

Dear Parishioners,

We, priests and deacons of the East Erie Deanery parishes, are excited to share with you an initiative to strengthen the vibrancy of our Catholic presence in our communities. Our common aim is creating and securing a hopeful future for our Catholic faith.

Following the lead of Bishop Persico, who began the Pastoral Planning Process in 2015, we have decided it is time to engage the process of pastoral planning to examine ways we can minister more effectively and ensure the presence of our Catholic faith for generations to come. From the start of this process, we want to emphasize that the work of pastoral planning rightfully belongs to all of us. This includes individual parishioners, parish leadership, and pastors from all our parish communities. As we embark on this journey together, we want you to know that we are committed to ensuring that the planning process involves all parts of our East Erie Deanery. Right now, we are at the point of brainstorming, and we need your help.

As a starting point we would like to share with you some common elements of our hopes, vision, and priorities. First, every parish provides unique and invaluable ministries and resources in our respective neighborhoods and beyond. Second, the planning process did not start with predetermined agendas or decisions as to how our initiative will unfold or conclude. Third, we do not have any preestablished timelines that we are considering. Finally, we recognize that our present situation is not viable in the years to come. It is our hope that this initiative will reinvigorate the expression and experience of our Catholic faith inspiring us to be more effective in evangelizing and ministering throughout the East Erie Deanery.

What might our future look like? After much dialogue, we identified six characteristics that we believe are important for ensuring a vibrant Catholic presence into the future: collaboration, outreach, faith formation, ecumenism, transparency, and sustainability. In other words, we must cultivate a willingness to work with one another (collaboration) and we must create an atmosphere of hospitality that welcomes others into our communities and ministries (outreach) and includes other Christians who may not share our Catholic faith (ecumenism). We must continue to demonstrate a commitment to grow in our faith throughout our life's journey (faith formation). Finally, our communities need to be open and honest in our communication and dialogue (transparency) when considering how to best manage our facilities, our ministries, and our communities with an eye ever fixed on the future (sustainability).

With that as the background, we are asking you to participate in a brief survey. We need your thoughts and observations to move forward with open and honest dialogue as we plan together for our future. Please take a few moments to fill out an initial informational survey. You can fill out the survey online (<https://form.jotform.com/212985812553058>) or you can fill out a paper survey at your parish.

In closing, our decision to engage in the planning process as a deanery is a sign of our common conviction that working together as parishes will ensure that the faith that was given to us will continue to be handed on to future generations. We are grateful for your consideration and prayerful participation as we embark on this important journey together.

Sincerely,

Fr. Malthaner  
Fr. Glover  
Fr. McCormick  
Fr. Jacquel

Fr. Hahn  
Fr. Kriegel  
Fr. Trocchio  
Fr. Murphy

Deacon Coan  
Deacon Sobrowski  
Fr. Stockton

Fr. Brooks  
Fr. McGraw  
Fr. Ritchie