

**VIBRANT PARISH LIFE II**  
**Cluster Planning Process**  
**Church of the Resurrection, SS Cosmas & Damian and St. Rita**  
**Parish Communication 1 (October 2007)**

**Organization**

The Diocesan-wide Cluster Planning Process is underway! Parish-to-parish clusters have been identified throughout the Diocese, and each group has begun meeting. The objective of the process is to “enhance the vibrancy of parishes and to strengthen the mission, ministry and pastoral care of the Church in an equitable manner...” (excerpted from Bishop Richard Lennon’s letter of May 22<sup>nd</sup> to pastors and parish leaders).

Each parish within a cluster group is represented by five members: the pastor, a member of the parish team, a representative of Parish Council and Finance Council and an at-large member. The Solon-Twinsburg cluster includes Church of the Resurrection, SS Cosmas & Damian and St. Rita. Our cluster membership includes:

Resurrection: Rev. J. Mark Hobson, Lisa Frey, Mary Ann Theby, Catherine Mazanec, Kay Mitro

SS Cosmas and Damian: Rev. John Singler, Deb Grgic, Paula Kampf, Rev. Mr. Ed Chernick, Carol Twigger

St. Rita: Rev. Richard Burchell, Andrea Kneier, Tim Panzica, Richard Cyr, Bob Slanina, Daphne Held

**Process Timeline**

Our cluster planning group will meet once a month. Our first meeting was held in July, and our process is scheduled to conclude in June 2008, when we will prepare and present our cluster plan to our parishes. After presenting to our member parishes, the plan will be refined and submitted to Bishop Lennon for review and approval.

**Communications**

We will be providing you with updates throughout our process. Each parish will be provided with the same communication, Bulletin insert or Bulletin announcement so that all parishioners have the same information. As the process unfolds, we may convene joint meetings of the member parishes to share information or obtain input.

**Priority Issues Agreed to**

At our initial meeting, the cluster planning committee agreed that the following five priority issues will guide our efforts.

- Continue to explore collaborative possibilities to strengthen pastoral care in an equitable manner.
- Strengthen efforts to provide a welcoming and evangelizing presence for the growing numbers of racially and culturally diverse people.
- Engage all of our faithful in regularly attending and participating in the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy.
- Continue to support Church in the City partnerships through cluster to cluster cooperation.
- Continue to monitor enrollment trends and collaborate to insure the long term presence of a strong, stable Catholic School serving this area and adjacent clusters.

## **Planning Process and Initial Findings**

After initial meetings to organize our process and select our Co-Chairs and Communications Liaison, we spent some time getting to know each other better. Here are the results of this initial part of the process.

Our Co-Chairs are: Bob Slanina (St. Rita) and Catherine Mazanec (Resurrection). Carol Twigger (SS Cosmas & Damian) will serve as Communications Liaison and will also function as a Co-Chair.

### ***DID YOU KNOW?***

The population that we serve:

- is fairly stable, with less than a 1% increase projected for the next five years.
- is a diverse group, primarily Caucasian (69.7%) 24.3% African American 6% other
- is projected to increase the number of households by 1.3% over the next 5 years

Our Parish Communities (statistics shown are for 2006):

- Total registered parishioners = 16,438 (relatively unchanged since 2000)
- Total Catholic households = 6,519 (slightly higher than in 2000)
- Average weekend Mass Attendance = 4,302 (2,000 fewer than in 2000)
- School and PSR enrollment has declined slightly at all three parishes

### **Financial Position**

- All parishes are financially stable.
- Resurrection and SS Cosmas & Damian typically operate at or near breakeven from operations both have long-term debt associated with new worship space.
- Although Resurrection has long-term debt parishioner debt reduction payments have substantially reduced the amount and remaining life of this debt.
- St. Rita operates at a surplus before considering school operating costs
- St. Rita has established an endowment fund restricted to financing its school

During the balance of the process, the cluster planning group will surface opportunities to collaborate among themselves. They will also identify ways in which, working together (and perhaps including other suburban clusters), they may reach out and support some of our poorer city parishes. Some initiatives may require us to establish subcommittees (e.g., youth ministry).

After the next meeting, scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup>, we will be sharing some of the ideas and initiatives that surface in brainstorming sessions. We will then prioritize among the initiatives, creating a vision and an implementation plan for each initiative we agree to pursue. We anticipate interaction with our parish communities during this process.

***Stay tuned for more updates!***