



**Archdiocese of Detroit
Together In Faith Draft Plan
Thumb Vicariate**

Guiding Principles from Together in Faith Coordinating Committee

1. Due to shifting populations, declining membership, and limited resources, some pastors who retire, become ill, or are reassigned, may not be replaced.
2. Since the Cluster Guidelines were adopted in 2000, many parishes have clustered. In most cases, experience has shown that clustering should be a first step towards merging parish communities.
3. In parishes where religious orders of men are assigned, their presence in the Archdiocese centers on the mission of each order and their availability to continue to serve. Facing the possibility that religious orders may need to withdraw from the Archdiocese, their parishes were also asked to identify cluster partners.
4. In cluster or merger situations, canonically, there must be a priest-pastor. It is possible for a deacon to be assigned to the pastor to assist in the pastoral ministry necessary for the new cluster or merger situation.
5. Demographics indicate that Catholic Schools are serving students from areas that extend beyond the local parish. Vicariates/regions need to address the responsibility of financial support of schools within the vicariate/region.
6. Each parish needs to review the status of its outstanding debts to determine if the frequency of payments and/or the amount of payments being made are sufficient to pay off its debts in a reasonable period of time.



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Vicariate Overview

- 7 Parishes and 2 Missions (3 clusters) served by eight priests.
- The vicariate priest-to-people ratio is 1:1890; eight parishes have a ratio below the Diocesan ratio of 1:2903.
- Two priests are at or beyond retirement age.
- Sacramental activity is low relative to other vicariates and is maintaining approximately the same level from year to year in most of the parishes.
- This is the second fastest growing county in Michigan (second only to Macomb). The growth is from south (Oakland County) to north. The general population in the vicariate continues to grow and is projected to increase by 12% by 2010 and by another 10% by 2020.
- One of the parishes has a parish population of over 2,000 households, four have 400-700 households and four have fewer than 400 households.
- This is the largest geographic vicariate within the Archdiocese of Detroit.
- All of the parishes are currently operating at break-even or in a surplus position.
- Four parishes have savings of \$100,000 or less. The rest of the parishes have significant savings.



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Vicariate Summation of Findings

- The plan identifies the need for continued outreach to the Hispanic/Latino Community and has developed such a plan.
- It also recognizes the need for ongoing adult formation and the need to train individuals to conduct RCIA programs throughout the vicariate.
- There is also a recognized need to train volunteers to minister to the homebound, prisons, and migrant camps and be involved in leadership and bereavement ministries.
- Three areas are noted in the Strategic Plan: Senior Adult Ministry, Evangelization, and Youth Ministry.
- Parish staffing will continue to be a real concern in this vicariate.
- Growth and expansion will be a continued necessity for this vicariate and its future. They have recommended the need to have one church presence per city area and the need to study and realign parish boundaries. They recommend clustering from east to west within the Vicariate.
- They recommend formation of a team ministry concept and establishment of administrative and education sites between the clustered churches.
- There is a recognized need for improvement and/or expansion of facilities and many of the parishes have already begun such programs.



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Fall, 2005

QUESTION FROM COORDINATING COMMITTEE: With such a comprehensive approach to the future of this vicariate, it would appear that critical issues and questions that arise in other vicariates have already been, or are being, addressed in this vicariate and that it is very proactive in its approach.

QUESTION FROM COORDINATING COMMITTEE: What is of great concern is how does such a large geographic area go about properly educating the needed number of individuals to undertake training and teaching in such areas as parish leadership, RCIA, etc.? What resources can the vicariate provide and what resources need to come from the Archdiocese to ensure the success of such programs? Who will conduct these programs, where, and how often? The educational task that the vicariate has set for itself is ambitious. How can it be accomplished? How soon can it begin? How long will it take? What will be the measuring marks of its success?

VICARIATE RESPONSE: Since the completion of the Together in Faith plan submitted to the coordinating committee, the vicariate has secured a central location in Imlay City to hold formation classes. The parishes are able to provide the program materials and the coordination of the parish calendars.

The main resource needed on an Archdiocesan level is program development and implementation by the Departments of Education, Parish Life, and Finance to provide programming for Lapeer County and neighboring vicariates. Bilingual classes need to be expanded.

The areas of concentration for initial implementation are Catechist Certification topics, Adult Faith Formation, RCIA, and Youth Ministry.

Another venue to be provided at an Archdiocesan level is the development of substantive on-line training. Perhaps a grant from a foundation could be secured to develop this initiative.

Mindful of the large number of children per household in the area, the Vocation Office needs to establish a presence in the vicariate by providing local retreats and integrating with our youth for sacramental and social activities.

Resources by the Archdiocese for young adult ministry stop at the county line and needs to be expanded.

The initiative will be evaluated by parish participation and support, as well as individual participant feedback.



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QUESTION FROM COORDINATING COMMITTEE: How will all of the parishes in the vicariate financially support Bishop Kelley School?

VICARIATE RESPONSE: The vicariate recognizes that the economy is tight and many of the parishes are completing or participating in capital campaigns for buildings. Therefore direct support from the parishes is not feasible or needed at this time.

Through consultation with the pastor, the school is healthy and financially sound. The institution does not need direct support from the parishes, though individual families may need assistance.

The vicariate will study the feasibility of a vicariate scholarship and/or the establishment of an endowment fund with moneys secured through a vicariate fundraiser. The vicariate parishes are willing to support the ongoing fundraisers at the school, however better communication between the school and the parishes is needed to disseminate information.

The vicariate sees the need to establish a newsletter and/or web site to build better communication.

February 2006

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COORDINATING COMMITTEE: The Thumb Vicariate is to be commended for the many initiatives it has undertaken and for the proven success of those initiatives. The questions posed were answered in a comprehensive manner. The financial support for Bishop Kelley School appears to be good for the present and the vicariate anticipates making the necessary adjustments for the future.

Comment: A new issue, not previously identified by the Coordinating Committee, was raised during the planning process:

Recommendation: The Coordinating Committee supports the recommendation it received regarding St. Patrick Mission, that it is the responsibility of the Vicariate Pastoral Council, in consultation with the Archdiocese, to make a final recommendation concerning the disposition of St. Patrick Mission. This task should be accomplished by March 1, 2007.

VICARIATE RESPONSE: The Vicariate agreed with the comments and recommendations from the Coordinating Committee and will work to meet the stated deadlines.

March 2006

FINAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COORDINATING COMMITTEE: The TIF Coordinating Committee has reviewed all materials and your vicariate's final comments and affirms the plan as submitted. This plan will be submitted to the Cardinal for his consideration.