

21 criteria guiding the creation of draft proposals for parishes

1. Plan on 25% growth based on 2015 October Mass counts. The proposals must allow enough space for new Sunday Mass attendees. **Counting the North American Martyrs Mass-goers with the St. Bernadette mass-goers following the October count of each parish for 2015 reveals: 915 for North American Martyrs and 2,292 for St. Bernadette's yielding a combine total of 3,207 persons attending Mass on a given weekend. Allowing for a 25% growth of 801 persons will yield a total of 4008 persons.**
2. Consider the total population (Catholics and others) of the area. **The Vital Statistics Summary of Vicariate 2, District 1 shows the 2015 General Population for St. Bernadette Parish as 12,620 and 16,062 for North American Martyrs Parish.**
3. Plan for individual parishioner registrations of between 7,000 and 60,000. **The Vital Statistics Summary of Vicariate 2, District 1 shows the 2015 Registrations for St. Bernadette at 7,356 and for North American Martyrs it is 2,935 or a combined total of 10,291 registrations.**
4. Build upon existing collaboration between parishes when possible. **St. Bernadette Parish and North American Martyrs Parish already collaborate in several ways including: helping each other with communal penance services, both pastors met with Diocesan officials about a possible merger of their schools, members of the Monroeville Interfaith Ministerium, members of both parishes in the Knights of Columbus Council at St. Bernadette's, St. Vincent de Paul Society whose local council serves persons living in Monroeville and Pitcairn, youth groups from each parish sharing several mission trips with Habitat for Humanity and to Appalachia, teamed together for the New Evangelization for the New Millennium Conference three years in a row, healing Masses at both parishes and the pastors are both members of the same support group.**
5. Anticipate growth with respect to parishioner gatherings outside of Mass and growth in staff, with adequate space for office, meetings, large and small gatherings and parking. **St. Bernadette's has the Lourdes Center and Biedenbach Hall and North American Martyrs has DeLuca Hall. Depending on the outcome of the decision on the future of the Catholic schools in our area, North American Martyrs has put on hold its plan to build new offices for the principal, advancement director and school secretary as well as making available another meeting room. Similarly, plans for building a perpetual Eucharistic Adoration chapel have been put on hold by the diocese pending the outcome of the On Mission for Church Alive process. The seating capacity for each church is over 800 (St. Bernadette- 840 and NAM- 826). While both churches have ample parking the traffic flow is less congested at NAM.**
6. Consider the present needs for pastoral care and plan for realistic, sustainable growth for the next 20 years. **North American Martyrs campus has 25 acres unlike St. Bernadette which has no room to grow.**
7. Based on no less than 1,000 persons attending Sunday Mass against the 2015 October counts and preferably between 2,000 and 4,000 Sunday Mass goers to ensure quality worship, accessibility to a priest, and enough resources to provide excellent pastoral care and evangelization. **If the two churches became one parish with an estimated six Masses altogether (and accounting for 25% growth as the diocese has asked) would yield a total of 4008 persons. Dividing their combined October Count by six (accounting for growth) would yield an average of 668 per Mass.**
8. Do not exceed 1 priest for every 2,400 persons attending Sunday Mass against the 2015 October counts and preferably between 2,000 and 4,000 Sunday Mass goers to ensure quality worship, accessibility to a priest, and enough resources to provide excellent pastoral care and evangelization. **Both pastors feel that 1 priest for every 2,400 persons should include those parishioners who are registered and not just those who attend Mass since these pastors are responsible for these souls as well eg. Communion calls, funerals, etc. If that is the case, then combining parish registrations of both parishes yields a total of 10,291 persons which easily satisfies the ratio of 1 priest for every 2,400 persons.**

9. Assignments for priests include coverage of hospitals, prisons, nursing homes and other institutions with sacramental needs. **There are about 14 health care institutions (hospitals and nursing homes) circumscribed by the territorial areas of both parishes. Forbes Hospital is within walking distance of North American Martyrs Parish.**
10. Consider natural traffic patterns and topography to ensure accessibility to worship. **Pastoral Council members, Finance Council members, On Mission Team volunteers and parishioners in general say that there is a low probability that parishioners from the Monroeville parishes will drive 20 to 25 minutes to the Plum parishes. This is seen as particularly difficult for the elderly who make up a large part of the Mass-goers. An exception is the Sunday night Mass at St. Bernadette in which people are willing to travel the distance since it is a Mass of convenience. Otherwise, it is felt that parishioners from the two Monroeville parishes will go to the other Catholic church in Monroeville, St. Colman (Turtle Creek), St. Regis (Trafford) or Mother of Sorrows (Murrysville) the last two of which are in the Diocese of Greensburg but closer to people of NAM than any of the parishes in Plum. Moreover, if too many obstacles are set up, Council members feel that some Catholics will start attending Protestant churches or non-denominational churches which are a closer distance away.**
11. Consider existing relationships and connections among communities. **The two parishes in Monroeville are in the Gateway School District. The three parishes in Plum are in the Plum School District. There is not a lot of connections or relationships between the two parishes in Monroeville and the three parishes in Plum other than helping each other with communal penance services.**
12. Consider where registered parishioners live in relationship to their current parish territorial boundaries. **See answer to #10.**
13. In order to provide a strong financial base for ministry, do not group parishes in great financial distress together—or those of great affluence together—unless no neighboring parish is in a different situation. **St. Bernadette and North American Martyrs can partially offset each other by St. Bernadette helping North American Martyrs with its operating surplus while North American Martyrs helps St. Bernadette with its indebtedness.**
14. For the sake of outreach to the poor and the salvation of souls, the criteria for financial viability can be waived if there is a sound alternative financial plan. **A sound alternative financial plan could better be arranged once the future of St. Bernadette School and NAM School is known.**
15. Consider the impact that parish debt or savings will have on another parish if there is a merger. This includes the transfer of debt and/or savings as to not gravely or disproportionately impact the parishes reception of new parish entity. **See answer to #13.**
16. Plan for 60% of the 2016 diocesan priests in active ministry based on current priest and seminarian projections. That projection would be 133 priests in active ministry. **With 133 priests in active ministry, Fr. Gargotta and Fr. Luisi could manage the combined parish as part of a team-ministry model with the help of one chaplain and two deacons.**
17. Assume that 100 permanent deacons will be available to serve in parishes. **See answer to #16.**
18. Plan for no more than 1 Saturday Vigil and 2 Sunday Masses per priest assigned. **We envision six Masses altogether, with three Masses at each church and three Masses/priest.**
19. The proposals may call for a Deacon Administrator or Parish Life Collaborator without a resident priest, if a non-resident Priest Director provides oversight and care of souls. **This is not necessary in our model.**
20. When possible, assume that the priestly residence is separate from rectory offices to provide adequate personal space for the priest(s). **Both rectories could be occupied with one priest at each rectory.**
21. If the proposal includes priests living together, the rectory must have adequate living space for each of them. **There is adequate living space at both rectories for both priests and a missionary priest.**