



## **CLUSTER 21**

### **The Roman Catholic Community of the Portland Peninsula and the Islands of Portland Harbor**

#### **Annual Cluster Report 2007-2008**

The Cluster 21 Pastoral Council was formed in September 2007, a first step in implementing the clustering plan that was approved by Bishop Richard Malone in Spring 2007. The council met monthly through June 2008. Comprised of representatives from each parish, Cluster 21 clergy, and the Cathedral School principal, the council worked to define its role, vision, mission, and organization and initiated projects involving communication, catechesis and evangelization, and business and administration.

In summary, the council is pleased to report the following accomplishments:

1. The council drafted and approved a mission statement for the Cluster Council.
2. The council drafted and approved a structure for the council based upon diocesan recommendations.
3. The council initiated communication procedures which included the development and approval of a graphic showing the five churches, a cluster 21 website, and a weekly newsletter insert for each parish bulletin. Bulletin editors worked with the communications committee, considered and rejected a common cluster bulletin, and maintained inter-parish communication through their respective bulletins.
4. The council conducted a needs assessment, which looked at various aspects of parish life, including catechesis, worship, word, community, service, stewardship, and leadership.
5. The council acknowledged the strength of its five parishes and prioritized needs revealed in the assessment. Committees were formed (or continued) to address these areas.
6. The communications committee was continued. Its work centered around promoting the diverse opportunities for involvement, evangelization, and outreach in all five parishes of the cluster. Announcements in the bulletin and from the pulpits encouraged parishioners to participate and feel welcome at events in all five churches.
7. The evangelization and catechesis committee was formed to foster a welcoming atmosphere in our cluster's ministry to reach out to the greater Portland community. Faith formation directors began meeting collaboratively to share resources and plan for a cluster celebration of First Eucharist and

Confirmation at which four of the five parishes participated. They also began working toward common programming and a cluster preparation and celebration of First Reconciliation. The committee considered opportunities to collaborate on aspects of parish life, including catechesis and faith formation, marriage preparation, baptism preparation, RCIA, and youth ministry.

8. The cluster council was pleased to support two major initiatives in promoting our mission to evangelize: *Disciples in Mission* and the *Gather Us In* Redemptorist Mission. Both were very successful and well attended. The parishes of the cluster were also involved in seasonal penitential services and a Cluster Evangelization Day during which parish leaders met to consider our mission. Representatives also attended diocesan sponsored meetings and events to support evangelization.

9. A business and administration committee was formed to consider ways to implement our clustering plan which calls for a business manager and parish life coordinator to be hired by Spring 2009. The committee also discussed the impact of our cluster school, Cathedral School, as well as the new parish assessment formula for parishioners enrolled at parochial schools.

10. The council requested that the diocesan human resources department conduct an audit of the employees and volunteers of the cluster to best assess the cluster's staffing needs.

As the cluster moves forward, the council will consider the following:

1. Further foster communication throughout the cluster
2. Further promote the second year of Disciples in Mission
3. Consider the impact of energy costs at our churches, school, and facilities
4. Develop ways to collaborate on the various ministries of our parishes, particularly youth ministry and sacramental preparation/celebration
5. Adopt job descriptions and set a timeline for hiring a business manager and parish life coordinator

Respectfully submitted,

Cluster 21 Pastoral Council

October 20, 2008