

From the Pastor

Friends,

Below is the announcement that I made last week regarding what the Archdiocese has termed "collaboration."

It is reprinted here so that you can have a copy to keep for yourselves.

God bless,

Fr .C

Last week I received a phone call from our regional bishop, Bishop Mark O'Connell, outlining for me the roll out of the remaining collaboratives for Disciples in Mission.

Bishop Mark told me that we and, of course, St Agnes, will begin as a collaborative in **June of 2019**.

The "collaborative" will be a structure within which our DISTINCT parishes cooperate to free up the priests, deacons, staff, and CERTAIN finances for a greater effort of evangelization.

Within the collaborative, our two parishes will begin by sharing a pastor. If there is to be a parochial vicar, we will share him as well. We will share our deacons and some key members of the staff. It is likely that the priests will live together in one rectory. We will have a new structure for our pastoral council and finance council, and, eventually, we will write one plan for evangelization in our parishes.

We WILL NOT COMBINE finances, though we will proportionally share the cost of the common staff members between the two parishes. The parishes will not be combining bank accounts. Our offertories, and sacramental records, and capital needs (e.g. facility repairs and utilities) will all be tracked separately. So this is NOT A MERGER, meaning that St. Athanasius Parish will keep its name and identity.

However, our two parishes will seek to do more TOGETHER toward evangelization than we are doing now separately. We will work together to write a plan for evangelization, which will include a plan for how to encourage more vocations to the priesthood.

Soon I will have a conversation with Father Rock and the other priests and deacons of Reading about how June 2019 may impact us today and how we can better prepare to make the collaborative transition as smooth as possible. Of course, we will include the Parish and Finance Councils and everyone else as the next two years unfold. If needed, plenty of people from the Archdiocese are happy to come out to answer any questions we might have.

Lastly, it is important that I state my intentions as your pastor. I do not plan on putting my name forward for another assignment between now and June of 2019, but by that time I will have been here for nine years and the Archdiocese may have other plans for me when this collaborative is instituted or even before. To a certain extent we have been discussing this type of arrangement for several years, the only difference now is that we have a more definitive timetable, which is meant to give us a greater sense of clarity, not less. With a positive attitude, we can do a lot of good things for our two parishes and our beloved community on behalf of Our Lord.

Thank you.
