

Batesville Deanery *Connected in the Spirit* Q&A for Pastoral Leaders

Q1. What is *Connected in the Spirit*?

A. Two years ago, pastoral leaders and lay representatives from the parishes in the Batesville Deanery entered an important planning process called *Connected in the Spirit*. This process is an effort to discern where God is leading the Church in central and southern Indiana and to discuss how the Archdiocese of Indianapolis must change its structures in order to carry out its mission today and in the future. This planning process was inaugurated under the leadership of Archbishop Daniel Buechlein. The Terre Haute Deanery parishes were the first to have participated in the planning process. Last March, the four deaneries of greater Indianapolis began their own self-study and the remaining five deaneries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will eventually take part.

Q2. What are the goals of *Connected in the Spirit*?

1. To enhance the vibrancy of parish life in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.
2. To foster an appreciation for and participation in Sunday Eucharist and the sacraments
3. To promote good stewardship so that parishes are financially viable now and into the future.
4. To maximize the availability of quality Catholic School education throughout the Archdiocese.
5. To ensure that all parishioners have opportunities for quality lifelong Christian Formation, including supporting new initiatives for youth and young adults and promoting vocations to ordained and lay ministry.
6. To strengthen service to those who are marginalized.
7. To build a greater sense of unity among the many cultures in the Archdiocese.
8. To realign parishes considering the number of priests available to serve, financial resources and demographics.
9. To increase collaboration among all entities in the local, national and universal Church.
10. To advocate for peace and justice in the Church and in the world.

Q3. Who made the final decisions to merge and close parishes and to have other parishes become linked or form partnerships?

A. The final decisions were made by Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin after careful study, personal prayer and broad consultation that included representatives from the Batesville Deanery, the Archdiocesan Planning Commission, the Council of Priests and the Management Council of the Archdiocese. The initial recommendations were made by representatives of the parishes in the Batesville Deanery and the Archdiocesan Planning Commission after several months of hard work and study.

Q4. How can I see a copy of the actual decree that affects my parish?

A. The parishioners of each parish are to be informed of the decree by their current pastor, administrator or parish life coordinator and copies of the decree shall be maintained at each

parish office and shall be made available for inspection. The decree also will be published in *The Criterion* and posted on the archdiocesan website at www.archindy.org.

Q5. Explain the different parish models – merged, linked and partnership.

A. MODEL ONE: MERGED PARISHES

Merged or consolidated parishes create a new parish configuration which is able to provide many more activities and opportunities than the original parishes could have managed on their own.

The consolidation process allows parishes to:

1. Use priestly leadership more effectively so that more communities can celebrate the sacraments regularly. (By having fewer parishes, more people will be served without burdening the priests who are currently serving parishes.);
2. Join forces to form a larger, more vibrant worshipping community;
3. Reduce overhead, and use resources more effectively and efficiently.

When done sensitively and cooperatively, the merger of parishes will ordinarily create a more viable parish situation. A consolidated parish happens when:

- Two or more parishes come together to form one new parish.
- A new name is given to the parish which may be a brand new name or a combination of the former parish names. Usually the new parish has one worship site, but permission may be given for several worship sites for a limited time period.

MODEL TWO: LINKED PARISHES

Linked parishes happen when two parishes share a pastoral leader. Linked parishes do as many things as possible cooperatively especially given that the pastor/administrator is striving to serve two separate parishes. Characteristics of linked parishes include:

- The parishes remain distinct canonical entities.
- The parishes are encouraged to work toward combining Parish Pastoral Council meetings and to establishing common committees where possible.
- According to Canon Law, linked parishes must have separate finance councils.
- Linked parishes do many things cooperatively, such as programs and in-services.
- Joint staff meetings where cooperative planning happens are marks of well-functioning linked parishes.

MODEL THREE: PARTNERSHIP PARISHES

Parishes enter into partnerships with other parishes when:

- They create joint programs.
- When appropriate, they share staff to enhance the quality of ministry and practice good stewardship of resources.
- They share in-services or retreats for parish pastoral councils, finance councils, or parish committees.

Q6. Several parishes are being merged. What parishes are closing as a result of the mergers?

A. The following 12 parishes will close: St. Anne in Hamburg, Holy Guardian Angels in Cedar Grove, St. Mary of the Rock in Batesville, St. John the Baptist in Dover, St. Joseph in St. Leon, St. Martin in Yorkville, St. Paul in New Alsace, St. Denis in Jennings County, St. Mary Magdalene in New Marion, St. Pius in Ripley County, St. Maurice in St. Maurice, and St. John the Evangelist in Enochsburg.

A total of 30 parishes – 27 from the Batesville Deanery, two from the Connersville Deanery and one from the Seymour Deanery – took part in this the planning process. Of those 30 parishes, 12 are merging into other parishes and will close and two new parishes will be established for a net reduction in parishes from 30 to 20.

Q7. In some circumstances the Archdiocese plans to establish an entirely new parish while, in others, one parish will be merged into another. Why the different strategies?

A. The Archdiocesan Planning Commission studied all of the data that each parish submitted as well as recommendations from its representatives. This study identified some parishes that should be merged into another, where the receiving parish presented greater advantages for the future, such as its size, location or physical structures. In two instances involving parishes in north Dearborn and north Decatur Counties, the existing parishes involved were approximately of equal size, so the decision was to create a new parish from the existing communities.

Q8. Are there further closings anticipated in the future?

A. Archbishop Tobin is confident that the current and near-term issues in the Batesville Deanery have been addressed. The plan does not call for any additional closings in this deanery.

Q9. Will there be any new church or school construction as a result of this process?

A. There are two new parishes being formed as a result of these decisions, but that does not mean that new buildings will be built for each of the new parishes.

St. John the Baptist Parish in Dover, St. Joseph Parish in St. Leon, St. Martin Parish in Yorkville and St. Paul Parish in New Alsace will merge effective December 1, 2013 to form a new parish. The new parish will have four worship sites during its first year of existence, which will be reduced to two worship sites no later than the First Sunday of Advent of 2014 and one site no later than the First Sunday of Advent of 2015. The Archdiocese will work with the new parish to study the possibility of building a new church and a regional school.

St. John the Evangelist Parish in Enochsburg and St. Maurice Parish in St. Maurice will merge effective December 1, 2013 and will become part of a new parish to be established in northern Decatur County. The parish will conduct worship at the churches of the two present parishes subject to periodic review.

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright, which was established in 2000, with the assistance of the Archdiocese will begin a feasibility study for the construction of a new church.

Q10. Will there be a reduction in parish staffing?

A. One of the primary goals of *Connected in the Spirit* is to address the use and availability of resources across the deanery. With fewer parishes and greater collaboration among the remaining parishes, it is anticipated that fewer staff will be required. Those decisions will remain at the deanery and parish level during the implementation.

Q11. Will there be changes to the Mass schedule?

A: It is recommended that all the parishes of the deanery evaluate the Mass schedules to better meet the needs of parishioners and priests.

Q12. What will happen to the property and assets of the closed parishes?

A: All assets and liabilities of the closed parish are transferred to the parish into which the closed parish is merged. The assets and liabilities become assets and liabilities of the receiving parish. This includes physical property such as church buildings, other parish buildings and parish cemeteries. All sacramental records of the closed parish will be maintained at the receiving parish.

Q13. How will parishioners be involved and who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?

A: Glenn Tebbe, of St. Mary Parish in Greensburg, and Nancy Fahringer, administrator of the Batesville Deanery Resource Center, will be the implementation coordinators. They will be working with Father John Meyer, Dean of the Batesville Deanery, and Tom Reid and Maureen Gallagher of the Reid Group, the consultant group which worked with the Archdiocese. More information about the implementation of the decisions and how parishioners can volunteer to help with the implementation will be communicated in the near future.