

CLUSTER 28 TRANSITION COMMITTEE

St. Joseph Parish, St. Patrick Parish, St. Pius X Parish, St. Brigid School

CLUSTER OFFICE ORGANIZATION

Last week I presented to you of some decisions regarding how our buildings will be utilized when we come together as Cluster next summer. I informed to you then that our main Cluster office would be located at the St. Joseph friary. This week I present to you the basic plan of how our Cluster office will be organized.

As I have previously mentioned, in our discussions of how the new Cluster office is to be organized, we looked first at the guidelines from the diocese as well as how other clusters have been organized. The diocesan plan advocates the hiring of a full-time business coordinator and a full-time pastoral coordinator. We note that this approach can create a compartmentalization and tension between these two important aspects of cluster life. Thus we decided to explore a model using a team approach where members of the leadership team would have responsibilities in both business and pastoral areas. Another related priority for us is to preserve in as much as is possible the place of our current gifted and faithful employees in our Cluster operation.

With these principles as a background, ***I am pleased to announce to you that Pamela Fogg, the Director of Religious Education of St. Joseph Parish, and Mary Gordon, the Program Coordinator of St. Patrick/St. Pius X parishes, will join me in forming the Cluster 28 administrative team.*** Both of these women have served our parish communities faithfully and well for a good period of time, both have strong pastoral skills as well as business skills, and both are highly respected by our Cluster community. Along with continuing to direct our Cluster Religious Education program, Pam will function as personnel relations manager and have financial oversight of our budget and accounting. Mary will continue to coordinate other parish programs such as Marriage preparation, she will coordinate our ministers and volunteers, and she will have oversight of maintenance and purchasing.

Mary, Pam and I have already begun regular meetings to plan in detail the Cluster operation: analyzing the current needs and functions of our offices, imagining what support staff we will need and their areas of responsibility, working with the administration of St. Brigid School to ascertain how the Cluster office can take some pressure off of them, and planning for the future with projects like a uniform phone system and Cluster data base. Our hope is that our planning efforts will affect a smooth transition next summer. Our date for opening the Cluster office is July 1st.

Next week, parishioners of the three parishes will receive a letter from me in the mail that will include ***a draft Mass schedule*** for the Cluster and my rationale for the choices made. All of us hopefully understand the necessity of adjusting the Mass schedule so that the Cluster can be served by fewer priests. At the same time, I know seeing the proposed changes in print will create strong feelings for many of you no matter how committed you may be to our forming a larger community of faith. On ***Sunday, March 14***, I will host ***another town hall meeting at 2pm at St. Pius X*** to present an additional opportunity for us to have a conversation about this challenging issue and any other concerns you may have about the clustering process.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to communicate with me (lafortainesj@live.com) or one of the other committee members if at any time you have input you wish to share – you can call your parish or school office for contact information. Please continue to keep us and this process in your prayers.

- Fr. Jim Lafontaine