



# Genesis Vicariate Pastoral Council

TO SHARE CHRIST IN AND THROUGH THE URBAN CHURCH

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## OCTOBER 10, 2011 GROUP 2 ("POLONIA") MEETING MINUTES

Genesis Vicariate Pastoral Council  
"Together In Faith" Phase II Meeting  
6:30 p.m.  
Blessed Sacrament Cathedral  
Recorded & Transcribed by Stan Bloch

1. **Opening Prayer – Meeting Introduction**
2. **Group Discussion of Questions 4 & 5**
3. **Meeting Wrap-up**

### OPENING PRAYER – MEETING INTRODUCTION

Alton James, Archdiocesan representative, opened the meeting at 6:17 pm with a prayer and peace was shared among the members.

He shared with the group a sample of what the final plan should be crafted like and distributed copies to the group. For each one of the 6 pastoral plans that the APC put out, this is the form in which you will need to respond. It should contain a planning group response, a simple vision statement, definition of pastoral plan in which you're speaking of (evangelical, stewardship, youth/young adults, etc.), who the planning group is made up of, activities that you plan to do, plans you're going to make and when they'll take effect. These don't need to be 'set in stone'; although you do need to attach a reasonable date to start a plan so it gives you focus and you don't lose sight of it. If you know you can't do something by a certain date, give a date you're going to start the major discussion and when it's going to be executed; if it is a far-ranging item, you'll need to set some anchors in the ground; you do not have to be able to give every detail of the plan.

There will be one plan for each planning group in our vicariate (Group 1 = 'City' group / Group 2 = 'Polonia' group). There will be an opportunity for you to look at specific things in the APC plan and to critique some of them. For instance, a lot of what we find is there's not a lot of 'social justice' components so you may want to say that in your response and then cite what you're doing. An example is one vicariate talked about the possibility of doing a gun 'buy-back' program sponsored by the Archdiocese of Detroit; this could be an Archdiocesan-wide program, it doesn't have to be limited to a region or vicariate. It probably has about a 2-year time frame, as it's something that's going to take time to do, but at least they have a stake in the ground and this gives them a goal. You do need to make sure it answers all questions of what you're planning to do, how you're going to do it and in what time frame it will take place.

The plans we come up with (some are starting to surface) will need to always take into consideration the Basic Assumptions. While there may be provisions in Canon law, understand it always defers to the local ordinary to implement, or to make the call, or to have the final say. We need to keep in touch with the basic assumptions and make sure that the plans we create don't over step that. When the plan is presented and it violates a basic assumption, it will probably not be approved in full. There are some plans currently going in that direction.

### GROUP DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONS 4 & 5

**QUESTION 4:** *What recommendations can be made about future cluster mergers or different parish configurations? Which ones and when? How would these increase our growth activities identified through the initial reflection process?*

**Group 2 Recommendation "A"** - St. Ladislaus, Trans-OLHC, and St Louis the King have merged to one parish.

**APC Response to "A":** "Great collaboration".

**Group 2 Recommendation "B"** - Queen of Apostles and St. Hyacinth will not identify a formal cluster partnership, but will collaborate with each other until issues such as pastor reassignment; death; serious illness; etc. are reached.

**APC Response to Recommendation "B":** "In what areas are they working together? You need firm plans for the future and need to make a firm recommendation for implementation of the plan. Who will develop the plan?"

**Planning Group Response to APC's Questions:** Upon the reassignment, death or serious illness of one of our pastors; Queen of Apostles and St. Hyacinth will cluster.

**Group 2 Recommendation "C"** – The planning group is concerned about St. Florian's growing debt. The remaining parishes in the planning group are without debt and have the ability to maintain individual parish status. Recommendations from the planning group regarding St. Florian include:

- Upon the Society of Christ order vacating the parish, the church would operate as a 'mission church' for Our Lady of Czestochowa in Sterling Heights, or they would have to close and all parish properties would be sold to reduce or pay the debt owed to the Archdiocese.
- If the order leaves and the parish is debt-free; the remaining parishes collaborating in Group 2 would be open to clustering discussions.

**APC Response to Recommendation "C":** "Has the Society of Christ and Our Lady of Czestochowa agreed to this plan? Is there a plan to pay down or pay off the debt?"

**Planning Group Response to APC's Questions:** Because there has been a complete lack of participation on the part of St. Florian in the TIF process, because there's a lack of transparency revolving around their growing \$1.8 Million debt and any plan that may exist between St. Florian and the AOD to pay it down; the remaining parishes in Planning Group 2 are **deeply** concerned about this issue.

*The Planning Group recommends:*

- St. Florian is to develop a plan to pay off their \$1.8 Million debt with the AOD.
- If the Society of Christ order should leave St. Florian for any reason whatsoever, either:
  - St. Florian would then become a 'mission church' for Our Lady of Czestochowa in Sterling Heights
  - St. Florian would close and all parish properties be sold to reduce or pay off their debt to the Archdiocese
  - If the parish is debt-free, the remaining collaborating parishes in Group 2 would be open to cluster discussions.

**Group 2 Recommendation "D"** – Parishes will collaborate on coordination of Mass schedules.

**APC Response to Recommendation "D":** "What is the purpose of coordination if there are no plans to cluster or merge? How does this deal with the possible priest shortage?"

**Planning Group Response to APC's Questions:** St. Ladislaus, Trans-OLCH and St. Louis the King have technically merged as of July 1, 2011. Prior to the merger OLCH permanently closed and the parish property was sold.

That leaves St. Florian, St. Hyacinth and Queen of Apostles. St. Florian chooses to stand apart and not participate whatsoever in the TIF process. Why is this? St. Hyacinth and Queen of Apostles have agreed to collaborate and cluster; it is within their collaboration that the issue of Mass schedules will be addressed.

BUT, to survive at a Mass schedule that is fair and equitable, ALL of the Group 2 parishes must work together on a new Mass schedule.

**QUESTION 5:** "Could parishes within the planning group combine financial and administrative activities to result in a merged parish with possibly one or more worship sites? Which ones? How would this increase the activities identified through the initial reflection process?"

**Group 2 Recommendation "A"** – In essence we could, but only if all the parishes in the planning group were to combine and assume the debt of St. Florian. The existing church buildings would need to close and be sold in order to make the merger financially sustainable. Such a combination would not be feasible.

We feel it would be detrimental due to the number of people this would alienate, and who would establish connections with suburban parishes? Since more than 50% of Group 2 parishioners live outside the parish boundaries, logic indicates they would attend Masses closer to their homes rather than a church with which they have no personal connection.

**APC Response to Recommendation "A":** "If the recommendation is not feasible, why are you making it?"

**Planning Group Response to APC's Question:** There has been a misunderstanding; please let us clarify our response to Question 5:

The merger of St. Ladislaus, Trans-OLCH and St. Louis the King, already proposed and in its final stages, should be allowed to be tested on a smaller scale before a major move is made. The success of this smaller merger needs to be tested, examined and evaluated before a decision can be made on whether a larger merger could be deemed successful.

The financial and administrative efficiencies and increased activities identified through the initial reflection process that results from the proposed smaller mergers/clusters would need to be tested, evaluated and deemed successful before a single parish concept for Group 2 could be considered.

## **MEETING WRAP-UP**

Alton thanked the group for attending. He also mentioned that we have until November 14<sup>th</sup> - the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in November - to have the plans ready to go for the 7 pastoral areas. You must be sure to include a Vision Statement, list the definition, what it means to the group, etc. The plans don't have to have every element and the dates can be flexible.

Your charge next time is to come prepared to finish these final plans in order to make the deadline. The next meeting is October 24<sup>th</sup>. One thing we didn't talk about was attending Mass on October 27<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm at Sacred Heart with Renaissance or November 1<sup>st</sup> at 7 pm at Christ the King with the Trinity Vicariate.

The purpose would be that the Bishop is celebrating Mass for the Together in Faith planning groups and the vicariate members. Please be sure to let Alton know which date(s) we could attend. The 1<sup>st</sup> is a Holy Day and those are the only 2 days Bishop Hanchon was available. We would like for everybody to come out and celebrate Mass and fellowship with the Bishop.

FOOTNOTE: Please be sure to keep an eye on your email for updated VPC Planning Group Mass dates, times & locations as they finalize the information.

The meeting closed at 7:56 pm with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Archibald  
Genesis VPC Recording Secretary

## **DOCUMENT DOWNLOAD LINKS**

[APC PLANS & FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS \(Questions 1-9\)](#)

The following are the reference files for the APC Plans & Final Recommendations:

[BASIC ASSUMPTIONS](#)

[REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS OF A PRIEST](#)

[APC YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY SUBCOMMITTEE](#)

[LEADERSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE](#)

[STEWARDSHIP & ADMINISTRATION SUBCOMMITTEE](#)

[CHRISTIAN SERVICE & OUTREACH](#)

[EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS](#)