



Faith in Our Future Planning has completed the Steps 4 & 5 phase of the initiative. Our Cohort #14, consisting of Holy Family, St. Joseph's, Jesus the Lord, and St. Clement's has conducted extensive conversations about the Preliminary recommendations from the Diocesan Planning Commission.

The Cohort #14 response to the Commission reads: Cohort #14 feels the preliminary recommendation of Model Two: Linked Parishes among Holy Family Church, St. Ann Church (Cohort #15), and St. Catherine Laboure (Cohort #15) would not achieve the stated goal of Faith in Our Future, *to strengthen and enliven our parishes*, but would instead place an undue administrative and logistic burden on the Pastor tasked with the responsibility of nurturing all of its parishioners and varied ministries.

Holy Family Church is not adverse to the Linked Model as defined in Canon Law. But, Cohort #14 and Holy Family Church believe that the more effective "Linked Model" would be linking Holy Family Church with St. Joseph Church within Cohort #14.

- **Model One: Collaborative Parishes** among the linked parishes, St. Clement, and the new parish community at the St. Joseph site.

Response: Cohort #14 has begun extensive Parish collaboration discussions involving youth ministry, youth and adult religious education, outreach to lapsed Catholics, facility maintenance planning, liturgical celebrations, and more. We believe by continuing and expanding collaboration among Jesus the Lord, Saint Joseph, Holy Family, and St. Clement, we will achieve the Faith in Our Future goals.

- **Model Three: Merged Parishes** between Jesus the Lord Parish and St. Joseph Parish at the St. Joseph's site, no later than July 2018, pending a structural review and maintenance appraisal of buildings.

Response: Jesus the Lord Parish respectfully acknowledges the changes needed to strengthen and enliven the Church in the Diocese of Trenton and plan for significant reductions in clergy over the next ten years. We have prayerfully thought through the recommended merger of Jesus the Lord and Saint Joseph Parishes. While we prefer to maintain Jesus the Lord as a neighborhood Parish, the reality is that this cannot continue indefinitely.

We believe the goals of Faith in Our Future would be better accomplished by first linking Saint Joseph and Holy Family, building collaboration between the four Cohort #14 Parishes, then merging Jesus the Lord and Saint Joseph Parishes. Therefore, after prayerful consideration, we reconfirm our recommendation to continue at this time as a neighborhood Parish, support the linking of Saint Joseph and Holy Family Parishes, develop extensive collaboration with the Cohort #14 Parishes, and merge Jesus the Lord and Saint Joseph Parishes upon the retirement of Fr. Kenneth W. Ekdahl in 2022. It is our belief that this is the best plan for achieving the goals, providing needed time for most effectively transitioning our local neighborhood parishioners, and provide a meaningful transition to retirement for Fr. Ken.

IF YOU NEED TO CATCH UP you can find resources at dioceseoftrenton.org/faithinourfuture.

Please continue your prayers for all the parishes in our in our diocese.