

PARISH REPORT
St Peter the Apostle
Oakland, MD
July 11-12, 2010

INTRODUCTION

As Vicar Bishop of the Seton Vicariate, I take seriously my responsibility to visit the parishes within my Vicariate. I value the opportunity to spend time in a parish listening and learning to the hopes and concerns of the pastor, staff, leadership and parishioners. I have celebrated Confirmation at your parish but, until this visit, had not had the opportunity to really get to know your parish. It is a pleasure to now say that I have met with you and have a better understanding of your current needs, your plans for the future and your proud history.

St Peter's is a one church with two locations. I had the honor of celebrating Sunday Mass in both Oakland and at the Lake in McHenry. I was impressed with the vibrant faith community as well as the active participation of the parishioners in the celebration of the Mass. Resort parishes are unique parishes. Your parish has managed to maintain a healthy balance between new residents, seasonal residents and native residents.

I was also impressed with how your parish has worked through the delicate issue of establishing a worship site at the Lake. Change is never easy but guided by the open and honest communication by Father Don, the parish staff and parish leadership you are well on your way to acceptance of the fact that you are one church, St Peter the Apostle, and you worship at two locations, Oakland and McHenry.

Finally, I was impressed with the impact your parish has on the Oakland community. Your parish truly serves the Oakland community through your various pastoral ministries and through your ecumenical alliance with other churches.

I thank you again for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to me and to my pastoral team throughout the visit. Your pride, concern and dedication to your parish were obvious.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

St Peter the Apostle Parish is located in western Garrett County. The parish is part of the Mountain Maryland cluster that includes other parishes in Garrett County and parishes also in Allegheny County. The chart below shows the driving times and distance between St Peter and its neighboring parishes.

	St Peter McHenry	St Peter Oakland	St Ann Grantsville	St Michael Frostburg	St Peter Westernport	St Thomas Thomas, WVA
St Peter Oakland	14 miles 20 min		28 miles 42 min	34 miles 44 min	24 miles 37 min	22 miles 30 min
St Peter McHenry		14 miles 20 min	18 miles 28 min	46 miles 59 min	31 miles 45 min	36 miles 49 min

According to the FY09 consolidated report, there were 443 households registered in the parish. Another 209 persons are estimated to attend the parish but are not registered.

Data found in the parish Mass attendance report demonstrates a well proportioned parish population. 13% of Mass attendees were under 17 years of age, 26% were between 18 and 39 years of age, 39% were between 40 and 59 and 20% were over the age of 60. 2% of the total was reported as unknown.

The parish reported an operating income of \$430,157 for FY09 and operating expenses of \$398,385. The parish consistently works to manage its budget to its income.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENDATIONS

A significant purpose of the Pastoral Visit is to bring to the attention of the Pastor, the Staff and Parishioners commendations and a few specific recommendations that I would like you to address. These items are based on my observations as well as information gained through this pastoral visit and through various archdiocesan offices that track specific data. As Bishop, I wish to bring these matters to your attention in the firm belief that you will make every effort to attend to them to strengthen the administration and ministries of the parish and the community.

Parish Community

1. I commend the Parish Community for the warmth and hospitality extended to me and my staff during the Pastoral Visit.
2. I commend the Parishioners of St Peter the Apostle for their foresight in building the St Peter at the Lake Center. I commend especially the way the community has embraced the concept of one church and two locations.
3. I commend the Parish Community for their support and participation in a wide range of opportunities to serve those in need both the in Oakland area and also through your sister parish in Jamaica. My only regret with the parish visit is that I was not able to attend the community supper that took place the evening of the day I left. That program, Senior Moments, your ecumenical Vacation Bible School and so many more programs are all evidence of your willingness to try new things and work with the community.
4. I commend the Parish Community for being such a welcoming place. The vibrant nature found in your parish is testament to the welcome you have offered people relocating to the beautiful mountains and lake in Western Maryland. The fact that your parish has not split into visitor vs. year round parishioner is to your credit.
5. I commend the parish for coordinating a mass schedule which is conducive to not only the two locations but the parish catechetical program.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that your parish community explore more ways that you can work with neighboring parishes. Interparish collaboration can benefit parishes and

parishioners in so many ways. Now is the time to creatively think about how the many ways that parishes can support one another.

2. I recommend that you continue to regularly take a realistic look at your daily, weekend and special site Mass schedules.
3. Your parish sacramental records are the history of your parish. I recommend they be safeguarded by being stored in a fire proof cabinet of some sort. I recommend you consider storing the oldest and most precious records (ca 1872) with the professional Archivist of the Archdiocese where they can be preserved in a climate controlled and secure environment.

Parish Staff

1. I commend the parish staff for their dedication to work as a team not only serving the parish but also the community at large.
2. I commend Fr Don Parson for his devoted care and pastoral leadership these past 12 years. Throughout my visit I saw the pastoral care that Fr Don blesses your parish with each day. A parish takes its tone from the pastor.
3. I commend Fr Paul Byrnes for his assistance to Father Don throughout the year. I thank Fr Dan Goulet for his assistance this summer.
4. I commend Deacon Candidate Don Batista and his wife Patty for together traveling to Baltimore to attend the formation program so critical to his training for the permanent diaconate. I am sure the entire parish joins me in prayerful gratitude and anticipation of his ordination.
5. I commend Donna Cook for her oversight and dedication to all aspects of the parish. It became obvious during our visit that Dona's dedication to the parish is what helps things run so smoothly. Her willingness to help anyone in any way with anything is obvious to all.
6. I commend Patricia Hines for her service as receptionist to the parish. Patricia plays an important role in making certain the right contacts are made when people call into or visit the parish.
7. I commend Neil Krebs for the music and leadership he provides to the entire music ministry program. I found the music selections in perfect context and the use of his recording of accompaniment for the Lake Center a practical solution is an often vexing problem of finding accompanists.
8. I commend Wendy Seymour for her dedicated service as sacristan. The work Wendy does is often behind the scenes but makes a big difference in what is seen by the parish community.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that you consider a series of bulletin inserts that reintroduces staff and the roles they play in the parish. With so many newcomers to the parish

often there are misunderstandings of roles and responsibilities. This was especially apparent in the front office. Many people do not realize that Patty is capable and anxious to answer more questions and solve more problems allowing Donna to concentrate on other business issues.

2. The staff recommended and I concur that staff meetings should take place the week before each Pastoral Council meeting so that issues of importance from the staff are submitted and considered when the Pastoral Council meeting agenda is created.
3. Regular staff meetings will help integrate the newest staff member with current staff members.

Catechesis and Youth Ministry

1. I commend the enthusiasm and the dedication of the parish catechists.
2. I commend the parish catechetical leader, Betty Eaton for her coordination of the catechesis for human sexuality and child protection program with the parish faith formation program.
3. I commend Betty Eaton for the variety of family and parish friendly activities such as Family Movie Time, Advent and Lent Fairs, and Special Stations of the Cross.
4. I commend Betty for her leadership in the ecumenical summer bible school program
5. I commend St. Peter's parish for hiring of a new youth minister. I was impressed with your participation in the regional youth ministry activities such as work camp, Stations of the Cross, pilgrimage, habitat for humanity, and youth mass.
6. I commend the parish under the leadership of Betty Eaton for their creative use of and participation in the "Why Catholic?" program.

Recommendations:

1. I recommend that parents encourage their youth to participate in youth ministry activities.
2. I recommend that the parish continue to seek opportunities to outreach to young families.

The Parish Corporators

1. I commend the Parish Corporators for their willingness to serve the parish. It is important that the parishioners, Pastoral Council members and Finance committee members understand clearly the role and responsibility of the corporators.

2. I commend the Parish Corporators for the interest and for their commitment to their fiduciary and oversight responsibilities.
3. I commend the Parish Corporators for their support and oversight on corrections that needed to be made to the parish balance sheet.

Recommendations

1. I would ask that the corporators meet quarterly, take minutes and submit those minutes to the Chancellor with copies to me.

Finance Committee

The parish Finance Committee has an important responsibility to monitor expenses and income as well as participate in the budget process.

1. I commend the parish finance committee for the active role they have taken to prepare a realistic budget. I was impressed with the role staff plays in review of those budgets.
2. I commend the parish finance committee for their planning so that now less than \$400K is left on the mortgage for the new building at the Lake. I commend your willingness to work with outstanding pledges in order to more quickly retire this mortgage.
3. I commend the finance committee for their efforts to anticipate expenses and then budget to those expectations. I was impressed by your prudence.
4. I commend the finance committee for their use of QuickBooks on line and use of standard Archdiocese GL codes.
5. I commend the finance committee for understanding how important and critical transparency is with all fiscal issues the parish faces. The monthly publication of your offertory collection and yearly publishing an annual report is important and appreciated by your parishioners.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that the Finance committee meet on a quarterly basis and review quarterly budget variance reports to insure that income vs. expenses remains balanced.
2. I recommend that as many times as possible have staff attends the business manager meetings. It is critical today that parishes share best practices and those practices are best evaluated at these important meetings.
3. I recommend and encourage you to continue working towards a viable distance learning center for Western Maryland. My office will support you in this effort.

Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council is an elected body that serves as a consultative entity to the pastor (or administrator) on pastoral issues.

1. I commend the Pastoral Council for their dedication to council ministry. I was impressed by each Council member having a committee that they represent and choose after election at large. This process allows for many to serve and many different organizations and ministries to be represented.
2. I commend the Pastoral Council for beginning each meeting with celebration of Mass. This is a wonderful model of faith in action based in sharing, sacrifice and service through the Eucharist.
3. I commend the Pastoral Council for encouraging the parish to hire a part time youth minister. This shows your concern for youth and young people who are the future of your parish.
4. I commend the Pastoral Council for the important role it played in helping the parish come to terms with a new center at the Lake. One parish two locations certainly was evident to me on this visit.
5. I commend the Pastoral Council for encouraging people to pay remaining pledges, encouraging direct deposit collections and concern for stewardship.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that your parish continue to work with the regional planning council. Every parish in the Archdiocese will be affected by the priest shortage. Your work and experience with the regional council will help you plan for the future.
2. I recommend that you spend a day on retreat together. It is important that your planning take place along with prayer and a day away planning for an inevitable leadership shift is critical.
3. I recommend that you use the 'Why Catholic?' groups you have in place to talk about change, the change process and how change can be positive.

Facilities

1. I commend you for the care of your parish grounds. The grounds are well cared for, clean and neat which is an indication of the strong feelings of pride that emanate from the community.
2. I commend the "Wednesday Group" for their work not only at the Lake Center but also at the Oakland church. Throughout my visit I saw again and again and again the practical, common sense improvements that have come from this group.
3. I commend Bobby Morgan for the creative and dedicated service he provides caring for and managing all your facilities.

4. I commend you on the creative use of space for storage in your parish hall and on the clean and functional professional kitchen you maintain with such care.
5. I commend your practical reuse of materials. I was impressed with use of the old altar rail throughout the sanctuary of the church in Oakland and the reuse of the wood from the Holy Cross chapel at Deer Park in the Lake Center. I use these two examples but saw time and time again the considerate use of materials and other items.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that you continue to work with the County to resolve the issue of property transfer with the cemetery. Please double check and make certain that St Dominic's cemetery, while no longer in use, has the proper financial arrangements so care in perpetuity is insured and documented clearly. We expect this will become a state mandate so now is the time to prepare.