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November 27, 2011

Dear Fellow Parishioner:

I write to share with you some news about Together in Faith, the pastoral planning process affecting every parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit and involving about 1,500 volunteers nominated by their pastors. Together in Faith has enabled lay leaders throughout southeast Michigan to evaluate their parish situations and those of neighboring parishes in an open, collaborative process to propose to the Archbishop what should be done to be better stewards of our resources and to fulfill our mission – Sharing Christ in and through the Church. In many cases, the recommendations coming forth from the planning process will involve parishes working more closely together on various priorities, and in some cases will result in the clustering or merging of parishes.

These volunteers, including those from your parish, have been meeting in 40 planning groups comprised of neighboring parishes throughout the Archdiocese. Over the past ten months, these planning groups drafted recommendations on their ministries and plans for the future. These recommendations have been thoroughly reviewed by the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC), a group of consulters to Archbishop Allen Vigneron who help represent Catholic parishioners in the Archdiocese of Detroit. The APC, of which I am the chairman, will make its recommendations to Archbishop Vigneron on November 30 based on the proposed plans received from each parish planning group.



The recommended plans will focus on how we will, as one Church, manage our resources to fulfill our seven mission priorities: Evangelization and Catechesis; Christian Service Outreach; Youth and Young Adults; Lay Leadership; Stewardship and Administration; Catholic School Education; and Vocations.

It is important that you know what is being considered regarding your parish. In this spirit, and to fulfill the Archbishop's commitment to transparency, the planning group recommendations and the subsequent APC recommendations will soon be published on the archdiocesan website. This will be the same information that Archbishop Vigneron will receive.

Please know that the recommendations to be published on the archdiocesan website are not final plans. We share them to keep you, as an active member of your parish, aware of the planning process. In the weeks ahead, the Archbishop will pray and reflect on these recommendations. He will also meet with archdiocesan consultative bodies to discuss the proposed actions. The Archbishop may accept the proposed plans in their entirety and may amend others. He will communicate his decisions to the entire Archdiocese in early February 2012.

To view the planning group and APC recommendations (to be published in the days ahead) as well as many other details on Together in Faith, please visit: www.AODonline.org/TogetherInFaith.

Though many decisions remain, I firmly believe our efforts, the Archbishop's leadership, and your faithfulness will lead us to be better, stronger stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to us. In all these efforts, I am encouraged by the words of Saint Paul: "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."

I encourage you to speak with your pastor and your parish planning group representatives regarding Together in Faith – you can contact your parish office to get in touch with them. If you have questions, please call 313-237-5971 or email TogetherInFaith@aod.org.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Edward (Chip) Miller
Chairman, Archdiocesan Pastoral Council