



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS  
305 Michigan Avenue  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
[www.AODcommunications.org](http://www.AODcommunications.org)  
TEL 313-237-5943  
FAX 313-237-4644

**November 30, 2011**

## **Lay Leaders Present Parish Recommendations to Archbishop Vigneron**

Nearing conclusion of a year-long, parish-based pastoral and strategic planning process, lay leaders and volunteers from throughout the Archdiocese of Detroit have presented Archbishop Allen Vigneron their recommendations for future plans for the Archdiocese of Detroit, its parishes and their countless ministries. These recommendations – formed through the parishes themselves, reviewed and amended by a group of mostly lay advisors called the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) – call for a number of multi-parish efforts in areas ranging from youth ministry to vocations to financial considerations. They also include recommendations to reduce some worship sites by merging and closing parishes.

The handoff by APC leadership at their November 30, 2011 meeting marks a significant juncture in the archdiocesan planning process known as “Together in Faith.” The process was originally begun in 2004. A second phase started in early 2011 and came to involve about 1,500 lay Catholics from the 270 parishes within the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Archbishop Vigneron will spend the next several weeks reviewing the recommendations he has received. Based on them, he is expected to put forth an archdiocesan-wide pastoral plan in February of 2012. The Catholic public is welcome to view the very same recommendations by visiting [www.aodonline.org](http://www.aodonline.org).

The plans under consideration are extensive, and focus on seven mission priorities defined by the parishes and leadership of the archdiocese over the past decade: evangelization and catechesis; Christian service outreach; youth and young adult ministry; lay leadership; stewardship and administration; Catholic education; and vocations awareness.

While not comprehensive, the following is a summary of some of the significant recommendations that Archbishop Vigneron has received:

- Within five years, nine parishes are proposed to close.
- In addition to the above, 60 parishes are proposed to merge down to 21, resulting in 39 fewer parishes.

– MORE –

- Also during this time period, seven worship sites are proposed to close. Additionally, a number of the worship sites impacted by the merging process would likely close.
- Four parish cluster arrangements, involving eight parishes, are proposed.
- 28 proposals would offer new or expanded ministries or regular events for youths and young adults.
- 17 proposals would allow parishes to cooperate on establishing new – or expanding current – programs for Christian outreach services, including food and clothing pantries.
- 19 proposals would form multi-parish initiatives to strengthen vocation awareness.
- 23 proposals would establish new, multi-parish teams or initiatives focused on inviting non-Catholics and inactive Catholics into/back into the church.
- 17 proposals would offer new prayer devotions and/or special services (e.g., monthly prayer services, adoration chapels or area-wide Masses to pray for vocations).
- Four proposals would expand Hispanic-focused ministries to more groups of parishes.
- Nine proposals would allow multiple parishes to collaborate on new marketing and/or funding initiatives in support of Catholic schools.
- 25 proposals would allow parishes to cooperate on the training of lay ministers or the funding of that training.
- Seven proposals would create new multi-parish initiatives on purchasing, financial services and contracted services.
- Additional plans include cooperation among parish business managers; support for secular initiatives, such as blood drives; establishment of multi-parish jobs ministries; collaboration on communications initiatives such as websites or newsletters; multi-parish panels focused on serving those with disabilities; and multi-parish faith revivals.

In an open letter distributed on the last weekend in November, APC chairman Edward “Chip” Miller encouraged his fellow parishioners to “... speak with your pastor and your parish planning group representatives regarding Together in Faith.” Miller asked those with questions to “... please call 313.237.5971 or email [TogetherInFaith@aod.org](mailto:TogetherInFaith@aod.org).”

*Brief Glossary of Terms*

**Cluster** – A cluster refers to two or more parishes that share a single pastor and oftentimes a single set of administrative resources and personnel.

**Closure** – The closing of parish.

**Merger** – Two or more parishes coming together to form a single parish.

**Worship site** – A church building, not necessarily a standalone parish. If, for example, three parishes merged into one, one of the church buildings would likely be identified as the primary location for worship and sacramental activity. One of the churches might be closed. And yet another might remain open as a church (worship site) for Masses and outreach ministry. In this case, there would be one parish with two worship sites.

An expanded glossary of Church terms,  
a thumbnail sketch of archdiocesan statistics,  
and Chip Miller's letter to the Catholic faithful  
are posted online at [www.aodonline.org](http://www.aodonline.org).

###