

2003-2008 DIOCESAN PLAN FOR PARISHES

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of New Ulm,

Our diocese has been working for many years to identify adequate resources, in terms of personnel, finances and physical structures, to carry out effectively the mission of the Church. Serious challenges have arisen in our local Church because of a decrease in the number of active priests, the shifting of residential population due to the farm crisis and urban sprawl, and the aging of a large portion of those who make up our Sunday congregations.

While we have tried to "cluster" parishes by leaving each parish community on its own and stretching the services of the clergy, we are now finding that this approach will simply no longer work. Instead, a new approach, outlined in this Plan, seeks to maximize our strengths through a collaborative adventure called an Area Faith Community.

The Plan is not radical, but it will require a new way of envisioning our Catholic way of life. It will require us to have what the Holy Father calls a "spirituality of communion" which is a greater identity with the Body of Christ, making room for more of our Catholic brothers and sisters and sharing in their burdens as well as their joys.

May the good work that we have only begun here be carried out, with God's grace, to a successful conclusion.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "John M. [unclear]".



a PEOPLE



a PLACE



plan for parishes MISSION

Diocesan Mission Statement

The Diocese of New Ulm is a people and a place. It is the Catholic laity, religious, priests, and bishop who are Christ's disciples in fifteen counties of south-western Minnesota. In union with Catholic dioceses throughout the world, the people of this diocese hand on, celebrate, and live the faith of the Church. With the entire Church, this diocese exists to continue the mission that Jesus was sent to accomplish.

Jesus' mission was to establish God's reign in human history. Jesus accomplished his mission through his prophetic word, priestly worship, and pastoral service. Jesus proclaimed the good news of God's love and forgiveness, offered true praise and thanksgiving to the Father, and reached out to all people, especially to the poor, the sick, and the needy. By his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus set us free to continue His mission.

The Church's mission is to be the sign and instrument of God's reign by communicating God's saving love for all people, sacramentally celebrating God's love, and witnessing to God's love in daily life - in family life, work and recreation, education and cultural life, business and agriculture, parish and civic activity, works of mercy and justice.



plan for parishes PRIORITIES

- ◆ Implementation of the Plan for Parishes
- ◆ Introduction of an annual diocesan stewardship appeal
- ◆ More focused recruitment of priestly and religious vocations
- ◆ Establishment of formation programs for lay ecclesial ministers
- ◆ Begin a three-year evangelization process



plan for parishes MINISTRIES

The Mission of the Church has four essential elements - Word, Worship, Service, and Stewardship. This Mission is the same for the diocese, the area faith community, and the parish.

It is important to point out that the Mission includes a responsibility for diverse populations. The fastest growing group in the diocese is Spanish-speaking people and the Mission of the Church is to provide ministry to people in an understandable language and in a culturally appropriate way. To this end, some form of diocesan or regional Hispanic ministry structure will be required.

Each of these four essential elements can be characterized by the ministries which flow from them.

WORD - The Gospel of Jesus Christ must be handed on in daily life by:

- ◆ Religious instruction and formation of children and youth
- ◆ Methods of evangelization to those inactive, distanced or new to the community
- ◆ Ongoing faith formation of adults, families and groups with special interests and issues
- ◆ Teaching and spiritual guidance to individuals during times of special need
- ◆ Access to Catholic schools for those seeking enrollment

WORSHIP - The mysteries of faith must be celebrated in order to build up a community of faith, hope and love by:

- ◆ Preparation and participation in the

- ◆ Eucharistic liturgy on the Lord's day
- ◆ Communal and individual celebration of the sacraments
- ◆ Promotion of spiritual practices, including family-centered prayer in the home
- ◆ Special prayer services, gatherings, and events to build the faith life of the community

SERVICE - Public witness must be given to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by:

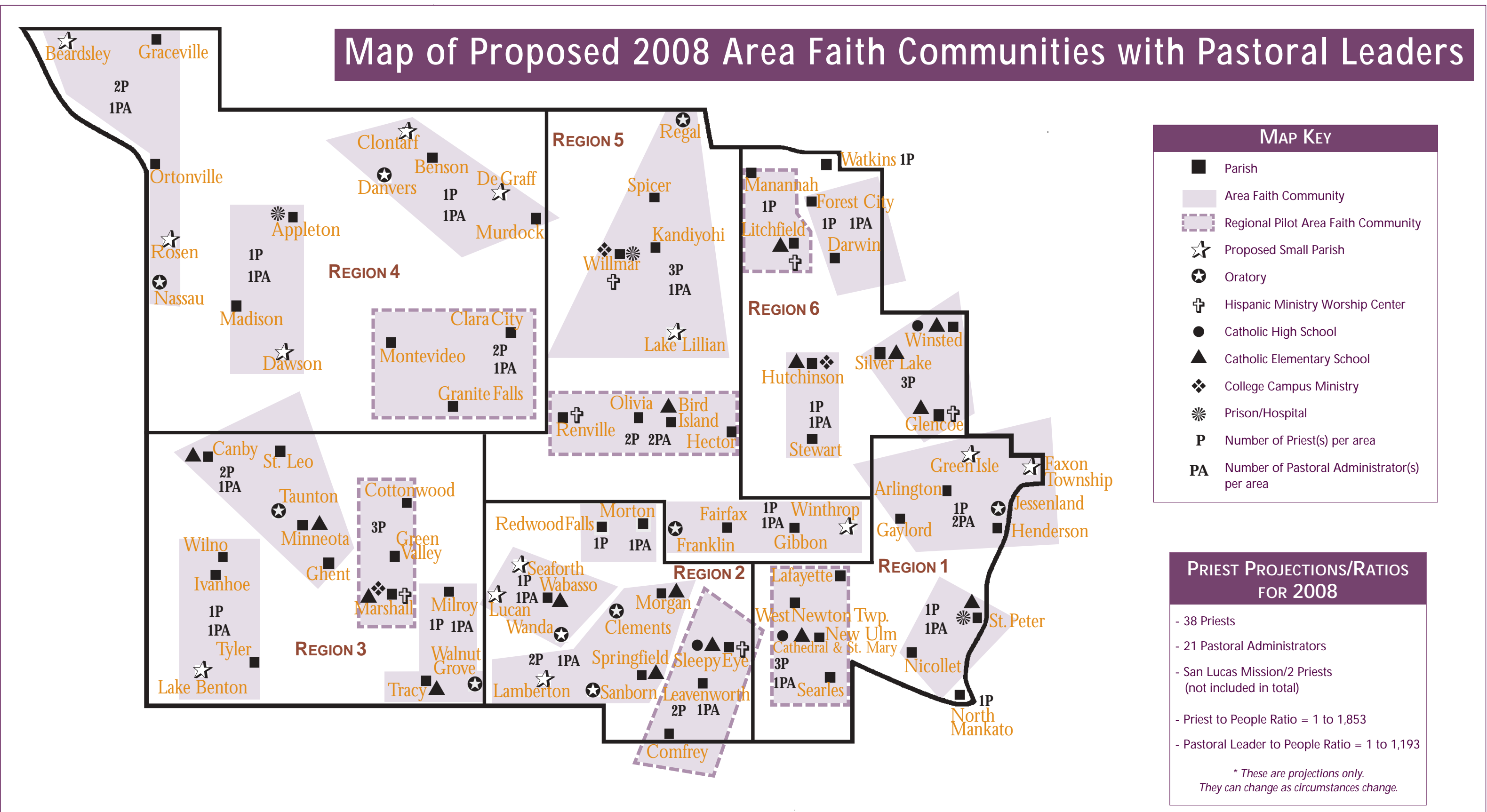
- ◆ Outreach to meet the temporal needs of the poor, lonely, and disenfranchised
- ◆ Study and action related to issues of social concern and justice
- ◆ Care for the sick, suffering, dying and grieving, and other works of mercy

- ◆ Fostering healthy relationships and family life through contact, support, and activities

STEWARDSHIP - Attend to the proper use of parish personnel, funds, properties and activities by:

- ◆ Providing support, supervision, and training for parish staff and volunteers
- ◆ Assuring just treatment and adequate compensation for personnel and volunteers
- ◆ Ensuring proper maintenance and safe upkeep of resources and properties
- ◆ Exercising fiscal responsibility in manners consistent with diocesan policies and in compliance with civil law

Map of Proposed 2008 Area Faith Communities with Pastoral Leaders



MAP KEY

- Parish
- Area Faith Community
- ▨ Regional Pilot Area Faith Community
- ☆ Proposed Small Parish
- ⊕ Oratory
- ⊕ Hispanic Ministry Worship Center
- Catholic High School
- ▲ Catholic Elementary School
- ◆ College Campus Ministry
- ⊛ Prison/Hospital
- P Number of Priest(s) per area
- PA Number of Pastoral Administrator(s) per area

PRIEST PROJECTIONS/RATIOS FOR 2008

- 38 Priests
- 21 Pastoral Administrators
- San Lucas Mission/2 Priests (not included in total)
- Priest to People Ratio = 1 to 1,853
- Pastoral Leader to People Ratio = 1 to 1,193

** These are projections only. They can change as circumstances change.*

The Area Faith Community a new way of organizing parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm

What is an Area Faith Community?

An Area Faith Community is comprised of two or more parishes, small parishes or oratories and entrusted to the care of one pastor with a pastoral staff or pastoral leaders who work together to carry out the ministries in the area.

Pastoral Needs

There will be an Area Pastoral Council and committees which

meet to examine the pastoral needs of the area and to recommend responses to those needs. This model also serves to maintain the Catholic traditions of individual parishes and communities.

Administrative Needs

Each parish has an Administrative Council, which includes the responsibilities of the Finance Council and some of the Parish Pastoral Council. This Council monitors finances,

buildings, and other specific parish matters and activities.

Although the Area Faith Community is a common model for collaboration, it is also envisioned to develop uniquely at each location. Pastoral leaders and parish leadership will need to work closely together and to learn from the experiences of other area faith communities as they adapt the model to their area.

PROFILE OF THE AREA FAITH COMMUNITY MODEL

- Comprised of two or more parishes and small parishes or oratories
- Advances the mission of the Church in an area based on geography, population, and school districts
- Entrusted to the care of a pastor or pastoral leaders
- Has an Area Pastoral Council and committees
- Shares the cost of area personnel, ministries and pastoral programs by a proportionate assessment

Small Parish or an Oratory? Determining factors and classifications

SMALL PARISH

The "Small Parish" classification is given to parishes when their membership, revenues, ministerial activity, and need for pastoral staffing declines to a certain level and parish self-studies and demographic projections indicate that the trend will continue. The Plan is recommending that thirteen parishes be classified as "Small Parishes."

Determining Factors

- ◇ Staffing for pastoral leadership is at half-time or less both in amount of service and financial compensation.
- ◇ The registered membership is nearly or less than 115 households/225 parishioners and state population projections indicate a continuing decline.
- ◇ The revenues are nearly or less than \$75,000 (in 2003 dollars), savings are diminishing, and income trends indicate a steady decline.
- ◇ Over one-fourth of the annual parish budget is spent on building maintenance and utilities and the percentage is increasing.
- ◇ The enrollment in the Religious Education program is small and future enrollment projections indicate a continuing decline.
- ◇ The distance to a neighboring parish is within a reasonable driving time.

Classification

- ◇ Parish leadership is less than full time in the amount of service and financial compensation.
- ◇ Many of the ministerial activities take place at other area faith community sites.
- ◇ Has an active Administrative Council.

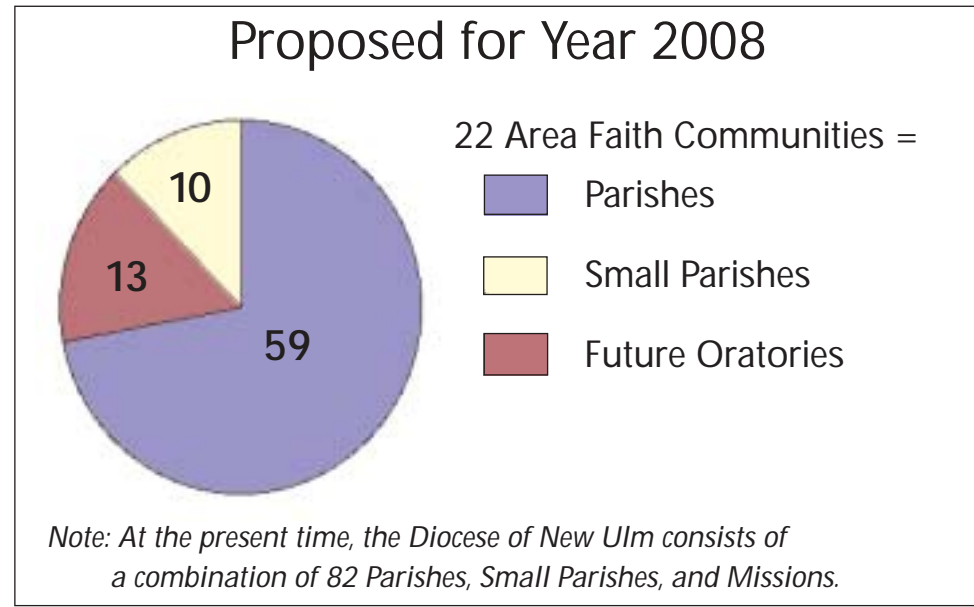
- ◇ Has membership on the Area Pastoral Council and committees.

ORATORY

The classification of "oratory" is new to this Plan. It is a classification which is permitted under the Code of Canon Law (canon 1223) and allows for church properties to be integrated into the ministry of the area faith community. Oratory is an optional classification for small parishes as their membership and contributions continue to decline yet they have adequate financial means to maintain the church building. The Plan is recommending ten sites as future "oratories."

Determining Factors

- ◇ A priest appointed or given faculties by the bishop will not be available to preside at a regular Sunday Mass.
 - ◇ Staffing for pastoral leadership is at a minimal level.
 - ◇ The registered membership is nearly or less than 90 households/150 parishioners and state population projections indicate a continuing decline.
 - ◇ The revenues are nearly or less than \$50,000 (in 2003 dollars), savings are diminishing, and income trends indicate a steady decline.
 - ◇ Nearly half or more than half of the annual budget is devoted to building maintenance and utilities.
 - ◇ The signs of Sacramental life – the numbers for Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony, RCIA – are minimal.
- ### Classification
- ◇ Ceases to exist as a parish or small parish.



A weekly Sunday liturgy is no longer celebrated in the church building. The people need to register in another parish because that is where they will primarily participate in a Sunday liturgy.

- ◇ The church building remains as a place of occasional worship. It may be used for weddings and funerals, devotions, private and communal prayer, a weekday Mass, and feast days proper to the oratory. The Blessed Sacrament may be reserved, provided there is adequate security. Other activities and programs may be conducted and financially supported as determined by the area faith community in consultation with the Diocese.
- ◇ The civil corporation continues.
- ◇ Sacraments of Initiation will be celebrated at the appropriate church in the area faith community.
- ◇ The oratory is administered and managed by the designated parish.

Implementation of the Plan for Parishes

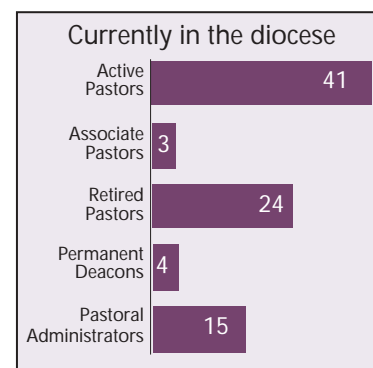
Because this Plan is based on increasing levels of collaboration, the implementation will be more of an evolution or gradual unfolding.

A seven-step planning process, leading to a two-year implementation plan, was designed to guide the transition into an Area Faith Community.

Twenty-five parishes have already completed the process. The remaining parishes will participate in the planning process over the next two years.

The classifications of proposed Small Parish and future Oratory will take effect between now and the year 2008.

Pastoral leadership in the Diocese of New Ulm providing hope for years to come



Ministries in the diocesan parishes are under the leadership and direction of clergy, religious, and lay ecclesial ministers. These ministers can be identified by the following roles.

Pastors:

The pastoral care of parishes is entrusted to an ordained pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop (canon 515).

Associate Pastors (Parochial Vicars):

Senior associate pastors may be priests who work in specialized ministry, are nearing retirement or have recently transferred into the diocese. Junior associates are younger priests and the newly ordained.

Retired Priests:

Retired priests will not be assigned to a specific parish. If health permits, retired priests may be available for sacramental ministry or emergencies.

Permanent Deacons:

Deacons who move into the diocese are appointed to assignments by the bishop.

Pastoral Administrators:

When there is a shortage of priests, a pastoral administrator may be, in accord with Canon

Law (canon 517.2), entrusted by the bishop to provide for the ordinary day-to-day pastoral, spiritual and administrative care of the parish. The diocesan Supervisor of Pastoral Administrators is appointed by the bishop to supervise the pastoral care in the parish and the ministry of the pastoral administrator.

Lay Ecclesial Ministers:

The parishes in an Area Faith Community are responsible for hiring all other needed ministry

personnel, such as Directors of Religious Education, Youth Ministers, Business Managers, Parish Secretaries, Catholic School Faculty, etc.

Volunteer Parish Ministers:

Essential to the effectiveness and quality of parish ministry are the many volunteers who work directly with the programs, events, activities, and plans such as catechists, liturgical ministers, social concerns personnel, council and committee members.