

DIOCESE OF MADISON
GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT

CLUSTER RECOMMENDATION RESPONSE FORM

CLUSTER: St. John Vianney, Janesville; St. Mary, Milton; St. Patrick, Janesville;
Nativity of Mary, Janesville; St. William, Janesville

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS:

After reflecting on your work, the Criteria established by the Planning Commission and the Goals of *Guided by the Spirit* articulated by Bishop Morlino, we make the following recommendations:

1. We accept your suggestion and recommend that you enter into Partnership as a cluster until such time as there is one less priest available to serve.
2. At that time we recommend that your new model be implemented, which combines elements of models three, four and five.
 - a. From model five, leadership team, the priests assigned to the five parishes in this cluster would serve as a team of priests ministering to all five parishes. No one priest would be assigned to any one parish; all priests would be assigned to the cluster. In accord with canon law, one of the priests would be assigned by the Bishop as the moderator of the group. The leadership team would consist only of the priests.
 - b. From model four, parish director, each parish would identify a parish administrator who would be on site at the parish and would be responsible for the everyday operations of the parish. Unlike a parish director who is appointed by the Bishop, these parish administrators would be hired by the leadership team.
 - c. From model three, partnership parishes, parish leadership would meet regularly to:
 - build on existing cooperative efforts beyond what is currently in place in Prayer and Worship and Collaboration With Neighbors
 - intensify the development of stewardship at the cluster level
 - study the implications of this new model for all ministries
 - envision how the model will look and function with the cluster parishes
 - work out specific details for the change, including the equal distribution of the expenses associated with shared clergy and shared ministry

We further recommend that as a cluster you:

1. Pray and do all you can to increase vocations to ordained and consecrated life and lay-ministry.
2. Explore the feasibility of less than four Catholic schools serving the cluster in future.
3. Create a Cluster Implementation Team to engage the staffs and pastoral councils in developing an implementation plan and provide regular updates to the parishes, after Bishop Morlino has made his decision about the plans.

RATIONALE:

We make these recommendations based on your own study and concepts found on your Suggestion Form as well as your good stewardship of resources, the current diminishing number of priests, and your desire to enhance your ministries through collaboration with other parishes.

We acknowledge the willingness to explore a new model for ministry and parish leadership in the future, creating a greater sense of unity in the cluster.

Janesville-Milton Cluster

CLUSTER CORE TEAM RESPONSE

Our response to the preliminary recommendation is:

We appreciate the openness of the Diocesan Planning Commission to the consideration of a new model, which draws elements from the proposed models presented to us.

We further appreciate the recommendation of the Diocesan Planning Commission that this new model be implemented.

If the model is approved by the bishop, we think the cluster should be directed to begin immediately to plan all the details for its implementation, so that it can be smoothly implemented when the number of priests serving this cluster falls below five.

In the minds of many, the term “parish administrator” refers to a business manager or facilities supervisor. The term, as we are defining it, is much broader, and refers to the pastoral care of a parish in all areas usually entrusted to the pastor:

- supervising all parish ministries;
- developing new ministries in the parish;
- coordinating the functioning of all councils, commissions, committees, and organizations of the parish;
- supervising and directing parish staff and providing (with the team of priests) for the daily spiritual and temporal needs of the faithful.

Perhaps a different term is needed so that it encompasses all aspects of parish ministry.

Possibilities might include: *Director of Parish Ministries* or *Director of Parish Life*. Persons in these positions would be hired by, responsible to, and under the supervision of the priests-team.

We acknowledge that the feasibility of less than four Catholic schools needs to be explored and would develop an approach to accomplish this.

Our reasons for this response are:

In addition to the rationale presented on our cluster suggestion form, we offer the following reasons which support this model for ministry:

- We have presented the model to all five parishes and have received very positive response, and we are confident it will be supported by parish membership.
- This model provides a supportive community of priests in which to live and minister.
- This model would enable a team of priests to enhance the strengths of and to supplement the weaknesses of its individual members.
- This model could provide an excellent training ground for newly ordained; the team of ordained could be easily added to when a newly ordained is available, and could be easily reduced when one is not.
- This model could be an excellent setting for a priest who lacks the administrative skills to lead a cluster of parishes, but has strong pastoral skills to serve the spiritual needs of the people.
- Ministering in this kind of setting would not be attractive to all priests. Special consideration would have to be given by the Priest Personnel Board and the bishop in making assignments to this team of priests.