

## **Cluster town hall meeting - 6/27/16 at 7:00 pm @ PLC Richmond**

40 in attendance representing all 3 parishes and both English and Latin masses

### **1. Why we are doing this process?**

- a. Declining number of priest, 79 parishes and about 50 priest, about 40% of the priests will retire in the next ten years.
- b. It takes 8-13 years for seminarian to become a pastor, 5 to 8 years of college and 3-5 years as a parochial vicar. There will likely be a shortage for several years.
- c. Bishop has stated we cannot rely on retired priests we need to have plans in place that do not revolve around them. Would you want a school district to cover a grade with only substitute teachers? Retired priests are retired.

### **2. Why keep the cluster together?**

- a. We have been a cluster for over 15 years
- b. Wellman/Holy Trinity in the same school district which helps planning youth activities and familiarity with youth across parishes.
- c. Joint confirmation classes, youth group, Liturgy committee, Social Action Committee, and Faith Formation Committee.

### **3. Why keep four English Masses?**

- a. No guarantee on what the new 3 English Mass schedule would look like.
- b. Our cluster of 3 serves more families, 655 (2015 family count), than any of the other individual parishes or clusters in the group of 10.
- c. Many young families, 29 1<sup>st</sup> communion candidates for the cluster and we had over 110 students at Vacation Bible School and Totus Tuus.
- d. The English Mass attendance is considerably more that of other clusters with four Masses, 559.5 versus 321 (Hills-Lone Tree-Nichols) and 418 (West Liberty-West Branch) in 2015 and 782.5 versus 294.5 (Hills-Lone Tree-Nichols) and 444.5 (West Liberty-West Branch).
- e. Our cluster is growing. Overall the cluster has grown by 61 individuals (2013 vs. 2015) which is the greatest amount of growth of the 10 parishes. Individually, Riverside and Richmond have the greatest amount of individual growth with Wellman coming in at number 4.
- f. Parish allocation would very likely change. It would be discussed by finance council and lay directors but very likely with Saint Joseph seeing the largest increase

### **4. Why drop an English Mass?**

- a. Canon Law 905 states priest can only say 3 masses on a Sunday.
- b. As priest population is aging, it is in interest of the health of priests to scale back to only 3 masses. All plans call for 1 priest saying 3 masses/weekend.
- c. More than three Masses on the weekend makes the cluster less attractive to other priest and more difficult to get subs to cover.
- d. New bishop may say no exceptions to the 3 mass rule.
- e. If St Mary goes to one English Mass, it may be easier for St Mary to fill ministries. Holy Trinity survived well after going from two to one Mass.

### **5. Why one Parish Pastoral & Finance Council?**

- a. In a sense what we are doing now. Finance and parish council meet together. We have committees working together.
- b. This is the diocesan direction for all clusters. We could look at this as paving the way. Some other clusters are already doing this.