

Pastoral Plan  
For Presentation to  
Bishop Matthew Clark

Pastoral Planning Group  
Of the  
Auburn Catholic Community

Church of the Holy Family • Sacred Heart • St. Ann  
St. Alphonsus • St. Francis of Assisi • St. Hyacinth  
St. Mary's • Cayuga Community College •  
St. Joseph's School • Auburn Memorial Hospital •  
Auburn Correctional Facility

## **What is Church?**

Church is a faith-filled community with the celebration of the sacraments and the Mass as the center of its life. This faith-filled community serves as an extension of family and a reinforcement of faith, extending into outside relationships and providing social justice for the less fortunate. The church building demonstrates a faith presence in the local community.

*Compiled from statements on the meaning of church by members of the Configuration Committee at its initial meeting of Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium Phase II. September 23, 2004 (modified 10-20-05)*

## **Preface of Pastoral Planning**

Many hours of study, discussion, and prayer have gone into the initial meetings inaugurating Phase II of Pastoral Planning for the Auburn Catholic Community. Respecting the diocesan constraints, keeping in mind the reduction of priests assigned in the future, and taking the uniqueness of each parish into consideration this pastoral plan is written to help meet the needs of our faith communities. As the Auburn Catholic Community moves forward into the future, we pray that God will bless each of us with a strong and steadfast spirit opening us to new challenges as we journey together.

The Auburn Pastoral Planning Group is a collaborative body of representatives from the seven churches that make up the Auburn Catholic Community. Since September 2004, the group has met to address the challenges set forth in Bishop Clark's letter.

## **Bishop Clark's Letter**

In a letter dated September 13, 2004, Bishop Clark gave several specific directives and suggestions for the Auburn Catholic Community:

- At the beginning of Phase II of Pastoral Planning, eight priests were ministering to the Auburn Catholic Community: four pastors (one of which is a Franciscan priest), one priest administrator, one parochial vicar, one prison chaplain, and one health care chaplain. The projected number of diocesan priests available for ministry in the Auburn planning group will decrease sometime between 2005 and 2010. There will be four priests assigned to parochial ministry and one assigned to prison ministry.
- Reduce the number of Masses
- Continue to maintain a welcoming atmosphere at St. Joseph School.
- Address the ministerial needs of the Catholic students at Cayuga Community College

In addition to the Bishop's directives, the Auburn Planning Group set some goals:

- No church will close at the present time
- Each church will have at least one weekend Mass

## The Auburn Pastoral Planning Group

### Introduction:

The City of Auburn, New York is unique in the Diocese of Rochester. Auburn has a rich history of Catholicism going back to before the middle of the nineteenth century. Irish settlers, and later German, Polish and Italian immigrants swelled the ranks of Catholics and at one time made up almost 85% of the city population. From this Catholic community emerged the parishes of Holy Family, Saint Mary, St. Alphonsus, St. Hyacinth, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ann, St. Aloysius, St. Isaac Jogues, and Sacred Heart. Parochial schools were associated with six of these parishes. In addition to the parishes were Mt. Carmel High School and Mercy Hospital. Auburn Correctional Facility had an active Catholic ministry with a full-time chaplain and Catholics in Auburn Memorial Hospital being cared for by the priests of the city. These active Catholic parishes sent a disproportionate number of young men to the seminary and young women to the convent. Numerous priests and sisters from the Auburn area have faithfully served the Diocese over the years. Many still continue to do so today.

Beginning in 1998 the Auburn parishes of *Holy Family, Sacred Heart and St. Ann's, St. Alphonsus, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Hyacinth and St. Mary's* began participating in a process that would prepare them to better meet the pastoral needs of our faith communities in the light of an accelerated decline in the number of active priests and changing demographics of the area. In Auburn's first five-year plan each parish was asked to analyze aspects of parish life. As a result of discussion and consensus, the Auburn Catholic Community began implementing a city-wide RCIA process, shared Faith Formation programs, revised and reduced Mass schedules, conducted a city-wide census, established a vocation awareness program, collaborated on youth events, created a website and hired a communication coordinator.

The Auburn Pastoral Planning Group was formed during Phase One of Pastoral Planning. It is composed of two representatives and the pastoral leader from each of the seven parishes that currently make up the Auburn Catholic Community. (In this group St. Ann's is considered a mission church of Sacred Heart.) The Planning Group has continued to meet at least four times a year since its conception in 2000. Reporting at these meetings are the chairs of the group's subcommittees: Configuration, Communication, Education, Social Ministry, Stewardship, and Youth.

### Phase Two:

The Auburn Pastoral Planning Group began meeting in September 2004 to prepare a five-year pastoral plan that is consistent with the ten-year projections in the Diocese of Rochester. The committee based all decisions and discussion on consensus. All issues were respectfully considered, given thoughtful review of other options and finally a resolution agreed to by a majority of the representatives. The Configuration Subcommittee was charged to reflect on the guidelines set out in the Bishop's letter while formulating a five-year plan for the churches of the Auburn Catholic Community.

In February 2005, the Configuration Committee of the Auburn Pastoral Planning Group broke into two work groups to gather information and look for similarities within the various aspects of our faith communities.

While still maintaining the independence of each parish, the two groups explored the uniqueness of each parish; coordinated the scheduling of activities and programs; and explored the possibility of collaborating in certain ministries.

## The Pastoral Plan

### 2005 – 2010

Between the present and the year 2010 the seven churches will continue collaborating within the two work groups while maintaining a collaborative spirit among the seven churches that make up the Auburn Catholic Community.

### Factors leading to the formation of the two work groups:

During the process it became apparent that working in a large group did not give everyone an opportunity to voice their suggestions and concerns. It was decided that the group of seven churches would break up into two smaller working groups. The reasoning for the make-up of each is as follows:

#### **Holy Family, Sacred Heart/St. Ann, St. Mary's:**

- St. Mary's and Sacred Heart/St. Ann currently have a combined Faith Formation Program for grades 1-8.
- St. Mary's and Sacred Heart/St. Ann currently share three staff members
  - Faith Formation Director
  - Youth Minister
  - Faith Formation Secretary
- Holy Family is presently contemplating joining with the Youth Ministry program of St. Mary's and Sacred Heart/St. Ann
- Holy Family collaborates with all the churches for the RCIA process

#### **St. Alphonsus, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Hyacinth:**

- St. Francis of Assisi and St. Hyacinth share a catechetical leader and religious traditions
- The Pastor of St. Alphonsus was appointed parochial administrator of St. Hyacinth as of June 28, 2005 and will continue until the approval of the plan.

### Presentation of the Plan to Staffs, Pastoral Councils and Parishioners

On June 3, 2005, a letter and introduction of the plan was sent to the staffs of all the churches. During the month of June the pastoral councils of each church were given an opportunity to hear and discuss the groupings. Feedback was shared at the July meeting of the Auburn Pastoral Planning Group. In the Fall of 2005, parish councils reviewed the draft plan and listening sessions took place in each parish community.

### Moving Ahead

1. St. Francis of Assisi and St. Hyacinth are requesting to cluster with one priest pastor to serve both parishes. St. Ann's Church will continue to be a mission of Sacred

Heart Church and both churches will be served by one pastoral leader and one pastoral council. St. Alphonsus, St. Mary's and Holy Family will continue to be served by one pastoral leader for each parish. During this period, St. Francis, St. Hyacinth and St. Alphonsus will collaborate among themselves as one working group. St. Mary's, Sacred Heart/St. Ann and Holy Family will collaborate among themselves as one working group. Already, shared staff is taking place between and among these parishes. Further sharing of ministries and programs will be explored. Greater sharing of staff will take place as positions become available. This scenario is consistent with the projected number of priests allocated to the Auburn Catholic Community. As pastoral leadership changes, this plan will be evaluated.

2. Presently there are 21 Masses of Sunday Obligation celebrated at the seven churches that make up the Auburn Catholic Community. Plans to reduce Masses when necessary are as follows:
  - a. While there are at least seven priests serving in the Auburn area, the Mass schedule will not change from 21.
  - b. When there are six priests assigned to the Auburn Catholic Community the number of Masses scheduled will be 18 with Sacred Heart, St. Alphonsus and St. Mary's reducing one Mass each. When St. Hyacinth and St. Francis of Assisi join with one pastoral leader, the fourth Mass will be offered by a priest from one of the other communities.
  - c. In the future when the number of priests is reduced to five the Auburn Catholic Community will meet to reconfigure the Mass schedule reducing weekend Masses to 15.
  - d. When four priests and one priest chaplain are assigned the Mass schedule will be reduced to fourteen weekend celebrations.
3. The Auburn Catholic Community will continue to sponsor collaborative activities, develop collaborative faith formation opportunities, continue the RCIA process, maintain the communications office, and begin to investigate ways of consolidating ministries.

#### **Working with Other Groups Within the Community**

***St. Joseph's School*** will continue to be supported by the Auburn Catholic Community in the following ways:

- Continue financial support
- Continue to support activities during Catholic School Week
- Continue to have Pastoral Leaders preside at school liturgies
- Continue to provide teaching
- Continue to have a pastoral leader as a member of the school board and liaison to the other leaders
- Continue to support the principal

#### ***Cayuga Community College***

- Initiate a relationship with the Chaplain at the College
- Prepare and hand out a brochure that includes the names, addresses, Mass schedules and confession times of all the churches in the area
- Publicize young adult events

***Auburn Memorial Hospital***

- Continue ministry of bringing the Eucharist to patients
- Continue priest coverage

***Auburn Correctional Facility***

- Explore ways to participate in prison ministry

**Uniting Principles of the Auburn Catholic Community**

1. The Auburn Catholic Community recognizes the integral significance of Roman Catholic Religious Education formation as a lifelong process that must be instilled in all members of our communities, especially the youth who need an in-depth program that encompasses the majority of the liturgical calendar so that they may come to embrace, appreciate, and practice our rich Catholic faith and traditions throughout their lives.
2. The Auburn Catholic Community recognizes the growing sacramental needs of the home schooled, the hospitalized, home bound and residents of nursing care facilities in the Auburn area who need an established and formal ministry to care for them.
3. The Auburn Catholic Community recognizes the need to collaborate on planning joint sacramental services throughout the liturgical year to bring members of our communities together to form a deeper faith-filled bond with one another.
4. The Auburn Catholic Community recognizes each community's rich traditions and devotions that make them unique and worthy of perpetuating so future generations may come to appreciate these traditions and devotions.
5. The Auburn Catholic Community recognizes the need for consistent, stable, and strong leadership guiding each community while giving its members a feeling of security. Under strong leadership each community will remain vital and viable while growing and flourishing.
6. The Auburn Catholic Community commits itself to provide for all liturgical needs of its faith community.

## Auburn Catholic Community By-Laws

### **Auburn Pastoral Planning Group:**

#### *Membership:*

- The pastoral leader of each parish
- Two lay representatives from each parish appointed by the pastoral council serving three-year terms with no more than two consecutive terms

#### *Leadership:*

- Chairpersons -- two individuals elected from the planning group's membership to serve a two-year term
- Executive Committee -- comprised of the two residing co-chairpersons, the two past co-chairpersons and the supervisor of the paid staff person

#### *Committees:*

##### *Membership:*

- Configuration: the pastoral leader of each parish and two members of the pastoral council or their representatives
- Communications: two individuals from each parish appointed by the pastoral leader
- Education: faith formation directors/coordinators from each parish working collectively
- Stewardship: two individuals from each parish, one of which should be the priest/administrator or their representative and second appointed by pastoral council.
- Youth: two persons from each parish, one adult and one youth (under 21) appointed by the religious education leader/youth minister and approved by the pastoral council
- Social Ministry: two persons from each parish appointed by the pastor/administrator with approval of the pastoral councils

##### *Terms:*

No term limits: Stewardship, communications, configuration, and social ministry

Term limited by service to parish: Education

Terms shall be two three-year periods: Youth

##### *Purpose:*

Configuration: reviews and reforms Mass schedules using attendance and building capacity as a guideline and addresses issues of vocational recruitment

Communications: supports, affirms and challenges the communications coordinator and helps when possible to complete large tasks

Education: coordinates and collaborates on faith formation programs and works collaboratively on the citywide RCIA process

Social Ministry: addresses social issues and supports the work of area food pantries and Catholic Charities

Stewardship: focuses on stewardship as a complete lifestyle

Youth: explores ways to involve the youth in the life of Auburn's faith communities

#### *Staff:*

Communication Coordinator Position: The Coordinator is responsible for dispersing information on intra-parish activities, liturgical schedules, collaborative parish events, the reconfiguration of Mass schedules and the vision of Pastoral Planning within the Auburn Catholic Community.