

Disciples in Mission – A Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of Boston

Phase One Implementation – Frequently Asked Questions – June 3, 2013

What's the reason for all of this?

Parish based evangelization works, and we can train for it, but we need strong Parishes in order to do so.

What's the goal?

The Parishes of the Archdiocese, formed into Collaboratives, are called to be strong, stable, intentional, and effective centers of the New Evangelization.

What does an evangelizing Parish look like?

Evangelizing Parishes exercise radical hospitality. They are always mindful of the lost. They choose their Pastoral Team for their mission, rather than their mission for their team. They pay careful attention to what they look like to people coming through the door for the first time. They make excellent and bold use of social media. They are committed to forming disciples, who in turn form other disciples. They have a strong focus on adult religious experiences, and adult faith formation, especially in small groups.

Please explain the concept of a Collaborative.

In a Collaborative, several Parishes work together in significant ways. They share a Pastor, a team of appointed Clergy (Parochial Vicars and Deacons), a Pastoral Team, a Pastoral Council, and a Local Pastoral Plan which they develop together. Each Parish maintains its own identity – its own name, its own church, its own bank accounts, its own books, its own financial assets, and its own financial obligations. Common costs (staffing, shared programs) are shared between the member Parishes of the Collaborative.

What is the Local Pastoral Plan?

After the Collaborative has been formed and is up and running, the Pastor will appoint a team to write the Local Pastoral Plan for the Collaborative. This Plan will contain the details of how the Parishes of the Collaborative will engage in the work of the New Evangelization – how will they run their programs, how will they promote vocations, how will they engage in radical hospitality. The Plan will contain goals, and ways to measure the movement toward those goals. This plan will differ from Collaborative to Collaborative. Each plan will need to be approved by the Archbishop.

What does the training for the Pastoral Plan look like?

The training began early this year with the employees of Central Ministries of the Archdiocese. It continued with a significant program of training for the Phase One Pastors. The Councils (Pastoral Council, Finance Council, School Boards) will train this fall. Sometime later in the year or early next year, the Pastoral Teams will begin their training. Training is focused on the New Evangelization, on Catholic Leadership, and on the mechanics of collaboration.

Will the Mass schedule change in my Collaborative?

Mass schedules are determined at the discretion of local Pastors, advised by their Teams and Councils. In many places, the Mass schedules will need adjustment.

Is this a merger of Parishes?

No. In a merger, the previous Parishes cease to exist, and a new Parish is created. The Collaborative is an affiliation of Parishes – it is not a new Parish. Each Parish remains open.

Will Religious Education programs merge?

The structure of the Religious Education programs is left to the discretion of the local Pastor, advised by his Team and his Councils. In some cases, the programs will merge, and in some cases they will remain separate. In each case, the Pastor will make his decision based on what he sees as the most effective way to evangelize.

What will happen to Parish Finance Councils?

Each Parish will have its own Parish Finance Council, but those Councils will have to work together in a substantial way in supporting the mission of Evangelization. There are various ways in which that can happen – the local Pastor will determine the best way to work that out.

What will happen to Parish Pastoral Councils?

There will be one Parish Pastoral Council for the Collaborative, made up of Parishioners from all of the Parishes, and advising the Pastor in the mission of the Parishes of the Collaborative. The Pastor will seek to structure the PPC in such a way that all of the people of the Parishes will be able to have open and honest communication with him, both through the council and in other settings. A vibrant and active communication between the Pastor and the Parishioners is vital to the success of the Parishes of the Collaborative.