



MOST REVEREND  
MICHAEL R. COTE, D.D.

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October 7, 2010

*To be read or copied and distributed to all parishioners of the Norwich Deanery on the weekend of October 9 and 10, 2010.*

**EMBARGOED UNTIL SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2010, AT 4:00 P.M.**

My dear brothers and sisters in the Norwich Deanery,

With my heartfelt thanks, I express my appreciation to the clergy, religious, and laity who have studied and discussed the pastoral needs of the parishes in your deanery. This is not an easy task. It is difficult to put aside our own interests and to make decisions based solely on the well-being of the Diocese. It is evident from the report containing the recommendations from the four clusters in your deanery that the parish representatives maintained their focus in achieving the goal. Although all recommendations were very seriously considered, it was necessary to make some changes. The result, I believe, is a plan to restructure the deanery in a way that meets the spiritual and pastoral needs of clergy, religious, and the faithful.

In a special way, I join with you in thanking Sister Elissa Rinere, C.P., J.C.D., the Director of the Diocesan Office of Pastoral Planning, for directing and coordinating this effort. Many of you have spoken highly of her ability and the assistance that Sister provides. The Diocese is blessed by her many gifts and her ministry.

## **Cluster 1**

### **Part A**

#### **The Parishes of the Cathedral of Saint Patrick and Saint Joseph in Norwich**

In this cluster, I ask that the Cathedral of Saint Patrick and Saint Joseph Parishes in Norwich begin to work together and collaborate in ministry wherever possible. This collaboration between the two parishes will mark a period of transition leading to eventual yoking. In this arrangement, I will ensure that ministry to the Polish speaking population will continue.

Although it was recommended that Saint Mary or Saint Joseph Parish in Norwich close, for the moment, let us explore other possibilities.

## **Part B**

### **The Parish of Sacred Heart in Norwichtown and Saint John Mission in Fitchville**

Sacred Heart Parish in Norwichtown will continue on as it presently is. The future of Saint John Mission in Fitchville is to be determined by Sacred Heart Parish, pending required permissions from the Bishop.

## **Part C**

### **The Parishes of Saint Mary and Saints Peter and Paul in Norwich**

Saint Mary and Saints Peter and Paul Parishes will continue on as they presently are.

Saint Mary Parish will continue on its own to develop its ethnic ministries which are so vital to the life of the Diocese.

## **Cluster 2**

### **The Parishes of Saint John in Montville, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Quaker Hill, and Our Lady of the Lakes in Oakdale**

This group of three parishes will work together as a cluster. The cluster will focus on merging programs as outlined in your final report to me. This is a pilot program for the Diocese of parishes functioning together in groups or clusters and sharing resources. For this period of transition, the three priests currently assigned to the parishes will remain in place. In order to emphasize the newness of this venture, I suggest that the cluster adopt a name different from any of the parish names in order to identify it as a cluster, for example, the Saint Anne Cluster.

## **Cluster 3**

### **The Parishes of Saint Joseph in Occum, Sacred Heart in Taftville, and Saint Mary in Baltic**

This group of three parishes will work together as a cluster. The cluster will focus on merging programs as outlined in your final report to me. This is a pilot program for the Diocese of parishes functioning together in

groups or clusters and sharing resources. For this period of transition, the three priests currently assigned to the parishes will remain in place.

In order to emphasize the newness of this venture, I suggest that the cluster adopt a name different from any of the parish names in order to identify it as a cluster, for example, the Saint Patrick Cluster.

#### **Cluster 4**

#### **The Parishes of Saint Thomas in Voluntown, Saint Mary in Jewett City, and Saint Catherine of Siena in Preston**

Saint Thomas Parish in Voluntown and Saint Catherine of Siena Parish in Preston will begin working together toward the eventual yoking of the two parishes under one pastor. The future of Saint Anne Mission in Glasgo is to be determined by Saint Thomas Parish, pending required permissions from the Bishop.

St. Mary Parish in Jewett City will continue as it presently is.

Sister Elissa Rinere will soon be in touch with the Deans and Pastors of the Deanery to set out a plan for the work which now begins.

All of us realize the sacrifices and adjustments required by our clergy and by the faithful. This process is about what we can do together. Our response to these changes must emanate from our love for the Lord in the Eucharist, our desire for the Sacraments, and our thirst for the proclamation of the Gospel.

With sincere gratitude to the clergy, religious, and laity who have brought us to this moment in our history as a Diocese, we invoke the intercession of our diocesan patrons, Saint Patrick and Saint Anne. We seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we begin this new chapter in the life of our Diocese.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael R. Cote". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bishop of Norwich