



# New Life

Through the Tender Compassion of Our God



## Regional Planning for Mission: Meeting Agenda (1.5 Hours)

**Total Time:** 90 minutes

**Purpose:** To gather in prayer and reflection as we begin the “Planning for Mission” process in our parishes.

**Location:** Sts. Peter and Paul, Warren | Wednesday, January 21, 2026 | 6:30 p.m.

**Parishes:** Sts. Peter and Paul, Warren; St. Mary’s, Euclid; St. Joseph’s, Oslo; Holy Trinity, Tabor

**Approximately 70 participants and Fr. John Wilebski**

**DPC Member:** Brian Wavra

**Jim Remer, Janelle Gergen, Bishop Cozzens**

### 1. Welcome and Introduction – Jim (5 minutes)

- “Who am I, and why are we here?”
  - Announcements made at parishes.
  - Time to hear from Bishop, adoration, feedback, questions.
- Brief overview of the purpose and spirit of the session.
  - Explain what we will do this evening
  - Briefly review principles from Regional Planning Process document.
    - Principles 5-8 of overview document.

### 2. Why We Are Here – Bishop (15 minutes)

- Opening Prayer by Bishop Cozzens
- What is *Planning for Mission*?
- Why prayer is the foundation of this process.
- Invitation to enter a time of reflection before the Lord.
- Announce that we will collect the questions after the sharing.

### 3. Eucharistic Adoration with Benediction (20 minutes)

#### Guided Reflection Prompts:

Bishop led a guided reflection before the Blessed Sacrament, inviting parishioners to answer the three questions below.

Three questions are provided on a half-page handout and collected afterward.

1. How have you encountered Jesus at your parish?
2. What is the greatest challenge you face as a parish?
3. What would need to change for your parish to grow?

*(Conclude with Benediction.)*

#### **4. Small Group Sharing (15 minutes)**

1. How have you encountered Jesus at your parish?
2. What is the greatest challenge you face as a parish?
3. What would need to change for your parish to grow?

#### **5. Large Group Sharing (10 minutes)**

Greatest challenge: Having a priest. Lay people willing to help but need a priest for the sacraments.

COVID really created a struggle for people to maintain their faith – especially when churches were closed. Some parishes haven't recovered.

#### **6. The Planning for Mission Process – Bishop (15 minutes)**

- Review of the *Planning for Mission* handout.
- Review of scenarios sheet.
- Walk through the steps of the process.

#### **7. Closing and Questions (10 minutes)**

- Floor open for comments or questions.
  - Who will lead this process locally? Answer: Fr. John Wilebski, current parochial vicar of Sacred Heart, E. Grand Forks; Holy Trinity, Tabor; St. Francis, Fisher
  - What are some of the things that led up to the decision for change here? Answer: During strategic visioning process Bishop Cozzens led when he arrived, the priests of the diocese requested a process of parish planning/long-range planning in light of upcoming priest retirements.
  - Where does a parish's financial resources go during a merger? Answer: To the parish jurisdiction or "receiving" parish of the territory of the former parish.
  - When our priests retire, can they help at a parish that needs a priest? It depends. Our diocese is rural and spread out. It doesn't always work to get them where there is a need for sacramental coverage.
  - Questions around cemetery funds during a merger. Receiving parishes, trustees and pastor of the receiving parish manage the funds for perpetual care of the cemetery according to canonical norms.

- Question asked about number of households/parishioners determining viability of a parish. Answer: It is one factor. Discussion around small farming communities diminishing.
  - Question about how clustering decision was made – example: Four parishes coming together to discern with one priest. Response provided around numbers and demographics; greater pastoral needs result in locations with higher population.
  - What is the biggest hurdle that we have experienced in doing this type of work? What is our best advice for these discernment group? Answer: People love their churches, their communities, and their priests – which is great – but it also means change is hard. Comments about honoring the beauty of what has been but the culture has changed and so our doing mission will require us to change the way we do things.
  - Comments around the pain that occurs in a community and community impacts when a church building closes.
- Closing remarks and blessing.
  - Our Lady of Guadalupe prayer