

The Chagrin Valley Cluster

St. Joan of Arc & Church of the Holy Angels

Preliminary Background

St. Joan of Arc and Holy Angels Parishes are both very vibrant parishes in the Southeastern Suburban area of the Diocese of Cleveland. St., Joan of Arc Parish was established in 1948 and Holy Angels was established in 1977. Both Parishes were supported in their creation by St. Rita's of Solon as the communities of Chagrin Falls and Bainbridge Township experienced rapid growth over the last 40 plus years. While St.



Joan's is located in Cuyahoga County and Holy Angels is located in Geauga County, Holy Angels successfully petitioned for inclusion in the Suburban group with subsequent clustering with St. Joan's on the basis of geographic proximity and similar demographics.

Pertinent demographic information for the cluster includes, overlaying public school systems for the two parishes, concurrent utilization of over 8 parochial and private schools, collaborative activities in public, political, and civic organizations, and many common social venues. In addition, clergy, staff, and parishioners at both parishes are heavily involved in Diocesan Activities, Church and the City Programs, and University based activities resulting in many existing and concurrent relationships and joint activities at many levels, both historically and emanating from activities during Vibrant Parish Life I.

Examples of the ongoing collaborative activities include;

- Arc-Angels for Life
- Bereavement Ministry
- Divorced/ Separated Ministry
- Junior High Youth Camp
- High School PSR Program
- Shared Business Manger
- St Patrick's meals and social needs support teams
- St. Thomas Aquinas

Evangelization as an Underpinning

It is very important to note that throughout the development of VPL I and VPL II, at parishes, multiple committees and collaborative efforts including the present Cluster Planning Committee recognize that a constant *Evangelization* underpinning to all activities within the parishes and general community are an imperative as an overarching theme. In depth analysis of our communities follows regional and national statistical trends with



equivalent percentages of non-practicing Catholics, Catholics attending other denominations, and potential inquirers and potential aspirants in significant numbers. It was decided early on in the deliberations of the present committee that *evangelization* will be an ever present objective in all activities and will be revisited from time to time.

The Catholic Presence in the Chagrin Valley



From a composite view, the parishes comprised of Holy Angels and St. Joan of Arc currently serves over 4200 families and nearly 10,000 people. While the current economy has slowed some of the growth rates in the area, it is expected that the area will continue to grow at a faster rate than most other regions of the Diocese in the years to come as construction of very large nursing facilities is currently underway, nearly doubling the nursing home residents in the area, along with continued demand for additional housing due to the proximity to the metropolitan area and easy access via Interstate highways. Concurrently, a key reality is that St. Joan's will most likely go to a single priest parish status in the near future while Holy Angels is already at that status. Each of the parishes has two Deacons with significant staffing by accredited pastoral staff and professional service personnel.

Sacramentally, all numbers continue to rise in single digit positive percentages of growth. Mass attendance is generally trending down. Both Parishes maintain stable staffs and respective debt and cost burdens relative to the existing financial debt of Holy Angels from physical plant construction and with St. Joan's maintenance of facilities and staffing of their school with school grades 1-8. No deferred maintenance or other capital cost burdens are currently evident. Weekly contributions in general support ongoing activities and debt service.

The Cluster Planning Committee

St. Joan of Arc

Fr. Dave Walkowiak (Vice Chair)
Deacon Denny Guritza (Communications)
Patty Hauserman
Robert Reschke
Bob Williams

Holy Angels

Fr. Dan Schlegel
Cyndy Vogley
Bill Eline (Chairman)
Rob Pietrick (Secretary)
Debbie Adams

Cluster Planning Committee Activities

Activities began at the preparatory presentations in June and July of 2007 for VPL II. Formal meetings began in September 2007 with monthly meetings following the cluster planning guidelines. Following completion of the first draft, a formal presentation was

made on May 19th to both staffs and Parish Councils and Finance Committees for the respective parishes. Following the presentations, breakout discussion sessions and inputs were discussed with all participants. Following bulletin and Mass announcements at both Churches, town hall meetings were held at each parish respectively on August 17th and 20th. The history of the parishes, Vibrant Parish Life activities and the proposed Plan were presented. Throughout the presentations and deliberations with the various committees and parishes, a web site at www.buildingcommonground.org was established to provide all supporting data and the final drafts to facilitate discussion and input.



Preamble to Proposed Cluster Plan

In recognition of ongoing strategic and financial planning at both parishes along with the respective attention being paid to upcoming changing clergy requirements the following Cluster Plan reflects the overall plan to a) increase the Catholic presence in the community and b) to establish a well articulated and communicated process whereby collaboration and resources can synergistically achieve leveraged results. Consequently, the primary issues identified with specific goals are intended to present a framework for adoption of additional goals and activities as resources become available and in light of ongoing discussions relative to ongoing strategic and stewardships discussions. The committee focused on Bishop Lennon's commissioning letter to frame the issues of concern. The following is a summary of the Bishops recommendations;

- Continue to explore collaborative possibilities to strengthen pastoral care in an equitable manner.
- Strengthen efforts to provide a welcoming and evangelizing presence to all people in this area
- Engage all of our faithful in regularly attending and participating in the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy
- Continue to support Church in the City partnerships through cluster-cluster cooperation
- Continue to monitor enrollment trends and collaborate to insure the long term presence of a strong, stable Catholic school serving this area.

Proposed Cluster Plan

Priority Issue I Enrich Prayer, Liturgy and Communal Life

[Note: italics indicates short term goal]

1. Collaboration on Liturgy

- A. Rotate national holiday masses between the parishes.*
- B. Exchange offering envelopes placed in the other parish's collections.*
- C. Joint advertising of parish events in local newspapers.*

2. Welcoming Church Environment

- A. Establish a logo or brand for VPL cluster so people would recognize Collaborations.*
- B. Advertise applicable parishes' schedules/activities in both bulletins*
- C. Link and share parishes' websites*
- D. Utilize local media advertising to invite the broader community to parish events.*
- E. Review, refresh and expand current joint advertising to increase participation in Sunday's Eucharistic Liturgies.*
- F. Joint staff "brainstorming" sessions on ways to improve evangelization in the community.*

3. Shared Social Events

- A. Coordinate parish social events and schedules (collaborate on at least one open collective social event within the first year)*

4. Welcoming Program for New Parishioners

- A. Establish a special committee made up of volunteers from both parishes to review the current welcoming programs of the two parishes and recommend collaboration opportunities within the first year.*

Priority Issue II Strengthening Pastoral Care in an Equitable Manner

1. *Collaboration of Shared Services (joint sessions between both parishes)*
 - A. *Share priest coverage for masses in both planned and unplanned situations*
 - B. *Coordinate hospital visits by key staff members*
 - C. *Hold a joint/shared staff day of recollection or some kind of a social event (dinner) for everyone on staff.*
 - D. *Hold a joint shared day of recollection for pastoral care givers*
 - E. *Coordination of resources and time to visit our homebound and sick (organize, create a format, and communicate how people get their names on a joint/shared list to be a Eucharist Ministry and how people needing a visit from a Eucharist Minister get their names on a joint/shared list)*

2. *Ministry Collaboration – Share, Meld, Create*
 - A. *Have matching ministries meet and discern and prioritize collaboration opportunities.*

Priority Issue III Establish, Embrace and Sustain the Culture of Stewardship

1. *Collaboration of Administration/ Staff*
 - A. *Continue collaboration of business manager*
 - B. *Review strategic procurement opportunities (best practices, cost savings)*
 - C. *Shared listing of available opportunities and offerings*

2. *Stewardship with Focus on Time and Talent particularly with volunteers*
 - A. *Consider and establish specific programs on areas of stewardship (estate bequests, funeral planning, home stewardship (home finance management)*
 - B. *Collaborate on volunteer coordination and planning of time and talent offerings and opportunities.*
 - C. *Create Directory of “Volunteer” resources for joint use.*

Priority Issue IV
Identify and Strive to Meet Human Needs through Social Concern

1. Church in the City/Collaborate with Other Clusters

- A. *Discuss collaborative ways to jointly develop and participate with social service organizations the parishes already support (e.g., St. Thomas Aquinas School, Ozanam Center, St. Patrick Hunger Center)*

2. Social Services to the Community At Large

- A. *Devise common list and contacts of multiple ways for people from both parishes to get involved with social outreach and services*
- B. *Joint social services through a “Faith-in-Action” group*
- C. *Discuss ways to collaborate on other community needs*

Priority Issue V
Continue to Develop Faith Formation and Catholic Educational Support Opportunities

1. Share and Enhance PSR Programs, Adult Faith Formation Programs, etc.

- A. *Share the programs for Adult/Catholic Faith Formation between parishes*
- B. *Create combined Lenten brochure of programs and offerings*
- C. *Host a joint/shared evening of reflection for the RCIA candidates*

2. Support of St. Joan of Arc School

- A. *Continue to support Catholic Schools Information Weekend at Holy Angels with St. Joan of Arc (SJA) School in attendance.*
- B. *Provide regular information on SJA School in both parish bulletins.*
- C. *Feature school events in both parish calendars.*
- D. *Invite Holy Angel’s parishioners to fundraisers for SJA School.*
- E. *Publish Opportunities to offer time/talent/treasure (e.g. tutors, corporate donations, needed materials).*
- F. *Establish a cluster sub-committee to explore other ways to ensure the long-term success of SJA School. Target to have recommendations within one year.*