

## **UPDATE ON RECONFIGURATION OF THE COLLABORATIVE PARISHES**

During the last few weeks we have witnessed lively exchanges in response to challenging questions that call us to assess the needs of the Catholics within our cluster. On Wednesday, Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>, 25 members of each of the 5 parish staffs, Parish Pastoral Councils, and Parish Finance Committees initiated the conversation of reconfiguration and reallocation. Many parishioners attended open meetings that were hosted at a different church each day from Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup>. Last Sunday, Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, the Leadership Group, which consists of 5 members of each parish for a total of 25, pastors included, met to evaluate how we might be reconfigured in order to respond to the needs of our communities.

As the Catholic Community of Belmont, Cambridge, Waltham and Watertown, we are called to follow Christ and proclaim his Gospel. In the course of the combined parish leadership meeting, five open meetings, and the meeting of the Leadership Group it has been suggested that, to be faithful to our mission, we need:

- To be welcoming communities.
- To work together and share
- A process by which people are welcomed and encouraged to share their gifts within the newly- combined community of faith
- To blend the youth from Belmont, Cambridge, Waltham and Watertown.
- To be attentive to senior citizens who have built and been the backbone of these communities.
- To reach out through a ministry of healing to alienated members of our family of faith
- To establish honest and open patterns of communication.
- To create a positive and safe environment
- To pay special attention to the heritage one community brings to another and memorialize it with symbols from their original house of worship
- To organize community-building events
- To provide and/or to choose a geographical location that has convenient access to public transportation.
- To enhance our Liturgical worship and attend to the Sacramental Life of our community in a meaningful way.
- To coordinate Mass schedules among the churches and make an early morning Mass available on weekdays.
- To renew our commitment to religious education for all of our members with a focus on care for and outreach to our youth and their parents.
- To be present at hospitals and nursing care facilities in our vicinity.
- To support those who grieve
- To serve those who are in need
- To increase the number of Pastoral Associates
- To provide a home for our priests that will be separate from their office and church.
- To organize a central office and outreach center for our parishes.
- To think outside the box in discerning a new way of being Church in this collaborative.

At this time no decisions have been made. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Leadership Group will continue to discern the best responses to the challenges before us. Please pray that we may grow in wisdom and love as we strive to move toward a new vision of Church so as to build "livelier and stronger parishes to carry out our Gospel Mission."