

GATES-CHILI CATHOLIC PARISHES PASTORAL PLANNING UPDATE

July 25-26, 2009



The Gates-Chili Catholic Council is in the midst of developing a second 5-year pastoral plan. The Catholic Council encourages and coordinates the efforts of the five Catholic parishes of Gates-Chili (Holy Ghost, St. Helen, St. Jude the Apostle, St. Pius Tenth, and St. Theodore) to use their resources more effectively in carrying out the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus.

Timeline for Completion of a Second Five-Year Pastoral Plan

June – Aug., 2009	Catholic Council and Standing Committees draft a pastoral plan
Sept. 30, 2009	Parish Pastoral Councils and Staffs meet with the Catholic Council to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the draft plan and suggest ways to improve it.
October 24-25, 2009	After revisions, parish town meetings are held so that parishioners can suggest ways to improve it
Nov. 30, 2009	After revisions, Pastoral Councils meet to do any final revisions to the draft pastoral plan so that all 5 councils can affirm it
Dec. 2009	Final plan goes to Bishop Clark for his approval
Jan. – June	Transition work done to aid in whatever clustering is set to begin in June 2010

Direction We are Heading

The Catholic Council met on June 22 and reached consensus on the parish configuration that will be included in the draft pastoral plan. They propose that Holy Ghost, St. Jude the Apostle, and St. Helen cluster in June 2010 and be served by two priests, preferably a priest pastor and an associate pastor (called a parochial vicar). The reasoning behind this particular configuration is that this arrangement: 1) provides the best way for two priests to minister sacramentally in 3 parishes; 2) enables an expanded use of resources (personnel and assets); and 3) more easily maintains the identity of each parish since they are of fairly similar size.

A **cluster** is two or more parishes served by a single pastor or pastoral administrator. Each parish retains its own identity according to both church and civil law. Ministry programs and staffing can be autonomous within each parish or may involve partnerships with other members of the cluster. Clustered parishes in

our diocese over time generally work toward becoming a single parish, often with multiple worship sites. According to present diocesan guidelines, no more than three parishes can be clustered together.

Nothing is written in stone, and details are still being worked out. Also, pastoral councils, parish staffs, and parishioners at large will have opportunities this fall to have questions addressed and to offer their input. ***For now, and for the foreseeable future, all five parishes will remain open.***

Your Prayers and Participation are Needed

The Catholic Council asks for your prayers for our five parishes and for the wisdom we all need to choose the best direction forward for our communities. Please read upcoming communications and plan to participate in one of the fall town meetings for parishioners. If you have any immediate questions or comments, please contact one of our parish's representatives on the Catholic Council:

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