



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

God's People in southeastern Wisconsin are committed to ensuring

- Access to the Eucharist in its totality, namely Word, Sacrament, Service and Community for all the faithful
- Opportunities to live Eucharistic lives through practice of spiritual and corporal works of mercy
- Wise stewardship of our human and temporal resources.

Regarding Your District Directives

We have seen and heard the ways you have advanced the Gospel through....

- ... Ensuring access to the Eucharist and sacraments by seeing to it that Mass schedules are complementary and that services are available to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of a richly diverse Catholic community
- ... Joining forces to address the needs of the poor and homeless through the Cathedral Outreach Center, the work of the Downtown Human Concerns Collaboration and ecumenical efforts
- ... Walking with the poor in their striving for empowerment and human dignity
- ... Active evangelization in low-income and gentrified neighborhoods
- ... Promoting the cause of social justice through ongoing advocacy, education and formation
- ... Striving to become a more vital and relevant presence in the neighborhoods you serve, especially where parishes have merged or closed
- ... Your support of Catholic education for all children, especially through Catholic East, St. Leo and St. Rose Catholic Urban Academies, our quality high schools, and the new partnership between the Capuchin order and the Messmer schools
- ... Creativity in responding to the unique requirements of ministry in an urban setting
- ... Collaboration between the ministers (directors of religious education and youth ministers) of Districts 11 and 13
- ... Your pioneering work in new forms of collaboration: RiverBank Catholic Connection articulating a "Model 7" and the creation of partnerships or new forms of clustering between a parish and non-parish entities. We applaud St. Francis of Assisi parish for the relationship they are establishing with the House of Peace Community Center, and hope that this work will be replicated in other areas of the diocese



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

- ... The dedication of retired priests who continue to serve, to whom we owe our gratitude. We trust that their time is being respected.
- ... Those men and women in religious orders who serve in various ministries throughout the district. Though they seek no recognition, we hope your parishes and clusters will continue to find ways to let them know how much they are appreciated.

We understand that you are concerned that although the diocese and a number of parishes outside the district are aware of and responsive to the plight of the poor and disenfranchised who come to your parishes for assistance and human warmth, more assistance is needed. We understand that you face overwhelming needs with limited resources and commend your efforts to network with agencies and community groups who also seek to serve the poor.

Your insights into the realities of ministry in an urban setting are critical in creating new models for pastoral care. You have repeatedly requested that the many extra-parochial ministries present in the district (prison ministry, hospitals, campus ministry, Franciscan Peacemakers, the Dominican Center, etc.) be taken into account in archdiocesan planning, and for Catholic Charities to figure more prominently in the planning. We welcome your ideas, input and creativity in building sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships in this regard. The idea of an “urban ministry corps” where Catholic men and women can give of their time and talent is certainly worth pursuing.

We know that you understand the importance of Catholic schools as a visible sign of the Church’s presence in a given neighborhood. At nearly every gathering of school personnel we hear people in school ministry talk to their peers about the tremendous potential for evangelization that our schools represent. The third of Archbishop Dolan’s six archdiocesan priorities recognizes their importance and directs all parishes to contribute to the support of Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

We understand the challenges you face in making Catholic education affordable in your schools while maintaining high standards and just compensation for faculty and staff. We appreciate your interest in assisting families make the transition from Catholic elementary school to Catholic high school, where cost continues to be a key issue for many parents.

In this district, as well as in districts 11 and 12, we have heard a number of concerns related to the Choice Program. Pastors and principals have expressed frustration at misconceptions held by the general public and parishioners regarding the Choice Program. They ask for the diocese to address this issue utilizing the media. Schools with a significant percentage of Choice students ask that a “Plan B” is developed in the event that the Choice program is discontinued.



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

Your concerns and suggestions will be communicated to the Office for Catholic Schools and Life-long Faith Formation.

Please be assured that we will continue to offer the assistance of your parish consultant and other archdiocesan staff as you move forward with collaboration and evangelization efforts at both the cluster and district level.

Moving Forward on Our Journey of Faith Together

We heard, understand and agree with the universally shared opinion that there were too many district-wide directives in the 2004 plan. Therefore, we invite you to focus on the six archdiocesan priorities offered to us by Archbishop Dolan in 2004 as stated below.

1. Grow in Holiness

- Eucharist is the “source and summit” of our lives. To ensure the highest quality of liturgical celebrations, employ or share a full-time director of liturgy and music. Make a commitment to training and forming all liturgical ministers. Develop a repertoire of music for use at all liturgies to enhance the full conscious and active participation by the faithful at liturgy. (on-going)
- Continue or adjust weekend Mass schedules that provide access to the Eucharist over a span of time each weekend within the district. (On-going)
- If you have not already done so, either as a district, a cluster, or a parish form an evangelization committee. Offer the committee formation resources from the Office for Evangelization (by June, 2006). Ask the Committee to develop a 3-year evangelization plan and be prepared to implement it not later than September, 2007. As part of your evangelization plan, study the potential for home visits on a regular basis, and for sharing in the cost of hiring pastoral associates who will focus on specific neighborhoods.
- As a district or in clusters, offer a variety of ways for people to grow spiritually through study, reflection, small group faith sharing, communal prayer and devotions. Promote these offerings throughout the district. (On-going)



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

2. Strengthen our parishes

- Employ qualified professionals to serve and support the pastoral and administrative ministries of the parish and or cluster. (On-going)
- Promote the healing ministry of Christ and foster holistic health and wellness within the parish by using the expertise of a parish nurse or sharing one with other parishes. (On-going)

3. Strengthen Catholic Education and Lifelong Faith Formation

- Support and encourage parents as first educators of their children. (On-going)
- Develop a district-wide plan where every parish in the district, with and without schools, will contribute to the support Catholic elementary and secondary schools. (By February, 2006 to implement in 2006-07 school year.)
- Strengthen catechetical ministry. Recruit, train and support faithful catechists. Invest children with a strong sense of Catholic identity rooted in the Church's sacramental life. (On-going)

4. Develop a “Culture of Vocations”

- Educate the faithful about God's universal call to holiness. (On-going)
- Encourage, invite, train and form all lay ministers in the parish. (On-going)
- Urge effective lay ministers to seek certification or higher education for ministry through one of the seminaries, colleges or universities ministry programs. Offers some financial support toward their degree. (Parishioners & parish Finance Committees)
- Support those discerning a call to ministry by prayer—individual and communal, mentoring/companionship, and genuine and repeated invitations to consider a vocation to ordained priesthood and diaconate, and to religious life. (On-going)

The Archdiocesan recruitment goal is a minimum of 68 new seminarians or religious in formation by the year 2009, which is about .0001 of our Catholic Population. This district is challenged by the Archdiocesan Vocations office for the recruitment of two seminarians or novices.

5. Emphasize our Mission of Justice and Charity

- Preach about and teach the spiritual and corporal works of mercy (On-going)
- Use the talents and services of parish deacons, human concerns ministers and committees, to continually help parishes and clusters contribute to the social ministry of the Church as we build the reign of God. (On-going)



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

- Contribute generously to the combined collections in response to the needs of the poor in our church and our world (Annually)
- Support justice efforts of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference

6. Stewardship

- As good stewards, share your human and material resources with people in need in the local, national and international Church. (On-going)
- Because plans and circumstances change over time, continue the planning process. Work with your district Dean, your Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) member, your parish consultant(s), the Vicar for Planning, Fr. Brian Mason to discern, design and implement and evaluate your plans to address these archdiocesan priorities. In April, 2006 you will provide another progress report to the Implementation Commission.



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

RiverBank Catholic Connection

To District 13 Cluster Parishes

- Cathedral of St. John
- Old St. Mary
- SS Peter & Paul
- Three Holy Women
- Our Lady of Divine Providence

G*race to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right that I should think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, you who are all partners with me in grace.*

Philippians 1: 2-7

We commend you for your diligence in continuing to shape and strengthen your collaborative ties as members of **RiverBank Catholic Connection**. Your work reveals a spirit of shared ministry between lay and ordained ministers in dedicated service of the distinct communities of faith you represent. The vibrant quality of worship at your parishes, as well as your energy and commitment to social justice have made your parishes attractive to people of all ages, especially young adults. Everything you can do in this area of ministry is to be encouraged. SS Peter and Paul and Three Holy Women deserve special mention for their work in this area.

We commend your parishes for their support of the poor and disenfranchised, especially through the Cathedral Center and efforts of the Downtown Parishes Collaboration on behalf of the homeless. We likewise commend the cluster parishes for their untiring support of Catholic education through Catholic East's ministry to children and families, as well as the religious formation of teens through East Side Catholic Youth Ministry.

We commend you for making evangelization a priority in your work. Evangelization is not a program but an infectious and uplifting spirit. It would be exciting to see parishioners from RiverBank Catholic Connection, young and old, from the parishes east of the river actively work on evangelization with the parishes west of the river. As you consider different aspects of evangelization, we invite you to also consider developing a plan for home visits to be conducted on a regular basis throughout the year. We understand that this is slow and painstaking work. Val Keller, our Director of Evangelization, is ready to assist you in this area.

Though these comments are directed to the cluster parishes collectively, we would be remiss if we did not applaud Our Lady of Divine Providence for doing so much more than



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

RiverBank Catholic Connection

“getting through” the merger of two parishes. Over the past few years this parish has truly refashioned itself into a more unified community with a deep love and commitment to serve the RiverWest neighborhood which is its home.

Our Lady of Divine Providence is one of only four parishes in the district where the Mass is celebrated in Spanish. We are deeply grateful for its commitment to serve a growing bilingual community, all the more because we realize that the multicultural nature of its ministry demands more resources that they currently have at their disposal. The neighborhood is not only strongly Hispanic and European-American, but African American as well. There is a certain youthfulness to the neighborhood that also needs to be tapped. We encourage Our Lady of Divine Providence to engage in more active evangelization through home visits and other creative ways to reach out to neighborhood residents. As we make this request, however, we realize that the parish is a small community and many of the members are older.

Within the district recommendations we suggested that the district consider hiring pastoral associates who would focus on particular neighborhoods, and that the cost for such personnel be shared by a cluster or within the district. We recommend that the cluster parishes discuss whether there is a possibility of such an initiative to be taken to assist Our Lady of Divine Providence in its evangelization efforts.

We have one more important matter to bring to your attention. The Priest Personnel Office responded to Old St. Mary’s request to hold a parish consultation earlier than it is usually done to explore questions related to the directive that St. Mary share a pastor with the Cathedral of St. John. The resulting recommendation was that St. Mary would receive a priest when Fr. Rebatzki’s term expires in 2006. However, other parishes in the cluster have asked for wider consultation on this. We are confident that the leadership at Old St. Mary’s will be open to the input of their cluster partners when a follow-up consultation is arranged by the Priest Personnel Office.

In closing we would like to say that your creativity and willingness to explore what moving towards “Model 7” means in concrete terms is an inspiration. You have long been leaders of change and prophets of hope for the diocesan church.

We will ask you to submit a brief written report of the status of your collaboration efforts to the Implementation Commission by March 15, 2006. Since you hold regular meetings, your report may simply be a copy of your minutes for any of the meetings you hold in the near future where these recommendations are discussed.

Please be assured that we will continue to offer the assistance of your parish consultant and other archdiocesan staff as you move forward with collaboration efforts at both the cluster and district level.



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

To District 13 Cluster Parishes

- All Saints
- Blessed Trinity
- St. Martin de Porres

G*race to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right that I should think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, you who are all partners with me in grace.*

Philippians 1: 2-7

We commend each of your parishes, first of all, for the magnanimous contribution of time, talent and treasure your parishioners have made and continue to make to ensure Catholic presence is strong and vibrant in the neighborhoods which are your home.

We commend Blessed Trinity for its consistent lay leadership and consistent ministry in spite of the difficult merger of three communities and frequent pastoral transitions which were often unexpected. You continued to serve those around you through active outreach and programs such as your summer Reach Out program for neighborhood children.

We especially commend council leaders for trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit and prayerfully making the decision to join All Saints and St. Martin de Porres in District 13. We understand that collaboration is hard work, especially when misunderstandings arise. We are deeply thankful that you remain committed to developing a strong cluster and that you identified concrete “first steps” to take together, such as supporting the African World Festival liturgy this year. We strongly encourage you and your new cluster partners of All Saints and St. Martin de Porres simply to concentrate on building community and getting to know another over the next year by working together on a project or two.

We understand the challenges Blessed Trinity faces with small congregation and a significant number of older parishioners, however, we firmly believe that your core of faithful parishioners will continue to demonstrate the visionary leadership necessary for growth.

We share your excitement at the arrival of your new pastor, Fr. Michael Barrett. We are confident that you will be supportive as he begins to know you and your pastoral reality. Fr. Mike is no stranger to District 13, since he served as pastor in the Riverwest area



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

years ago. We strongly encourage Fr. Carl Diederichs and Fr. John Celichowski to welcome Fr. Mike and to offer him their assistance and knowledge of the district as he begins his pastorate at Blessed Trinity.

We commend All Saints for your continued efforts to be a good neighbor and a strong Catholic presence in the inner city. We believe your outreach efforts and interest in social justice should be as well-known as your music ministry. We especially commend you for the program of outreach and support for former prison inmates and their families.

We understand that you have revised your plans to renovate the worship space, and that you are also considering different uses and ministries for the chapel. We strongly encourage Fr. Carl Diederichs to continue to consult with parishioners, council, committees, and archdiocesan personnel as needed in developing a capital campaign. We also recommend that you engage in substantial dialogue and regular communication regarding developments in the uses and ministries of the chapel with your cluster partners and neighboring parishes, since they will be impacted by anything you do.

Both All Saints and St. Martin de Porres are to be commended for your support of Catholic education through the scholarships you provide, and also for reaching out to the children at St. Leo Catholic Urban Academy. This may be an area for potential collaboration with Blessed Trinity.

St. Martin de Porres is to be commended for being a sacrament of Christ in the city. Its warmth and welcoming spirit beautifully brings together elders and youth in worship that is at once prayerful and dynamic. It is truly a parish that welcomes the African-American community and celebrates its history, traditions and culture without being exclusive. We are pleased that the council is currently in the process of creating a vision and mission to guide the parish for the next 5 to 10 years. We know that members of the parish participate in diocesan formation programs. Lay ministers are key in “growing the Church in an African American neighborhood” as one of your directives indicates. Our thanks also for reaching out to young adults by hosting Theology on Tap.

We have heard the concern expressed by St. Martin de Porres regarding your capacity for collaboration given the fact that you already relate to a number of parishes like St. Robert in Shorewood and St. James in Menomonee Falls and that a new relationship is beginning with Blessed Trinity which will need time to develop and mature. We trust in your ability to discern and prioritize the best use of your time and energy for your work as a cluster.

Because we know of your sincere interest in evangelization, we hope that this will be a priority in the work of your cluster. Evangelization is not a program but an infectious and uplifting spirit. Blessed Trinity has considerable experience in this area, as we believe All Saints and St. Martin de Porres also do. We understand that this is slow and painstaking work, especially when you begin to consider other aspects of evangelization such as conducting home visits on a regular basis. We noted in the district



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

recommendations that some parishes or clusters may consider sharing the cost of hiring pastoral associates who will focus on specific neighborhoods as part of their work in evangelization. We encourage you to explore this idea with your cluster partners, and other parishes with whom you may already have established relationships. Val Keller, our Director for Evangelization, is ready to assist you in this area.

Finally, we heard each parish in District 13 express concern that although the diocese and other churches outside the district remain aware of and connected to the plight of the poor and disenfranchised who come to your parishes for assistance and human warmth, you face overwhelming needs with limited resources. We welcome your ideas, input and creativity in establishing sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships in this regard. As we stated in the district comments, we commend your efforts to network with agencies and community groups who also seek to serve the poor.

In closing, let us say that we are confident that you will each draw upon your individual strengths for the benefit of all in the cluster and the neighborhoods which are your home. We ask that you submit a brief written report regarding the status of your collaboration efforts to the Implementation Commission by March 15, 2006.

Please be assured that we will continue to offer the assistance of your parish consultant and other archdiocesan personnel as you move forward with collaboration efforts at both the cluster and district level.



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

To District 13 Cluster Parishes

- St. Francis Assisi
- St. Michael
- St. Rose

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right that I should think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, you who are all partners with me in grace.

Philippians 1: 2-7

Though we have been notified that your cluster partnership dissolved as of June 30, 2005, we offer our comments to you as the group to which the most recent planning directives were addressed. We are confident that each of you will seek new collaborative partnerships and continue to support the work of the district.

Let us begin by congratulating you for notable efforts in ministry:

We commend you for developing creative ministerial models to serve the needs of faith communities of faith which are culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse. Your welcoming spirit is enhanced by the programs you have created to assist people in their real-life concerns such as housing and education. Your 11-year collaboration provided untold opportunities for interaction across barriers that normally serve to separate individuals and communities. Your parishes have brought color, texture and vibrancy to the tapestry that is our diocesan church. We likewise commend you for creating resources for multicultural ministry where few or none previously existed, for promoting and supporting *indigenous* lay leadership among the various communities, for opening up to parishes who wished to establish relationships with you as a way to concretely experience the universality of the Catholic Church, and for assisting in the transition of immigrant families and children into a new culture.

We have heard of your concern, shared by all parishes in District 13, that more assistance is needed to address the plight of the poor and disenfranchised who come to your parishes for assistance and human warmth. We understand that you face overwhelming needs with limited resources and we welcome your ideas, input and creativity in establishing sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships in this regard.

We noted in the district recommendations that some parishes or clusters may consider sharing the cost of hiring pastoral associates who will focus on specific neighborhoods



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

as part of their work in evangelization. We encourage you to explore this idea with other parishes with whom you may already have established relationships.

To St. Francis of Assisi Parish: We understand that both the parish and the Capuchin Order have much to sort out in regard to your mission, the Capuchin charism of service among the poor, and best uses for your former monastery. We commend you for taking to heart the recommendation to evangelize in low-income and newly gentrified areas. We encourage you to continue your work of evangelization and to establish mutually beneficial relationships with businesses and agencies along Martin Luther King Drive and the downtown area as you have begun to do.

We commend you also for boldly enhancing your ministry in the African American community by hiring a pastoral associate specifically for African American ministry in spite of financial concerns, and for initiating a monthly Mass and social gathering for seniors. The Sunday evening Mass for young adults is a valuable addition to the district. We are glad to see that you are supporting area efforts to reach out to young adults, such as the Theology on Tap sessions offered by St. Martin de Porres, and initiating some connections with the students at MSOE. Finally, your parish deserves special recognition and encouragement to continue to develop the program you have created to support former inmates and their families. We believe this program has the potential for wider support from other parishes in the district and beyond.

Evangelization is not a program but an infectious and uplifting spirit. All parishes in the district would benefit from collaboration in this area, whether it is a single parish reaching out to another or a cluster working together. In your own case we recommend that you consider home visits and other activities related to evangelization with neighboring parishes such as Our Lady of Divine Providence in Cluster A and All Saints, Blessed Trinity and St. Martin de Porres in Cluster B. It would be exciting to see parishioners, young and old, from the various parishes go out into the neighborhoods together to do home visits on a regular basis. We understand that this is slow and painstaking work. Again, this may be an area where parishes can share the cost of hiring pastoral associates to focus on specific neighborhoods and to coordinate the work of evangelization among them. Val Keller, our Director of Evangelization, is ready to assist you in this area.

We applaud you for your initial efforts in identifying new collaboration partners such as the House of Peace. In building a cluster that includes non-parish entities you are breaking new ground and creating a model that could be replicated by others. The various Capuchin ministries and organizations such as the Dominican Center and the Vincent Center may be potential new partners to consider. Mark Peters, parish consultant with a focus on social justice and human concerns, or Rob Shelledy, Director of Catholic Social Action, can be a resource for you in these efforts.

Because you both serve the Hispanic community, we encourage you to continue the dialogue you have begun with Our Lady of Divine Providence regarding potential



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

collaboration in Hispanic ministry. We understand that finding “the best fit” will take time.

Your challenge in the midst of all this activity will be to keep a focus on the larger picture while also seeking a reasonable balance in ministry to your current membership which is strongly Hispanic and African American, and the newer members you are beginning to attract. Your parish consultant and other diocesan personnel are ready to assist in your efforts connected to evangelization, African American and Hispanic ministry.

To St. Michael and St. Rose Parishes: We understand that while not formally considered cluster partners, a number of parishes across the archdiocese relate to St. Michael and St. Rose in terms of your Summer Bible school program, assisting with food and gifts at Christmas, clothing, etc., and a variety of activities throughout the year. Gesu is a partner with you in supporting programs and ministries of empowerment. These relationships are without a doubt to be continued. We do, however, encourage you to build deeper forms of collaboration that will touch and involve not only your staff and leadership groups, but the average parishioner as well.

We commend St. Michael parish for their ministry in the Hmong and Laotian communities, and for your untiring work in promoting and developing leadership from these communities for service in the Church. It is of great importance that you continue to send representatives from both communities to the meetings of the Asian Ministry Advisory Committee, where they can provide their input for the planning and coordination of programs and events related to the larger Asian Catholic community.

We also commend St. Michael and St. Rose for their support of the ACTS program which assists families in the purchase of their first home and provides educational support to families with children in the public schools. We encourage you to continue to promote this program among the families who have not yet taken full advantage of it.

You have tremendously diverse congregations between the two parishes, and the complexity of providing for their pastoral care may tempt you into becoming too inward-looking. With that said, there are *internal matters* that also merit your attention:

- We are happy to see that you continue to hold regular joint staff meetings as a way to keep the two parishes connected and growing in their collaborative efforts. We commend you for the close relationship your two parishes initiated years ago and have sustained by virtue of sharing your pastor and the services of staff. We believe, though, that the parish councils need to hold joint meetings more frequently. Along with building community, the councils need to study matters of common interest in an ongoing basis, among them:
 1. **The need for evangelization:** The rapid growth which is occurring in the Hispanic community, a group which is traditionally Catholic, should be having a positive impact for both St. Michael and St. Rose. Is that the case? As we



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

have noted in other clusters, we believe that more vigorous efforts at evangelization are needed at this time with a stronger focus on both the Hispanic and African American communities. Our focus on these two groups is not meant to be exclusive it merely highlights their strong presence in your neighborhoods.

2. **Hispanic Ministry:** We commend the Sisters of San Mariana de Jesús for their ministry to Hispanic Catholics at both parishes. We invite them to hold a listening session with interested Hispanic/Latino parishioners and Fr. Robert Stiefvater, Vicar for Hispanic Ministry to assess how well their pastoral needs are being met.
3. **African American Ministry:** We recommend that a listening session is planned for African American parishioners in both parishes for the purpose of assessing pastoral needs. Schauneille Allen, Parish Consultant with a focus on African American Ministry is available to assist you.

We recommend that your councils meet sometime before February 15, 2006 for dialogue designed to identify your strengths, the demographic trends which are impacting you, and to begin to sketch out how you can work together in developing a plan of action. It would be helpful for any listening sessions you decide hold to precede the joint council session, so this input can be presented to the councils. Your parish consultant and other diocesan personnel can assist you plan the listening sessions and joint council meetings.

Finally, we believe that the staff who serve St. Michael and St. Rose are highly skilled in their individual ministries. We support the idea that has surfaced from some of the staff, expressing that they are willing to serve as mentors to others. This can be an excellent way to promote and nurture the *indigenous* leadership of the Asian, Hispanic and African American communities, at the same time that we avoid burnout among the pastoral people who minister among them. The staff has begun to identify parishioners who are pastorally inclined and have the potential to become professional lay ministers. Some of these individuals are second-generation young adults now returning to the parish with the desire to serve. We encourage you to continue your efforts to ensure quality ministry for years to come. How can we assist you?

In closing, let us say that we believe this a time of great promise for you. Please be assured that we will continue to offer the assistance of your parish consultant and other archdiocesan personnel as you move forward with collaboration efforts at both the cluster and district level. We will ask you submit a brief report to the Implementation Commission no later than March 15, 2006 describing your progress in establishing new clusters and clarifying how each of the ministries which were formerly shared are now being handled.



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

To District 13 Cluster Parishes

- St. Benedict the Moor
- Gesu

G*race to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God at every remembrance of you, praying always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right that I should think this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, you who are all partners with me in grace.*

Philippians 1: 2-7

We understand that collaboration specifically between St. Benedict and Gesu is a fairly new development. We are addressing our comments to you as a cluster and hope that you do not consider this a premature designation.

We understand that each of your communities of faith are and have been actively connected to different parishes and ministries within District 13, and that you have done your best to be flexible and responsive to the changes around you. It is exciting to see a cluster beginning to be formed between two religious order parishes. We believe that the charisms of the Jesuit and Capuchin orders, along with your love of the cause of social justice will be a powerful combination!

As we respond to your progress reports on the planning directives, we find that some commendations are in order:

To St. Benedict the Moor Parish: By your work among the poor you “incarnate,” give flesh to, the Beatitudes. As a community intimately connected to the Capuchin Order, it is not always easy for you to be seen as the distinct community of faith that you are. We hope that the significance you hold as the “mother Church” for African American Catholics in our diocese will continue to be celebrated through the annual gathering of St. Benedict alumni and other events.

We understand the challenges you face with a small congregation, however, we firmly believe that your core of faithful parishioners will continue to demonstrate the visionary leadership necessary for growth. Do not let your small numbers inhibit your interaction in collaborative activities, whether it is with Gesu or other parishes. You have impressive gifts to offer. Our recommendation is that as you continue to work with Gesu you seek to identify one or two concrete and “doable” areas for collaboration, and to make the building of community your number one priority!



Autumn 2005

District 13 – Northern Milwaukee County

To Gesu Parish: We commend you for the high degree of caring and thoughtful volunteerism, the generous sharing of resources through the Gesu Endowment fund and your human concerns ministries, as well as the strong focus on social justice which makes that final phrase in your mission statement “... our special care is for the poor” come alive. It would be hard to imagine the Downtown Parishes Collaboration without your presence and support. In you, the poor and disenfranchised have found a friend.

We have heard of your concern, shared by all parishes in District 13, that more assistance is needed to address the plight of the poor and disenfranchised who come to your parishes for assistance and human warmth. We believe that both you and St. Benedict the Moor have a wealth of ideas, creativity and experience to contribute in identifying and designing concrete ways to establish and sustain the type of mutually supportive relationships that we need to have between our parishes, whether they are large or small, urban or suburban that will truly help us be in touch with our brothers and sisters in need. Mark Peters, parish consultant, or Rob Shelledy, Director of Catholic Social Action can be a resource to you in this important area of social concerns.

We noted in our response to District 13 that some parishes or clusters may consider sharing the cost of hiring pastoral associates, “neighborhood workers” if you will, who will focus on specific neighborhoods and coordinate the parish’s or cluster’s work in evangelization in a more consistent and energetic fashion than the parishes are able to do right now. We encourage you to take the initiative in exploring this idea as a concrete way to assist the parishes in the district that do not have the resources they need for this important work.

We applaud you for your willingness to continue to discern where the Spirit is leading you in your relationship with other parishes and entities in District 13 and beyond. We encourage you to continue the dialogue you have begun with St. Benedict the Moor while still being connected to the work of the district. We will ask that you submit a brief written report regarding the status of your collaboration efforts to the Implementation Commission by March 15, 2006.

In closing, let us reiterate that we believe this a time of great promise for you. Please be assured that we will continue to offer the assistance of your parish consultant and other archdiocesan personnel as you move forward with collaboration efforts at both the cluster and district level.