

St. Joe's Parish

October 2012 Cluster Formation

- ❖ **Learning together**
- ❖ **Fostering stewardship and community building**
- ❖ **Building collaborative leadership**
- ❖ **Fulfilling the Parish Mission**

WHY CLUSTERS?

After years of discernment by both the parish and the Oblates, St. Joe's parish has decided to move toward a model of governance based on collaborative leadership. Collaboration would be foundational for all aspects of St. Joe's life, including how we organize and facilitate the valuable work of volunteers in the many ministries in which parishioners are involved. The hope for these clusters is to nurture better communication and cooperation among ministries that share a common purpose, even though those ministries may be fairly self-sufficient on a day-to-day basis and see little need to work with other ministries.

Our experience of working together over the years has shown the benefits of communication and collaboration. We want and need to do more of that. By doing so, we'll also be building awareness of how each of us and each ministry contribute to building church. Clusters will help to nurture a stronger involvement in the life of the parish by providing space for greater representation of parishioners in the decision-making of Parish Council. Ministry Clusters will play a vital role here. Seats on Parish Council have been designated for each of the Ministry Clusters; Cluster representatives nominated to the Council will be full members of Council, taking part in all discussions and decisions.

VISION AND HOPED FOR OUTCOMES OF CLUSTERS:

- ❖ Capture the complexity and scope of the ministries and activities in our parish life
- ❖ Gather ministries and activities to work collaboratively on a particular sphere of parish life
- ❖ Contribute to more dynamic, better-informed governance and stewardship of the parish and its physical, spiritual and human resources
- ❖ Bring the Parish Mission alive, ensuring an outward focus centred on the poor and marginalised

PURPOSE OF CLUSTERS:

- ❖ To ensure that the members of the various ministries and activities of our parish work collaboratively to align themselves to respond to the mission of the parish
- ❖ To foster and call out leadership in all members of the clusters, increasing their capacity to work effectively together
- ❖ To identify opportunities for leadership development and mentorship for people not currently connected with a ministry/group
- ❖ To foster a sense of belonging and deepen the appreciation of how the respective ministry enhances parish life
- ❖ To encourage building towards the future and more creative solutions to issues
- ❖ To foster stewardship; that is to plan with a sustainable future in mind
- ❖ To encourage ministries and activities to be mutually responsible and accountable

PRACTICAL OUTCOMES

- ❖ An efficient use of everyone's resources, i.e., no one has to reinvent the wheel
- ❖ Enhanced ability of ministries to respond rapidly to the need for change
- ❖ Information is more easily shared and readily available
- ❖ Common commitment and dedication to the success of our parish in fulfilling its Mission
- ❖ Possible reconfiguration of Cluster ministries/activities to best mirror the experience of collaboration.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CLUSTERS

- ❖ Focused on a particular aspect of parish life
- ❖ Are small enough to be workable
- ❖ Have a truly meaningful purpose
- ❖ Have specific goals
- ❖ Establish a clear approach to the cluster's work
- ❖ Have mutual accountability
- ❖ Have collaborative, as opposed to top-down, leadership.
- ❖ Draw on complementary skills of people within the cluster
- ❖ Identify leadership development opportunities
- ❖ Foster mentorship within/outside the Cluster

CHALLENGES:

- ❖ Not everyone is starting from the same place; a flexible implementation strategy is needed to accommodate each ministry's and activity's issues
- ❖ Decision making sometimes can become more complex and more protracted, so clear communication and a coherent decision-making process will be essential
- ❖ A perception may exist that each ministry/activity is unique and certainly different, so learning to collaborate may be challenging
- ❖ It will take time to evaluate the effectiveness and benefits of working in clusters

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLUSTER REPRESENTATIVES ON PARISH COUNCIL

Under the new parish governance model, Parish Council takes on many of the responsibilities previously vested in the Pastor as Administrator of the parish. If you are nominated to represent your cluster on Council, you will work with other Council members to provide leadership to:

- ❖ Sustain St. Joseph Parish as an Oblate Mission in the heart of Ottawa, consistent with the Oblate of Mary Immaculate's charism of welcoming and solidarity with the poor and marginalised
- ❖ Ensure all activities and initiatives of the Parish are aligned with the Parish's Mission Statement
- ❖ Approve all policies required to ensure that the Parish is managed in a fair, transparent, inclusive and responsible manner, including policies related to:
 - Financial management (including stewardship and fundraising)
 - Communication both internally within the parish and externally

- Staffing and management of human resources
- Use and maintenance of Parish's physical assets, such as Information Technology assets
- Maintenance of the capital facility
- ❖ Approve annual budgets for the Parish
- ❖ Hire and evaluate the performance of the Executive Director
- ❖ Serve on ad hoc Council subcommittees, as required
- ❖ Attend 2-hour Council Meetings 1st Tuesday of the Month and commit up to 2 hours per week prep time to review documents, etc.
- ❖ Report to parishioners and the Oblates on the management of the Parish

DEFINING COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

In essence, collaborative leadership is learned, developed and practiced in relationship with others.

Hank Rubin author and President of the Institute of Collaborative Leadership has written "A collaboration is a purposeful relationship in which all parties strategically choose to cooperate in order to accomplish a shared outcome." In his book "Collaborative Leadership: Developing Effective Partnerships for Communities and Schools" Rubin asks "Who is a collaborative leader?" and answers "You are a collaborative leader once you have accepted responsibility for building - or helping to ensure the success of - a heterogeneous team to accomplish a shared purpose"

David Archer and Alex Cameron in their book *Collaborative Leadership: How to succeed in an interconnected world*, identify the basic task of the collaborative leader as the delivery of results across boundaries between different organisations. They say "Getting value from difference is at the heart

of the collaborative leader's task... they have to learn to share control, and to trust a partner to deliver, even though that partner may operate very differently from themselves."

Being a collaborative leader requires an individual to learn the fundamentals of working collaboratively while being aware of how their concept and personal lens on leadership has an impact on how they lead. Developing collaborative leadership implies that the individual is both mindful and intentional in how they exercise leadership.

PRACTICES OF COLLABORATION¹

- ❖ **Cooperation:** Acknowledging and respecting other opinions and viewpoints; Examining and changing own beliefs and perspectives willingly.
- ❖ **Assertiveness:** Supporting one's own viewpoint with confidence
- ❖ **Responsibility:** Accepting and sharing responsibilities; Offering critical assessment of components in areas other than cluster responsibility/expertise; Identifying leadership development opportunities; Participating in Parish Council decision-making and planning.
- ❖ **Communication:** Sharing important information effectively. Exchanging ideas and discussing issues effectively, inclusively and respectfully.
- ❖ **Autonomy:** Performing responsibilities independently.
- ❖ **Coordination:** Organizing cluster tasks and assignments efficiently and inclusively.

- ❖ **Trust and Respect:** Respecting and drawing out other's gifts, talents, knowledge and skills.

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

FROM OLD PARISH MODEL	TO NEW PARISH MODEL
The Parish Council and the Finance Council were equal and operated separately	Finance Committee advises Council
Parish Council was advisor to Pastor	Parish Council is a decision-making body; Pastor has one vote on Council
Unclear to whom staff reported, responsibilities uncertain	Staff report to Executive Director, with clear job descriptions and regular evaluations
Pastor spent considerable time on admin issues and choosing from conflicting advice	Pastor spends most time on spiritual life of parish
Parish Council members "nominated" by Parish leaders and elected, mostly by acclamation	Parish Council members chosen by Clusters and Masses
Volunteers contribute to their ministry	Volunteers contribute to their ministry, shape Cluster activity and identify opportunities for leadership development
Leadership was "shared", leading to gaps and conflicts	Leadership is "collaborative", giving, those who wish, the chance to input.

¹ Adapted from Jones & Way (2001), Norsen et al (1995)