

Bishop Braxton's Response to the revised pastoral plan submitted by our parish partnership from his Pentecost Letter, June 8, 2014

Excerpted from The Vicariate Letters: the Bishop's Reflections on the Strategic Pastoral Models of the Parish Partnerships

St. George, New Baden / St. Mary, Trenton
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St. George Parish and St. Mary Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish are now participating with parishes in Clinton County in a common celebration of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. You also jointly provide support for the important ministry to Hispanic Catholics. You also come together for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation for your young people. Additionally, you exchange invitations for parish programs--especially faith formation programs. I note you are currently planning "pulpit exchanges," a shared partnership mission, and a Pastoral Associate who will assist the Pastor when your parishes are served by only one priest. I commend you for these important efforts at cooperation. However, what you have proposed does not go far enough when looking to the long-term.

I must ask you to revise your **STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL**. In this revision, you must propose ways in which you can move beyond sharing individual programs and resources. Please take the opportunity to re-imagine what your parishes would look like if you truly shared a common mission. Both parishes with a single mission, the mission of Christ to proclaim the Good News to all. Look for specific ways to reorganize your parish life for this shared mission. This should include aligning ministry efforts, sharing parish leadership structures, and developing a greater degree of sharing of parish life. **Please continue to pray and work with me for Vocations to the Priesthood from your parishes.**

The Joint Parish Ad-hoc Committee for Pastoral Planning met in February 2015 to develop a "Vision Statement" in response to the Bishop's request for "Both parishes with a single mission, the mission of Christ to proclaim the Good News to all." That statement is called Common Vision Statement and will be found in the list of documents in this section of the web-site.

Regarding the Bishop's request that our parishes "Look for specific ways to reorganize your parish life for this shared mission. This should include aligning ministry efforts, sharing parish leadership structures, and developing a greater degree of sharing of parish life." further development of the plan will take place with discussions jointly held between the parish representatives at a future date, when the likelihood of our sharing one pastor is more certain.