

Strategic Planning Fact Sheet – 1/30/13

- The Diocese of Evansville is holding seven Town Hall meetings - one in each of our seven deaneries - over a four-week period.
- The purpose of the meetings is to allow parishioners to hear an update from members of their deanery's "core team" about the ongoing strategic planning process within our diocese, and to gather input to be used by the core teams over the next few months as they work to finalize their recommendations to Bishop Charles C. Thompson.
- The ultimate goal of the strategic planning process in the diocese is to revitalize, strengthen and bring new life to our parishes, churches and Catholic families in response to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.
- No plans or ideas discussed in these Town Hall meetings represent final decisions of any kind. After these meetings have been completed, and input from parishioners has been gathered, the core teams will continue to look at and work through a number of possible options for the churches within their deanery.
- Each core team includes the priests and pastoral life coordinators from all parishes within that deanery, as well as two non-staff parishioners from each church within the deanery. They began meeting monthly in October 2012. The mission of each team is to develop a "deanery plan" that will be presented to Bishop Charles C. Thompson in March 2013.
- After consulting with the appropriate advisory groups, Bishop Thompson plans to make final strategic planning decisions for the diocese in May or June of 2013, with a public announcement of all strategic plan changes tentatively planned for July 2013.
- Ultimately, as a result of this process, some churches within the diocese will end up being linked or merged. This will alter the current parish structure. No final decisions have been made as to which churches will be merged or linked.
- While some school consolidation is an eventual possibility, NO strategic planning-related changes to schools within the diocese will take effect during the 2013-14 school year. The 2014-15 school year is the earliest that any changes might be implemented.
- There are several reasons why our diocese is engaged in this process. These include:
 - An opportunity to better use our limited resources to develop a true 21st century approach to parish ministry
 - A population shift from the city to the suburbs
 - Advancements in technology and transportation
 - Fewer priests — today, there are 46 active priests serving 69 parishes, and many of these men are nearing retirement age; church guidelines call for priests to celebrate no more than three Masses a weekend (excluding weddings and funerals)
 - Declining Mass attendance — here in our diocese, fewer than 50 percent of Catholics regularly attend Mass at least once a week
- The Evansville Diocese is not alone. Other dioceses currently engaged in Strategic Planning initiatives include: Belleville, Ill.; Milwaukee, Wisc.; and Duluth, Minn.