

**St. Mary
Rosenhayn, NJ**

Questions Related to Planning

Below are a few of the frequently asked questions. To read all 17 pages of questions, click on the link below. It is a PDF (Portable Document Format). You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to open this document.

FAQ

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Q. Does a merger mean some churches in the merger will necessarily close? Are merging parishes all merging into a new identity or do one or more parishes get absorbed into an existing parish?

A. Parishes can be combined or united in a variety of ways. There can be federations or confederations where each parish retains its own identity but seeks limited union with others in sharing resources, talents, experiences and vision. There can be mergers in which one parish is absorbed by another with only one of the previously existing parishes retaining its identity. In other cases, parishes can be so joined that each loses its own identity and a new parish is constituted.

Q. Why can't we stay as a "one priest one parish model" until the pastor retires?

A. For one thing, it is prolonging the inevitable and secondly the planning process is not solely dependent on the clergy but the intention is to create vibrant faith communities. We need to study that reality now and make plans for insuring that these communities can be both vibrant and viable.

Q. Why can't we keep a church building open as a chapel for occasional weddings, funerals?

A. A church is a sacred building designated for divine worship that has a public character, that is, where all the faithful have a right to gather (cf. c.1214) and to expect the spiritual assistance of pastors (cf. c.213) out of the spiritual goods of the Church especially through Sacred Scripture and the sacraments. Therefore, a church building set aside for 'occasional weddings, funerals, etc.' is not true to the essential nature and purpose of a church. Furthermore, a church building is not integrally joined to the fullness of the life of a parish loses its true character and nature

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Q. In a merger which one of the pastors do we keep and who decides?

A. The Priests Personnel Board will review the needs of the merged parish and recommend to the Bishop the priest who seems best suited to serve the merged parish. He may be from one of the parishes involved in the merger or he may be a priest completely new to the parishes involved.

Q. Why do the little parishes have to make all the sacrifices?

A. Concessions are being asked of every parish. Smaller parishes which have insufficient resources and are geographically adjacent to other parishes may well experience a merger. Other small parishes that are remote may not. Size is only one of several factors that have to be considered.

Q. If we have the money, why can't we do what we want?

A. The purpose, focus, and primary reason for planning is not all about money. It is about dynamic and vital parishes which are viable and alive. Funding, like size, is only one of several factors being considered in the planning process. Other issues such as availability of priests, facilities, geographic location and parish vitality will inform the final decision. Money alone is not, nor should it be the deciding factor.

Q. How long will it take to implement these plans once they are decided? Will we be given a timeline? When will it begin and end?

A. A timeline for completion is very important for it allows you to plan and to meet deadlines. Some reconfigurations will not take as long as others and some will be more complex, especially mergers. We are anticipating a 3 phase timeline. It will start at the same time for all parishes, beginning with some formation workshops in spring 2008. It will continue concurrently over a period of 3 years.

Phase X lasts approximately a year from beginning to completion on June 30, 2009

Phase Y lasts approximately 2 years from beginning to completion on June 30, 2010

Phase Z lasts approximately 3 years from beginning to completion on June 30, 2011

Pastoral considerations and in some cases priestly assignments will also affect the implementation time line. An education process which includes guidelines and help will initiate the process. We will work with each deanery to set the timeline appropriate for it. However it is important to remember that no plan moves into the implementation phase until Bishop announces the final decision, in March 2008 regarding the total diocesan plan and its timeline.

To read all of the Questions and Answers, click on the link below.
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