



Genesis Vicariate Pastoral Council

TO SHARE CHRIST IN AND THROUGH THE URBAN CHURCH

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MARCH 28 2011 MEETING MINUTES

Genesis Vicariate Pastoral Council
"Together In Faith" Phase II Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Blessed Sacrament Cathedral

AGENDA:

1. **Opening Prayer**
2. **Meeting Overview**
3. **Planning Questions Discussion**
4. **Wrap-up**

Msgr. LeFevre opened the meeting at 6:30 pm with a prayer.

MEETING OVERVIEW

When the council met two weeks ago, they didn't get to answer questions 4, 5 & 6 of the TIF Planning Questions. Those are the questions we'll be reviewing and discussing this evening.

Msgr. LeFevre asked what information has been communicated to the group. The secretary stated which files have been sent by email and that the ones that are not confidential are available on the Genesis Vicariate website (www.GenesisVPC.org) on the TIF Planning page.

As we move forward the data is going to get very intricate and the information will directly relate to each individual parish. Msgr. LeFevre noted that if you don't have access to a computer please you let your parish secretary know, as they should be able to get the emails to you before the VPC meetings.

A council member requested that the emails entail whether the files sent should be printed off and how important they are. Msgr. LeFevre stated that you may want to get with other members to share the information and asked "How do you share this with other parishioners?" It is very important that the information is disseminated to and discussed among parishioners. He suggested that your parish council talk directly to them. Larger communities have a harder time speaking with parishioners individually and that you need to make sure the community knows what's going on at these meetings. You need to make sure the community is engaged. You can use the communication flow chart provided to the members and put it up where people can see it and ask questions.

The internal data comes from vital parish statistics turned into the Archdiocese (PEI's, Sacramental Statistics, etc.). All data is collected nationally and includes how many Catholics there are in the Archdiocese, priests, deacons, etc. Pastors are supposed to send in this information every year. The AOD is main source for this information that also includes budget and statistical information for each year, the number of weddings, funerals, etc. They can only give back what they receive. The computer generates the numbers and some information may not be accurate.

The good news is that they're trying to get more accurate statistics. ParishSoft is the new program the parishes are using to trying to fix this problem. The software can look into statistical data at any time. As the internal data comes in the representatives will want to put their parish's accurate numbers on it and not quibble on stats.

PLANNING QUESTIONS DISCUSSION

The council met as one group instead of breaking into "City" and "Polonia" parish groups. They first worked as parishes, then as a group. The questions being discussed deal with schools (in our case St.

Bart's school). Msgr. LeFevre reminded the group that it is our school, even if your parish is not located close to it.

We need to be aware of the other parish's services so we're not duplicating them. In the case of clustered parishes, this may be more difficult to do.

Question 4: "What percentage of the population was 65 and over in 2005 and how is that projected to change by 2035 in each parish? What types of services or ministries do the parishes provide for seniors? Is this currently an area of collaboration among parishes and how or could it be in the future?"

Blessed Sacrament: In 2005 the age 65 and over population was .2% and is projected to change by 29.9% by 2035. The ministries/services provided are: parishioners visit the homebound and sick and are supported in this by the seminary. They're clustered with Madonna who has a senior's group, although it's not that well known yet. They need to collaborate and work with cluster partners to better provide services for seniors.

Queen of Heaven: The percentage, increasing by 48%, is pretty significant. They have a Tuesday card playing & food social group, food pantry and the St. Anne Society (like an Altar society) that helps out with the homebound in the community. They provide seniors with transportation and have people who are trying to help, but are becoming fewer as the parish senior numbers rise. It's always the same people helping; they need new, younger people to help with their efforts. There's also an outing once a quarter from proceeds from a 50/50 drawing held there.

OLGC – St. Raymond: The numbers of seniors are increasing at a great rate. OLGC has senior lunches, a food program, "grandparents help", religious education classes and a parish nurse at both locations. St. Raymond has quite a few dinners that the local seniors attend. They also have an altar society, St. Vincent DePaul thrift store, senior quilters, adult Bible study and adult religious education classes. There is a tremendous amount of collaboration between both parishes.

Queen of Apostles: In 2005 the numbers were 1331; in 2010, 1352; it's expected to climb to 1870 by 2035 – a 38% increase. They have an active weekly seniors group, bingo for women (men play cards) with lunch, holiday dinners and monthly coffee and cake (offered through Christian Service group) in the activities center (both to seniors and general parishioners). St. Florian's Westiarki order of Sisters do home visitation – they visit the elderly, homebound and sick and run errands for them, get prescriptions filled, drive them to doctor appointments, keep them company, do light cleaning and keep them attuned as to what's happening in the parish. Christian service has a 'lifeline service' where seniors can be scanned for blood pressure and receive stroke awareness training. They have monthly coffee & cake after Mass. Fr. Bogdan does visitation on First Fridays and also visits the St. Joseph Nursing Center; he hears confession and gives communion. They do visitation at St. Joseph's Home, give seniors the Sacraments & say Mass. Currently, there is no collaboration of services for seniors (outside of Westiarki services), but definitely is an avenue to pursue.

Msgr. LeFevre noted that there are those who volunteered to visit the sick and those in nursing homes. The list of establishments isn't that good and they're going to see what nursing homes are being missed.

St. Hyacinth: The population of seniors is 65% (actual number +41%). Most parishioners are not from the neighborhood. They have 225 registered households in the parish; their number is more accurate than what the charts reflect. The numbers signal that the neighborhood growing and improving. They may pull in more young people with the change. Hamtramck is fixing up the streets with few homes, attracting more student and the neighborhoods are improving monthly. Deserted homes are being cleaned up. They need to do something that's going to affect the neighborhood, possibly new programming. They provide hospital visits, house calls and a church pantry where all requests are responded to. Monthly senior Masses with Benediction are on First Fridays of the month.

St. Bart-St. Rita: They're experiencing a loss in the over 65 population (actual number: +13%). Currently there are no specific programs for seniors; all of their programs are for everyone, but seniors are the majority of the people that take part. They have Bingo, a flea market, St. Dominic Food Bank; future programs could be health fairs, but they're not big enough to do alone, they'll need to collaborate with other parishes.

St. Louis the King: They're not sure of the percentage of seniors (+16%). Services provided are: Tuesday socials where people play cards and have a luncheon – right now all parishioners can attend, but they don't meet in winter months – they'll start again in April. They have cake and coffee after Mass. Fr. Krol visits the sick & seniors. They've recently brought in 3 new families. They've been attracting more Mexican-American families and find it's changing from senior crowd to a family crowd.

St. Benedict: A 77% increase (updated w/actual number) will double the number of seniors. They have a food pantry on Mondays, holiday baskets, Communion and Sunday meal for the homeless. They have a lot of things they'd like to do, such as having the 'baby boomers' come in. St. Vincent DePaul does information and referrals to Meals-on-Wheels, DHS services. They need collaboration with other parishes and would like to get together with other religious communities. They'd also like to establish food, friendship and telephone companionship, which would uplift seniors and bring life into their homes.

Msgr. LeFevre noted that in Changing Lives program, they've developed a team of people to do calls. They could be the 'companion callers'. No one likes cold calls, but they've had great feedback and results. Possibly could help gather a team together for the senior calling bank and spread out the list.

St. Lads: There's no hard data regarding membership. (Projected senior population: increase over 150%). Speaking from regular Mass attendance, the English language Mass attendants are mostly over 65; the Polish language attendants is about 60% seniors. The Polish parishioners are not all registered members of the parish. The data is different and a challenge to overcome. Their senior group has about 125 members that get together twice a month, not all that come are parish members. Their soup kitchen, the only one left in Hamtramck, is open every Thursday from 4-5:30 pm.

St. Gregory: Their seniors are passing away and they're losing members. They don't have many senior programs, they just installed new parish council and are implementing new ideas. They had a van and used to supply transportation for those who couldn't get to Mass. Parish members now pickup people and bring them to Mass. They have a fellowship program after Mass that involves everyone, not just seniors. Sometimes the Altar Society provides soup. They have a '50/50 club' (for people 50 and over) with Madonna & St. Gregory that attends musicals, goes to Canada and the casinos. If they don't go out they have a potluck lunch at Madonna. There's over 50 people in the group, they meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. They'd like to have a phone call chain for people who are sick and the deceased (to pass on funeral information).

Msgr. LeFevre suggested they get ideas from Madonna's phone system.

Madonna: Has the over 50 group with St. Gregory. They're experiencing a decrease in population. The projected number of seniors will be much greater. They have Bible study on Wednesday mornings, they sponsor trips and need to do better – possibly collaborate with cluster parishes to improve participation. Although fliers are sent out, not all put in the bulletin. They'll be starting bingo in May and have a food pantry that gives out care bags twice a month.

In a larger context, Hamtramck needs centralized senior services; safety classes and First Alerts at a discount. This can filter back into the community, they can all benefit from the knowledge. Possibly bring in people that know about geriatrics.

Question 5: "What is the percentage of change in school-age population for 2005 and 2010 and the projections for 2035? Has this change been reflected in religious education classes? Youth Ministry

activities? How have the parishes addressed this change? What plans can be made for the future? What does this mean for the general life of the parishes?"

Blessed Sacrament: The stats show the number will be reducing by 28.8%. They're trying to get youth more active in the parish. Sunday's there's a youth liturgy after Mass and they have different activities with them. The attendance seems to grow; people bring their family and neighbors, the kids really enjoy it. They've increased the number of altar servers, young choir members and readers. They have a vacation Bible school with their cluster partners and rotate between schools. They get about 60 kids with more every year. They involve the teens and give them responsibilities. They have a parish picnic, children's activity weekend. The children made posters for the "Charting the Course" program and on Sunday they had their Mass. They had special seating and shadowed the ushers.

Donna said the people involved want to continue it, they're looking at doing it monthly. Msgr. LeFevre noted that it's a great opportunity to gather the children, it helps seniors and others see there are young people involved in the parish.

St. Bart- St. Rita: The number is dropping by 20%. They're trying to get young altar servers. The school is bringing in more youth with the dropping of tuition, grants and collaboration with the school. They're trying to get more parishioners in the church to bring in more youth. They currently don't have a lot of youth activities in the parish. The school has a lot of functions and fundraising programs. They'd like to get the youth involved with the church; they can plant gardens and help to do cleanup in the spring.

Queen of Heaven: The statistics project a 14.9% reduction (overall projected loss -60%). Their 'Kids for Christ' program has 27 kids. Parents that went to school there have their children involved in the program; they'd like to reach out to other parishioners to increase this number. They're trying to evangelize 420+ current students and hope they can continue to function in the future and increase their numbers. They currently do not offer religious ed classes. Fr. Tom Puzio has reached out to Dove Academy and they held an event for Black History month in February.

OLGC-St. Raymond: The stats show their numbers will decrease (total projected loss through 2035 - St. Raymond: -72%; OLGC: -64%) They don't have a large youth program. They have DRE's working with the Hmong children on Sundays; St. Raymond has a teen youth group that is growing. They're talking about hiring a young coordinator to get the youth involved. They'd like to collaborate with community leaders in the neighborhood that use their building. They have music, a legal clinic and cooking program for kids and they give them a small cash bonus. OLGC is focusing on a green initiative through collaboration with a local person. The legal program, a pilot program established at St. Raymond, teaches youth about the law and what their rights are. They must register to take part and complete a certain number of weeks in the program.

Queen of Apostles: Their youth may be decreasing 22.9% by 2035 (actual projected number 50%). Like other parishes, they've had a loss of young people when their school closed. They rely on religious education for their youth activity. It stabilized at 55-60 kids per year and they draw from all of the Hamtramck parishes and the suburbs. The participants became acquainted with the program when they lived in the area and they bring kids back for it. There was a Confirmation class of 22 high school-aged children; one of the larger classes they've had. Once they've been confirmed, you don't see them much. There's 6000 Catholics in the area, but this number is not reflected in parish attendance numbers. They have no youth ministry at this time, it's difficult because the children don't come to Church except for Communion; they're bringing kids in for Baptism at 8-9 years old. They'd like to make Confirmation a 2-year program so they can work with them longer to give them a greater understanding of the faith. They still have some youth (HS aged) and young adults that remain serving the parish as either altar servers or Catechism teachers. They also collaborate with the Polish scouting organization that uses the parish grounds for meetings/gatherings and they come to various Masses throughout the year.

St. Hyacinth: The statistics show not much of a change in the school-age population (actual projection:

-28%). They cater to the youth by ministering to them with marriage preparation and training sessions for altar servers; they plan to continue these programs. Usually young people that are married there return. Their school is closed, but kids come with parents to church and get involved with the choir. The kids help with spring cleanup. They have a 'Bunny Breakfast' on Palm Sunday and the kids really enjoy it. Seeing young people in the church is a good sign.

St. Louis the King: Some children are altar servers, but there are not a lot of them in the pews. They're training new altar servers and welcome children to join the choir, but there's not a lot of encouragement to do that. The ones that come aren't that involved, there are not a lot of programs to reach out to them.

St. Lads: Their last religious ed class was in 2005, they had 45 students. They've consolidated with other parishes, Q of A and St. Florian. 2005 was the last 1st Communion class, there's only been one child since. There haven't been any Confirmations there since 2005. The high school closed in 1982. The parents supplement children going to Catholic schools. Last year was the first there was no tuition assistance provided. Most parishioners are Polish-speaking. When children reach school-age, the parents move out of the parish are due to lack a of quality education in the area. They need improved education options.

A representative noted that there are still schools in Hamtramck that provide a good education.

Trans-OLHC: They have a handful of young people and are getting more, which is a good sign. They have young altar servers. 2-3 young lectors and 3 young men that joined the ushers club. They send children to Q of A for religious ed. Looking around the parish, they have some younger women expecting children and see the parish growing. People recently married in the church come to Mass every Sunday.

Msgr. LeFevre mentioned that we will see these numbers in the internal data at future meetings.

St. Benedict: They have no youth on a regular basis. Those that need religious education get it through their cluster parishes. They have no youth ministry, but have youth groups in the city. They use the rectory for a home base and students come from all over the US and other countries, they feel blessed to have them for a short while. They do work painting, etc. There's permanent residence in the rectory for college students.

St. Gregory: They have a core group they're proud of. As the data will show, their numbers are dropping like most other parishes. They've just started religious education classes and every 4th Sunday is Youth Sunday where the kids are in the choir and act as lectors, ushers, etc. They have Bible Study on Sundays and collaborate with the Boy Scouts who have their meetings at their facility which can be a good recruitment tool to grow. They send kids to Rainbow and are active in Bible School. They have an 'Easter Egg' celebration every year. They'd like to lock in an upcoming weekend spiritual retreat. Others are involved as well. They host a Halloween celebration for the young in the parish and youth in the community.

Msgr. LeFevre noted that St. Greg's had the most formalized religious ed program and that there's a long history there.

Madonna: Their numbers go against the data; they believe the number of youth is increasing; they're getting more young people between the ages of 1-16. They're blessed with a great youth minister and a vibrant group. They need to recruit more young people and reach out to older youth to retain them. They have young lectors once a month as well as ushers and altar servers. They participate in Meals-on-Wheels. They can rely on the youth for cleaning up the parish grounds; they're always chipping in to help. They're trying to get the youth to be involved on a regular basis and bring their friends in. The challenge is youth retention.

Msgr. LeFevre stated that they have the CDC in their gym and the people funding it are from the Baptist mega-churches. They're in our neighborhood and definitely making an impact. We have those types of

parishes in Novi, etc. and we might be able to learn from their model. All parishes have a youth minister, Joi Hunter, and all parishes pay her salary. Her whole focus is young adults – college-age to 35. She's very talented and very accessible.

Question 6: "If there is a school within the planning group, how do these external data affect plans for the school(s)? Does the school planning affected the parish planning efforts and how? Where do Catholic children currently attend school within the planning group area (refer to maps)."

Msgr. LeFevre noted that Transfiguration-OLHC is in the "king of clusters" and are a good model for other parishes.

Trans-OLHC: They used to give grants to students, \$300 each for high school, but they haven't in the last couple of years. They have a group that is renting 2 rooms in the school building.

St. Lads: They've been giving grants since 1982. In 1992 they expanded the program to include those who were sent to Catholic Grade school, until last year. They're fortunate to have Hamtramck Public Schools renting their school building until the end of this year, at which time the school will be available. They've been in discussion with clustered members and were blindsided when the school closings left Hamtramck without Catholic schools. There is a need for a Catholic school in the area. The parishioners sending their children to St. Anne and St. Clement moved to those areas. Without a school you're not going to retain children and religious education is not the same thing.

St. Louis the King: They currently provide no school support and have no charter school.

St. Benedict: St. Bart's school is in the area; as Catholics we need to support it by advertising so people know about the school before sending children outside of the city. They're unique because they have Northpointe Charter School which is owned by the City of Highland Park.

St. Gregory: They have someone renting their school and do get some support from tuition.

Msgr. LeFevre stated that St. Gregory and Madonna have the same school renting their buildings; older children are at St. Gregory and they're a ½ mile from each other. St. Gregory's needed \$100K work of work, so they took hit on the monthly income and the charter used the money to fix the building. They replaced the parking lot and rebuilt the exterior. The renters re-upped for 5 years and if they can get the gym together, it would help tremendously.

One question we need to look at is "how can we get children to a Catholic school? How can we transport them?"

In response to a question about tuition, the St. Bart rep stated it is \$2200/yr.

Madonna: They have no information; they're going to go back to the parish council to gather data.

St. Bart-St. Rita: They have the only Catholic school in the vicariate. There is a lot of need. They have 88 students with 10% Catholic and 4½% non- African-American. They provided this data for those who said they don't want to send their children to a non-white, non-Catholic school. Tuition was \$3200 last year, they hope they can get it down to \$1800-\$1500 so they can bring the number of students up. They have a Martin Luther King parade, graduation fundraising events and fellowship. At Thanksgiving they gave out 12 baskets and filled Msgr. LeFevre's trunk 3 times with food. The children attend Mass once monthly and they're working on getting them involved in the Mass. We need to work on the question of how many young people there will be in 2035. If we don't work on that question, the end is coming pretty soon for all. We need to appeal to all that know children to send them to St. Bart. They have a lot of good things going on. They won the basketball tournament a couple of years ago. They're trying to tell people "yes, there is a Catholic school in Detroit." They like the ideas Msgr. LeFevre's talking about such

as assisting with transportation, most children are dropped off by parents. The school also has a kindergarten.

A representative asked if all St. Bart's children receive a Catholic education. Each classroom has Bible study, Mass is said twice a month and all the children attend, which is diocesan policy. By signing them up for Catholic school, you're signing them up for Catholic education.

St. Hyacinth: Like other parishes, their school was closed in 1990. They had to close because of declining enrollment. They have a school building which is used for parish activities such as class reunions, their Banana Festival and flea market. It is also used as storage. They cater to young people and have had an annual blessing of the Polish Dance Groups for 9-10 years. About 100 dancers come to the Mass; it's very colorful and continues yearly. They're hoping they can collaborate and borrow youth to help set up decorations then serve them a luncheon.

Queen of Apostles: Their school closed in 2002, they lease the building to National Heritage Charter School and they're negotiating an expansion. There's just over 500 students in the school and they'd like to have 700. There's youth in the area, but the large majority are Islamic. When the school closed, a handful of children stayed at the academy and are ready to graduate from 8th grade. They're giving 15% of their charter school income to the AOD, 5% of which is focused to St. Bart's. They give grants for children to go outside Hamtramck to St. Clement, St. Dennis and St. Anne, but the program has just about run out. Even with the school in proximity, the Islamic haven't really had a close relationship with the Catholics. They've used the church for their programs and there may be an opportunity to open a dialogue with them.

Msgr. LeFevre noted that the 5% given to St. Bart's school is \$1.3 Million. There's a 'Stewards of Tomorrow' program; St. Bart should be a recipient of some of that money.

St. Raymond-OLGC: OLGC sold their school to DPS and it's now empty. St. Raymond has charter school that is rented to DPS, which is now an African-based school. They give their 15% to OLGC to educate Hmong children. They used to help with grants for tuition to St. Clement.

Queen of Heaven: Their grade school closed in 1989-90. Shortly after that, they rented it to DPS (until 1999). In 2000 they were approached by Dove Academy who has the current lease until at least July 2011; they're in the process of renegotiation. The school currently has 424 students; there are no Catholic students. When the school signs on will they will become a participant of 15% program (for parishes with charter schools). They had a weekend program where kids from the neighborhood came in. They need to look at insurance costs, etc., to bring the school children in there too. Efforts are being made to advance participation between Dove & Queen of Heaven. They have made every effort to make all students welcome.

Blessed Sacrament: They give 15% support. They have no school, it is closed. At one time the gym was open to the neighborhood, but the man that ran the program passed on. They do have kids using the gym now. The rep stated that we need the support of all on the East side to send their children there; they need transportation and evangelization. The greatest population is in the charter and public schools and we may need to draw from non-Catholics.

WRAP-UP

Msgr. LeFevre thanked everyone for their insights.

The next meeting will be on April 11th and the council will be discussing the first 5 questions on internal data. By next weekend if you don't have access to the data, please go to the website, www.GenesisVPC.org. You can also go to <http://www.mediafire.com/?1nygmc7md3cwd> for Group 1 parishes; <http://www.mediafire.com/?1nygmc7md3cwd> for Group 2 parishes.