

Queen of the Universe

RECTORY
2443 TRENTON ROAD
LEVITTOWN, PA 19056
(215) 945-8750
Fax: (215) 945-0413



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Dear Friends in Christ:

Three years ago, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia began implementation of the Parish Area Pastoral Planning Initiative. This process is designed to allow groups of parishes known as Pastoral Planning Areas (PPAs) within the same geographic area to undertake a program of self-study. It is led by the pastors in conjunction with parish leadership, parishioners, and the Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Committee.

The need for this process was outlined in a pastoral letter from the Fall of 2010 which called on all parishes in the Archdiocese to determine if they possess the resources necessary to accomplish their roles in the mission of Christ while remaining sustainable and vibrant faith communities. It is hoped that the end result will be the strongest possible parishes that are poised for stability, growth, and service to God's people now and far into the future not only here in Lower Bucks County, but also throughout the Archdiocese. Last year, a number of PPAs completed this process. More, ours among them, are scheduled to begin their work this year. Locally, we will conduct this study in conjunction with Immaculate Conception BVM, Our Lady of Grace, Saint Francis Cabrini, Saint Joseph the Worker and Saint Michael the Archangel parishes.

The work of Parish Area Pastoral Planning is conducted in multiple stages. It involves a review of information related to demographic, financial and spiritual activity followed by consultation with parish leadership, parishioners and the Archdiocese. Finally, recommendations are made for the future. There are three possible outcomes from the work: parish mergers, no change in structure with a plan for future sustainability, or a recommendation for future study. Additional Information about this initiative can be found on the Archdiocesan website at www.archphila.org. The process is designed to be highly collaborative and I will work to provide you with as much information as possible on a regular basis. As parishioners, you should not only be informed, but also engaged as we move forward. I welcome your feedback and will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

We will formally initiate the process with a special Mass celebrated by our regional bishop, Bishop Fitzgerald, for all parishes involved. All are invited and welcome to attend. That Mass will be held at Saint Mark Church (Bristol) on Monday, September 23rd at 7 p.m.

As we enter into this process. I ask you to pray that the wisdom of the Holy Spirit may fill all of us and that God may grant us the patience and grace to complete this work with the necessary focus and dignity. Our efforts will ensure that strong parish communities are present to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel for generations yet to come.

Sincerely in Christ,