

Current Pastoral Planning Committee Recommendation

On behalf of the Current Pastoral Planning Committee, the pastors of our Pastoral Planning Area met with the Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee on March 10th to review the recommendation which our CPPC were offering for consideration.

After having met six times over a four month period, and after having reviewed and discussed at great length the documentation provided by the Archdiocese as well as the specific information provided by the six parishes, the CPPC reached a consensus and submitted the following recommendation to the ASPC:

- 1. Immaculate Conception Parish be merged into Queen of the Universe Parish, with Immaculate Conception Church remaining as a Worship Site for at least one year, and a new parish being established at the Queen of the Universe Site and the new parish retaining the name of Queen of the Universe Parish.**

- 2. Saint Joseph the Worker Parish be merged into Saint Frances Cabrini Parish, with Saint Joseph the Worker Church remaining as a Worship Site for at least one year, and a new parish being established at the Saint Frances Cabrini Site and the new parish retaining the name of Saint Frances Cabrini Parish.**

- 3. Our Lady of Grace Parish remains as is.**

- 4. Saint Michael the Archangel Parish remains as is.**

Although on September 12, 2013 at their meeting with the pastors, the Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee had recommended that our PPA 110 be reduced from six parishes to three parishes, subsequent to that meeting, our CPPC was given permission to offer a recommendation which allowed for four parishes if this were the consensus of our CPPC. In light of this permission, at our fifth meeting on January 8, 2014, a consensus was reached to recommend that PPA 110 be reduced from six parishes to four parishes with the following four parishes continuing and two parishes being designated as worship sites:

Four Parishes

**Our Lady of Grace Parish, Penndel
Queen of the Universe Parish, Levittown
St. Frances Cabrini Parish, Fairless Hills
St. Michael the Archangel, Levittown**

Two Worship Sites

**Immaculate Conception Parish, Levittown
St. Joseph the Worker, Fallsington**

At our sixth and final meeting on January 29, 2014, our CPPC came to the consensus that the following mergers take place:

**Immaculate Conception Parish be merged into Queen of the Universe Parish;
St. Joseph the Worker Parish be merged into St. Frances Cabrini Parish.**

Prior to coming to this consensus, the CPPC members were asked their opinion as to which parish Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph the Worker should be aligned. After each member gave their rationale for their opinion, the members who were not in favor of the majority position were asked if they could support, that is “live with” the majority position even though it was not their preference. In response to this question, it was the consensus that the CPPC’s recommendation that Immaculate Conception Parish be merged with Queen of the Universe Parish and St. Joseph the Worker Parish be merged with St. Frances Cabrini Parish be accepted.

Based on the most current statistical information available, the recommended restructuring would reflect the following:

	QU	IC	<u>QU</u>	SFC	SJW	<u>SFC</u>	<u>SMA</u>	<u>OLG</u>
Registered Households	2,450	1,152	3,602	1,390	1,355	2,745	2,896	3,000
Parishioners	6,882	3,311	10,193	3,667	4,051	7,718	8,568	9,492
Weekend Attendance	1,252	1,000	2,252	813	546	1,359	1,264	1,333
Seating Capacity	700	450	700	800	700	800	1,200	1,200
PREP	321	98	419	153	165	318	237	409

Given the geography and the populations for the newly-created parishes, the parishes are relatively comparable and they are properly located within the area.

With this reasonable distribution of families and parishioners, each of the four pastors would be better able to minister to his parish community.

Although the CPPC has made their recommendation to the ASPC, **Archbishop Chaput’s decision will not be announced until May 30th.**

With regard to the personnel of the parishes involved in the mergers, it will be the responsibility of the pastor of the newly-created parishes to determine the staffing needs of his respective parish and, to this end, all personnel within the parishes to be restructured are to prepare a job description for their respective position. For any employees not being retained by the new parish, they will be laid off and thereby will be eligible for unemployment benefits. It is currently envisioned that with regard to employment of current staff within the parishes to be merged, there will be a transition period during the months of July and August.

March 22-23, 2014

Rationale for the CPPC's Recommendation on the Restructuring of Parishes

The merging of these parishes would provide additional resources, both personnel and financial, and thereby position the new parishes for more concerted efforts in the new evangelization. With only one priest in each of the merged parishes trying to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of the parishioners within a larger geographic area, as well as the ministry to the hospitals, nursing homes and senior citizens' housing, the additional resources will assist the merged parishes to be bettered positioned to provide pastoral care of their people and their sacramental needs, as well as train more lay leaders to meet the needs of their parishioners.

Although the main focus of the Parish Planning initiative has been on the Parishes, it was recognized that Catholic Education is an integral part of every parish, and therefore, there necessarily needs to be a serious and in depth consideration of the schools within the Parish Planning Area. Currently, there are two parish schools, namely, St. Michael the Archangel School and Our Lady of Grace School, and there is one regional school, namely, Holy Family Regional Catholic School. Although there may be other contributing factors regarding the continuation of these schools, it was thought that the Parish Planning initiative should not in any way undermine, threaten or jeopardize the viability of Holy Family Regional School.

1. Since Queen of the Universe Parish/Immaculate Conception Parish and St. Frances Cabrini Parish/St. Joseph the Worker Parish are the sponsoring parishes of the Holy Family Regional Catholic School, there would be no issues with regard to the funding of the Regional School or any issue with regard to the continued enrollment of children in the Regional School now or in the future. The families living within the boundaries of these parishes or moving into these parishes in the future would be able to send all their children to their Regional School.

With all else being equal, there is no reason to jeopardize Holy Family Regional Catholic School which the four parishes worked together to establish.

2. Since Queen of the Universe Parish/Immaculate Conception Parish and St. Frances Cabrini Parish/St. Joseph the Worker Parish are also the sponsoring parishes for the Holy Family Regional CYO Program, the parents and the children are already very familiar with each other and have been cooperating extremely well for the past four years.
3. With more than adequate space at their respective campus, PREP children of both Queen of the Universe Parish/Immaculate Conception Parish, and St. Frances Cabrini Parish/St. Joseph the Worker Parish could be easily accommodated.
4. With regard to worship space, both Queen of the Universe Parish and St. Frances Cabrini Parish have a church building which can comfortably accommodate significantly more parishioners at their Eucharistic celebrations.

Given the driving distances to Queen of the Universe Church and St. Frances Cabrini Church, accessibility should not pose a problem for the parishioners of Immaculate Conception and St. Joseph the Worker.

5. Although Queen of the Universe Parish and St. Frances Cabrini Parish are already financially solvent and there is financial sustainability, the net transfer of assets from the other parishes will greatly strengthen each new parish.
6. Since three of the four parishes, namely, Queen of the Universe Parish, St. Frances Cabrini Parish and St. Joseph the Worker Parish have shared the ministry at ARIA hospital, there would be a continued ministry at this health care facility.
7. With regard to the Queen of the Universe Parish/Immaculate Conception Parish merger, the Summer Camp currently operated at Immaculate Conception could be easily moved to Queen of the Universe Parish/Holy Family Regional Catholic School, thus providing a wonderful opportunity to attract children to the Regional School.
8. Although it never came to fruition, early on in the deliberations regarding the formation of a regional school for the area, there was some discussion of creating two schools instead of one large regional school. During that brief discussion, although the sites of the two new schools had not been determined, among some members of the School Steering Committee, it was generally considered that Queen of the Universe School and Immaculate Conception School could be naturally combined and St. Frances Cabrini School and St. Joseph the Worker School could be naturally combined. Although it did not materialize, there was some thought that these parishes could have and perhaps would have worked together in creating a merged school for their respective parishes.