

**The Cluster Plan
St. Anthony of Padua,
St. Teresa of Avila,
St. Thomas the Apostle**

1. Parish strengths (individual/collective) and existing collaboration to build upon to strengthen pastoral care in the cluster area.

Composite summaries: See attachments

Present activities:

- St. Thomas and St. Anthony's schools have been trading pastors for their school Masses once a month for 2 years. The school children have also gone on field trips together and held dances together.
- St. Thomas and St. Teresa have had a combined Parish School of Religion and Confirmation program for over 20 years. Confirmation took place at St. Thomas. In 2007, the two parishes agreed to alternate locations for the Confirmation classes and ceremonies. Three years ago, St. Teresa began their Generations Of Faith program but they still have children who attend St. Thomas' PSR program for catechesis.
- All three parish councils have had an annual combined meeting and social.
- St. Teresa and St. Thomas held a combined parish picnic the past two years.
- St. Anthony, St. Teresa and St. Thomas held a combined parish Mass and picnic on September 7, 2008 with Bishop Quinn presiding.
- The three parishes began having combined communal penance services in 2006 for Advent and Lent, alternating locations.

2. Key realities, trends and their implications for pastoral care in the cluster area.

Catholic Households	1996	2006
St. Anthony	1275	748
St. Teresa	348	477
St. Thomas	726	545
Mass Attendance		
St. Anthony	882	538
St. Teresa	447	388
St. Thomas	1076	417
Baptisms		
St. Anthony	45	26
St. Teresa	28	5
St. Thomas	39	15
Marriages		
St. Anthony	37	12
St. Teresa	5	4
St. Thomas	16	2

Deaths

St. Anthony	42	37
St. Teresa	17	8
St. Thomas	15	5

Staffing	Priest	Fulltime Lay Employees	Part Time Employees
St. Anthony	1	20	7
St. Teresa	1	0	9
St. Thomas	1	1	1

Facilities

- St. Anthony: facilities include the church, school, friary, parish office, adoration chapel, gym/social hall, and an adjacent house that is rented.
- St. Teresa: facilities include the church and rectory (both over 100 years old), parish hall/kitchen and meeting rooms (3 years old), maintenance garage, cemetery, adjacent house that is rented and undeveloped land.
- St. Thomas: facilities include the church, school building with integrated gym/kitchen, freestanding hall, and a rectory which is not adjacent to the church and school.

Demographics and financial implications

The finances of each parish were reviewed at the beginning of our meetings.

The demographics indicate that people have moved out of east Lorain and Sheffield Lake. There has been a slight increase in Sheffield Village. The statistics regarding Mass attendance and sacramental ministry indicate that there is a great need for evangelization and re-engaging the faithful in weekly participation at Sunday Eucharist within the cluster.

The financial situation of each parish is different. St. Anthony Parish is financially stable with a minimum of debt and some restricted funds. St. Teresa Parish has significant debt because of a new building and the recent purchase of a nearby home. However, these debts are currently being met through contributions to their building campaign and rent. Also, it is hoped that the sale of land would liquidate these debts. St. Thomas Parish has significant assessment debt predating the current pastor, as well as new debts accrued in the final year of St. Thomas School. With the closing of the school and the cutting of administrative costs by 75%, St. Thomas Parish hopes to be able to service its debts.

3. Description of the proposed cluster plans: list priority issues and related goals to strengthen pastoral care in the cluster area. Our response to this item is organized according to the four mandates given us.

#1. Continue to explore collaborative possibilities to strengthen pastoral care in an equitable manner. St. Anthony, St. Teresa's and St. Thomas look to collaborate in the following ways:

RCIA:

Description of the issue: St. Teresa and St. Thomas have combined RCIA already.

Collaborative possibility: St. Anthony will study joining for the 2009-2010 season.

Goal: Cluster RCIA for 2009

Method: The process would rotate between St. Anthony, St. Teresa and St. Thomas Parishes during the Pre-Catechumenate and Catechumenate. Beginning in Lent, each parish would host its own Enlightenment, Initiation and Mystagogia.

Key resources and structures: staffing by all three parishes

Financial plan: Each parish would share proportionally, according to the number of candidates, for materials.

Timeline: This area of collaboration would be studied in the spring of 2009. Based on the study, the combining of RCIA's would take place in the fall of 2009.

Combined Parish Mission:

Description of the issue: Have one cluster mission instead of each parish trying to host their own.

Goal: Have a cluster mission in Advent of 2009 or Lent of 2010.

Key resources and structures: A subcommittee has been formed to work with members from each parish.

Financial plan: Parishes will share in the expenses of the mission.

Timeline: First cluster mission planning has already begun.

Youth Ministry Programs:

Description of the issue: St. Anthony parish has a youth ministry program. St. Teresa and St. Thomas parishes do not have strong youth programs.

Goal: Create viable youth ministry programs to serve the youth of the cluster.

Key resources and structures: St. Anthony's is willing to have St. Thomas and St. Teresa's youth join their youth ministry program. However, St. Anthony Parish is located in a different school district. St. Teresa and St. Thomas parishes share a school district. St. Teresa parish has hired a part-time pastoral associate to begin a youth ministry starting August 2008. This ministry will be open to any youth from St. Teresa, St. Thomas, and St. Anthony parishes.

Financial plan: St. Anthony youth ministry will remain freestanding. St. Teresa parish will fund its own program. St. Thomas youth will participate as they wish. St. Thomas parish will have no financial commitment to this program at this time.

Timeline: Further collaborative possibilities will be looked at in the school year 2009-2010.

Marriage Enrichment and Natural Family Planning:

Description of the issue: None of the parishes currently offer this.

Goal: For the cluster to host a one hour introductory class facilitated by the NFP faculty in the fall of 2009 to see what the interest is. If the interest is favorable, then this will be further pursued.

Key resources and structures: Make use of the Marriage and Family Office.

Financial plan: The only expense for this would be for the facility and refreshments. The host parish would absorb those expenses.

Timeline: Interested parishioners would meet to plan this event in the spring of 2009. The event would be in the fall of 2009.

Parish School of Religion and Generations of Faith:

Description of the issue: St. Anthony and St. Thomas Parish have traditional PSR programs. St. Teresa of Avila has Generations of Faith.

Goal: Each parish would maintain the current programs, with open enrollment at each parish.

Key resources and structures: The key structures and resources are already in place.

Financial plan: Each family would pay for the program they choose.

Timeline: In the spring of 2009, the cluster would revisit possible configurations regarding the Parish School of Religion and Generations of Faith programs.

Reconciliation Schedule:

Description of the issue: St. Anthony, St. Teresa and St. Thomas parishes already cluster for both an Advent and Lent communal celebration of the Sacrament of Penance.

Goal: We plan to continue this practice, rotating parishes.

Key resources and structures: The host parish plans the service and obtains extra confessors as needed.

Financial plan: The host parish will continue to absorb costs of printing and stipends for visiting priests.

Timeline: Already in place.

Mass Schedule:

Description of the issue: The daily Mass schedule provides a variety of opportunities between the parishes: 8:00 am, 8:30 am, 9:00 am; 7:00 pm on Tuesdays.

The Saturday Vigil Mass is also staggered: 4:00 pm, 4:30 pm and 5:00 pm.

The Sunday Mass schedules are identical: 9:00 am and 11:00 am.

Goal: Provide a variety of Sunday Mass times to further meet the needs of the people.

Key resources and structures: Already in place.

Financial plan: There will be minimal costs and these would be absorbed by each parish.

Timeline: In the fall of 2009, the VPL cluster committee will begin discussions about the Sunday morning Mass schedule. If changes are to be implemented, they will take place in June of 2010.

#2. Strengthen evangelization and the social and community services that serve the surrounding areas.

Evangelization: St. Anthony, St. Teresa and St. Thomas parishes have agreed to do the following evangelistic outreaches:

PRAY FOR EVANGELIZATION EFFORTS

Description of the issue: Effective evangelization efforts need to be empowered by prayer.

Goal: Institute a common shared prayer at all parish meetings.

Key resources and structures: Each parish will use the following prayer at the beginning of parish meetings and the prayer will be included with meeting agendas and published as needed.

Lord Jesus,

We believe that you died on the cross and rose from the dead to save the world.

We want to know you better and make you better known.

Fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit as we proclaim you Lord of heaven and earth.

Equip us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Strengthen us with the courage, wisdom and love we need to evangelize our community.

Amen.

Financial plan: No cost

Timeline: Parish meetings will begin using the prayer in the fall of 2008.

ONE DAY WORKSHOP ON EVANGELIZATION

Description of issue: In order to evangelize, our cluster needs a better understanding of Catholic evangelization.

Goal: This would be a one day workshop focused on the questions:

What is evangelization?

How can we evangelize?

Key resources and structures: Sr. Margaret Mach would be invited to present the workshop. The site would be decided among the cluster.

Financial plan: Sr. Margaret's stipend and materials would be shared by the three cluster parishes. Each parish would use the same flier to promote this event.

Timeline: The workshop planning committee would form in January of 2009. The workshop would be held in fall of 2009.

FORM EVANGELIZATION ORGANIZATION

Description of the issue: The cluster needs an organization to facilitate evangelization within the community.

Goal: To form an organization to oversee and coordinate the work of evangelization for the cluster. This organization will report back to the cluster team.

Key resources and structures: Cluster members from the cluster planning committee, plus other parishioners, totaling between nine and twelve people, would form this organization.

Financial plan: The organization has no cost. The cost of evangelization efforts will be split equally between each parish, as approved by the pastors.

Timeline: Fall of 2009, as an outgrowth of the workshop

CATHOLIC ALPHA PROGRAM

Description of the issue: The cluster has talked about the Alpha Program since it began meeting. It recommends this program to the Evangelization Organization as a possibility to initiate its efforts within the cluster.

Goal: To collaborate in putting on a Catholic Alpha Program

(<http://www.christlife.org/sharefaith/Alpha.html>) among the cluster parishes.

Key resources and structures: Members of the Evangelization Organization and other interested parishioners would form a team to put on a ten week Alpha program, plus a one day retreat (which is part of Alpha). The team would consist of a meal and hospitality group, table leaders, prayer leaders and local presenters. St. Teresa's would be the host site.

Financial plan: Start up costs would be shared by all three parishes. A free will offering for meals would be accepted.

Timeline: Team training would take place on two Saturday mornings in August, 2010. The Alpha program would run ten weeks in the fall of 2010 on a week night. The Saturday retreat would be after the seventh week (near the end of October).

Social and community services: St. Anthony, St. Teresa and St. Thomas parish agree to work more closely in reaching out with community services to our cluster area and to Lorain County.

ST. JOSEPH HOMELESS SHELTER

Description of the issue: All three parishes currently cook meals for St. Joseph's homeless shelter in Lorain.

Goal: The cooking teams from each parish will exchange names and information regarding when they cook for the shelter. They will publicize this information to their parishes in order to recruit more people to assist with this ministry. People who could not cook on their own parish's date, may be able to assist with another parish in the cluster.

Key resources and structures: The parish kitchens and kitchens of parishioners are used. The Confirmation class from St. Teresa and St. Thomas parishes currently serve a meal at the homeless shelter.

Financial plan: Different parishes finance this meal differently. In most cases the food is donated by parishioners. St. Teresa's does purchase some of the food that is prepared for the homeless shelter.

Timeline: October of 2008

SOCIAL ACTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE NEEDS

Description of the issue: St. Anthony and St. Teresa Parishes have had active St. Vincent de Paul Societies. As these groups evolve, there is still the need of service directly to the poor. There is also the need to educate parishioners on other current social issues, i.e., service to the disabled, issues with the elderly, homebound visitations, etc.

Goal: St. Anthony, St. Teresa and St. Thomas will collaborate to create a cluster social justice committee that would oversee the work of the groups that directly help the needy and expand to include suggestions from the Lorain County Catholic Action Commission.

Key resources and structures: The key resource will be the socially minded people of each parish.

Financial plan: Each parish would channel the current funding that has been earmarked for the needy to this endeavor.

Timeline: The forming of a Cluster Social Justice committee would take place in the fall of 2009.

PICNIC

Description of the issue: St. Teresa's and St. Thomas' had a combined parish picnic the last two years. St. Anthony's also has an annual picnic.

Goal: To have a cluster picnic.

Key resources and structures: A subcommittee was formed and has begun work on the picnic. This picnic will begin with Mass.

Financial plan: Tickets for food and refreshments will be sold to defray the cost.

Envelopes collected at the Mass will go to their respective parishes. Loose cash will be used to defray the expenses of the picnic.

Timeline: The picnic was held on September 7, 2008. Whether we continue to do this on an annual basis will be evaluated.

#3. Engage all of our faithful in regularly attending and participating in the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy. St. Anthony, St. Teresa, St. Thomas parishes agree to reach out to all Catholics and engage them in regularly attending and participating in the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy.

Improving Sunday Eucharistic Celebrations:

Description of the issue: Sunday Masses need to be celebrated well in order to better engage all Catholics.

Goal: Each parish will work at improving their liturgy by encouraging celebrants to pray the liturgy with attentiveness and devotion, encouraging liturgical ministers to be well prepared, and enhancing the worship environment. Our liturgy committees will collaborate.

Key resources and structures: The liturgical committee of each cluster parish.

Financial plan: Each parish would invest money in the improvement of their liturgies as needed.

Timeline: The liturgy committees will begin meeting in the fall of 2009.

Mass Mailing To All Households Within Our Cluster

Description of the issue: One way of reaching inactive Catholics and other people who are seeking God would be to mail them invitations and information about cluster parish liturgies and programs.

Goal: The cluster parishes will do a mass mailing to all the households within the zip codes of all three parishes. (44052 and 44054)

Key resources and structures: The Evangelization Organization will:

- Gather pertinent resources together for mailing
- Investigate cost of mailing
- Prepare the mailing

Financial plan: St. Anthony would cover 44052. St. Teresa and St. Thomas would cover 44054.

Timeline: Preparations for the mailing would take place during the spring of 2010. The mailing itself would take place in August of 2010, highlighting the parish liturgies, programs and perhaps the Alpha Program.

#4. Continue to monitor enrollment trends and collaborate to insure the long term presence of strong, stable Catholic schools serving this area, including consideration of possible consolidation to a single shared school pending trends. As previously submitted, the subcommittee which evaluated the schools' situation announced in December 2007 that St. Anthony will be the cluster school and will accommodate Kindergarten through 8th grade.

After further analysis, it was decided St. Anthony would also oversee the preschool program.