

# Parish Pastoral Planning and Partnership Links and Documents

*Please Note: Some of the links will take you to sites off the parish web-site. Adobe Acrobat will be needed to view.*

Because of the changing demographics of the Diocese of Belleville, including the number of priests available to serve the local church, Bishop Braxton initiated a Pastoral Plan for Parish Renewal and Restructuring in 2011. Over the course of the next several years, parishes in the diocese were invited to consider how they might work more closely together, often sharing a priest-pastor where in the past each parish had its own pastor, to ensure the mission of proclaiming the Gospel and providing for the spiritual needs of Catholics could continue in the future.

As a result of this process, **St. George Parish in New Baden, IL and St. Mary Parish in Trenton were asked to form a Parish Partnership.** It is possible in the future these two parishes will share one priest-pastor. Even if that does not become a reality, the Pastoral Plan seeks to see a closer cooperation between the parishes so that they can more effectively accomplish their mission in the years to come.

Below you will find links to the various documents that have been part of this process the parishes have entered into at the mandate of Bishop Braxton. They are listed in chronological order.

<http://www.diobelle.org/resources.aspx> – All diocesan documents pertaining to the announcement of the process By Bishop Braxton and gathering of data for the initial formulating THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING (*Announced August 6, 2011*) will be found at this web-site.

Of particular interest of the documents found at the above web-site link:

[\*"Embracing the Future with Hope: A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Braxton"\*](#)

[A Summary of the Pastoral Plan](#)

[The Timetable of the Pastoral Plan](#)

[FORMAL RESPONSE: THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING BY BISHOP BRAXTON – APRIL 2, 2013](#) – This document lays out the various “Parish Partnerships” and gives the parameters of what decisions will need to be made in subsequent planning meetings on the parish level. ([http://www.diobelle.org/documents/BishopBraxton-ParishRestructuringFullReport\\_000.pdf](http://www.diobelle.org/documents/BishopBraxton-ParishRestructuringFullReport_000.pdf))

In response to the “Formal Response” an ad-hoc committee of pastoral staff and laity from both St. George and St. Mary parishes meet several times to map out how they would structure their parish partnership in preparation for submitting a plan to the Bishop by December 31, 2013. These are the joint reports published parish newsletters reporting on the committee’s work.

[Joint Statement for Publication in Parish Newsletters and Web-Sites, October 9, 2013](#)

[Joint Statement for Publication November 12, 2013](#)

As required by the “Formal Response” of the Bishop, a “Pastoral Plan” was submitted to the Bishop on December 31, 2013.

[December 31, 2013 formal report to Bishop outlining our Pastoral Plan](#)

The Bishop and his advisors studied the “Pastoral Plans” submitted by all the parishes of the Diocese and issued a response on Pentecost, June 8, 2014, asking in most instances for more specificity and changes in the plans submitted the previous December 2013.

[THE VICARIATE LETTERS: THE BISHOP’S REFLECTIONS ON THE STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODELS OF THE PARISH PARTNERSHIPS – PENTECOST LETTER, JUNE 8, 2014](#)

[Vicariate Letter to North Central Vicariate](#)

[Bishop Braxton’s Response to St George & St Mary revised pastoral plan Pentecost 2014](#)

The parishes’ ad-hoc committee further refined the “Pastoral Plan” for our parishes as noted in the following documents.

[Joint Statement of the Parish Partnership Planning committee Nov 10 2014](#)

[Unified Joint Vision Statement submitted to Bishop May 2015](#)

[Report on Next Step Meeting with Bishop and Feb 15, 2017 Joint Pastoral Council follow-up](#)

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. Bishop Braxton requests as part of THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING that parishes and parishioners regularly pray for vocations to the priesthood using the prayer he composed for our diocese. Please, download it and pray it often.

[Bishop's Prayer for Vocations](#)