



Gates-Chili Catholic Parishes

Holy Ghost
St. Helen
St. Jude
St. Pius X
St. Theodore

Pastoral Plan for 2010 – 2015

INTRODUCTION

Gates-Chili Catholic Council

In June 2008 the Gates-Chili Catholic parishes of Holy Ghost, St. Helen, St. Jude, St. Pius X, and St. Theodore, formed the Gates-Chili Catholic Council. This council is composed of the five pastoral leaders and three parishioners from each parish. A liaison from the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Office is also part of the group. The Council's guiding philosophy is that as five individual faith communities we each have our own communal personality with different strengths, resources and limitations but we are also members of the same Church, baptized in the same Holy Spirit and are disciples of the same Lord.

The first purpose of the Council was to encourage and coordinate the efforts of the five parishes to use their resources more effectively in carrying out the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus. During the year 2008 – 2009 it created and oversaw three Standing committees charged to design and implement plans for shared ministry in the areas of Social Ministry; Faith Formation and Youth Ministry; and Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality. The results of these ongoing collaborations are detailed in appendix A.

The second charge of the Council was to draft a five-year pastoral plan for 2010 – 2015. In a letter dated November 15, 2004, Bishop Clark asked the five Gates-Chili parishes to outline a plan which should “continue to build appropriate collaborative ministries” and “respond to the circumstances caused by a declining number of priests.” In a letter dated March 25, 2009, Bishop Clark informed the Council that they should “expect the number of priests assigned to your [five] parishes to decline from the current five to four... in June of 2010.”

Vietnamese Catholic Community

St. Helen is the home parish for the Vietnamese Catholic Community. The members of this Community are parishioners of St. Helen's and, therefore, part of the Gates-Chili Planning Group. However, Bishop Clark has an agreement with the Congregation of the Mother Co-Redemptrix, a Vietnamese religious order, to provide a priest to minister to these Vietnamese parishioners. Currently, Fr. Joseph Canh, CMC is serving the Vietnamese-speaking parishioners of St. Helen's. Bishop Clark made it very clear in his letter dated March 25, 2009, that when referring to the four priests available to the Gates-Chili parishes in June of 2010, he was not counting Fr. Joseph Canh, CMC as one of the four.

GATES-CHILI PASTORAL PLAN for 2010 – 2015

After many meetings with Council members, Parish Councils, and parishioners from all five parishes the Council developed the following plan.

Collaboration

Social Ministry; Faith Formation and Youth Ministry; Adult Faith Formation and Spirituality

- Each of the above three standing committees of the Gates-Chili Catholic Council will continue to meet and carry on the great strides they have made in shared ministry. (See appendix A)
- Each of the five parishes will support and promote the efforts of these three standing committees.
- Membership will continue to include people from each of the five parishes and where appropriate, professional parish staff.

Future Opportunities

- All five parishes will continue to work together to build relationships with one another, and keep building an alliance.
- Future areas of collaboration may include, but not be limited to, other parish ministries; sharing buildings and human resources; budgets; and finances.

Parish Configuration

In light of the fact that in June 2010 the number of priests assigned to our five parishes will decline from 5 to 4, (not including the priest assigned to the Vietnamese-speaking parishioners of St. Helen's) we recommend the following:

- St. Pius X and St. Theodore continue as single parishes. Each parish would preferable be served by a priest pastor.
- Holy Ghost, St. Helen, and St. Jude cluster in June 2010 and be served by two priests, preferably a priest pastor and a parochial vicar (associate priest).
- Three masses would be celebrated each weekend at the single parishes and two at each of the clustered parishes.
- It is our understanding that it remains the responsibility of Bishop Clark to arrange for the sacramental ministry to the Vietnamese-speaking parishioners at St. Helen's. With this in mind, one additional mass would be celebrated by this individual each weekend at St. Helen for the Vietnamese Community.

- Initially each parish in the cluster (Holy Ghost, St. Helen, and St. Jude) will retain its own identity, ministry programs and staff.
- The parishes in the cluster will study the benefits of sharing staff, ministries, councils, and resources. Over time the cluster might work toward becoming a single parish with multiple worship sites.
- Ministry partnerships are encouraged between all five parishes, not just for those involved in the cluster.
- The four priests assigned would work together to serve the entire Gates-Chili community along with their assigned parishes.
- Currently four deacons are serving the Gates-Chili parishes. The ministries they provide in the areas of service, preaching, baptizing and marrying are greatly appreciated. The pastoral leader of the new cluster should work with deacon personnel and the involved deacons so that their ministry will be collaborative and to all 3 parishes of the cluster.

Transition Year 2010

- The Gates-Chili Catholic Council will continue to meet in 2010, aiding the parishes during the transition.
- The Council may invite staff members to its meetings to solicit input on how best to implement the changes at each parish.
- By May 2010 (before the cluster is created) the new weekend mass schedule will begin and remain in effect for at least 12 months. Hopefully this will help dissociate the change in mass schedule from the new pastoral leaders.
 - St. Pius X and St. Theodore: 3 masses each per weekend
 - Holy Ghost, St. Helen, and St. Jude: 2 masses each per weekend
 - St. Helen: 1 Vietnamese mass per weekend
- During the first half of the year the current five pastoral leaders will start work on a tentative daily and Holy Day mass schedule.

CONCLUSION

Over the past three months all pastoral councils, parish staffs, and parishioners at large have had the opportunity to have their questions addressed and to offer their input. After making revisions the five parish councils were able to affirm the above plan as the one that “best provides the regions its sacramental and spiritual needs, thus improving the usage of resources (both personnel and assets), and more easily maintains the identity of each parish.” (*“Maslow's hierarchy” adapted for parishes*)