within a family.

## **It seems like everything is decided, where is our input?**

This process began in August of 2020. During the months of September through November people were invited to participate in discussion sessions through zoom meetings, surveys, email, phone calls. In this broad consultation process, over 2,000 people responded to questions that were forming our renewal.

The Renewal Task Force that led all of this consultation compiled all of the input and made a draft recommendation to Bishop Michael Fisher upon his appointment on how to move the Renewal forward in the Diocese of Buffalo.

Consultation continues to happen! All of the priests, deacons and lay leaders have had meetings about the Renewal in which information was shared, conversations were had and questions were asked. All of this consultation is helping to shape the rollout of the Renewal.

Consultation will continue to happen! As we move forward with the Renewal, the consultation and input phase at the parish levels is just beginning! The framework of the Renewal is shaping where we begin. The consultation of how to implement the draft proposal is the 'on the ground' work that now begins to take place in our parishes. The parishes and parishioners will be invited to come together to learn more about the Renewal, and how their parish can be strengthened by this process. Parishes will also decide what gifts and strengths they can bring to the new family, and learn where they need to grow as well.

Something must be done to revitalize our church! We are not alone in this. After consultation from other Diocese across our country, and even internationally, the Renewal and Family of Parishes is the model many other diocese are using to respond to the changing needs of the Church, while it might be called by a different name, the model we are embracing is the same. Your input and help are going to continue to be essential to make the Renewal a success!

## **Are all parishes participating in the Renewal?**

YES! This is a Diocesan initiative that is responding to the needs of our local church. All of our parishes are part of the larger church and all of us can strengthen one another which can strengthen our Diocesan church. We are many parts, but we must remember that we are all members of the one body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12: 12- 27) '... so there may be no division in the body, but that the parts have the same concern for one another. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.'

## **When will we know who is in our family?**

The plan is to release the draft families in July. When the draft families are released, then parishes will have an opportunity to give feedback on their family and if changes need to be made.

## **Are families decided and final?**

The families that will be announced have been put together with much input from the task force with the consultation that was shared. The families themselves are not final, but these are recommended configurations of parishes that were believed to be a best fit for one another in a family. Again, when the draft families are released, there is an opportunity for feedback and an opportunity to change families if needed.

## **How do I learn more?**

Go to [www.roadtorenewal.org](http://www.roadtorenewal.org) to stay up to date with the latest on the Road to Renewal! Please pray for the Renewal and encourage your parish to spend time in prayer for the Renewal.