



# Interim Report on Regional Vicariates

February 2009

*The following material is drawn from the studies developed by working committees of the Ad Hoc Committee on Regional Vicariates established by Bishop Zubik and chaired by Bishop Bradley. The studies have been reviewed by the Administrative Board, the diocesan Priest Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. These reports will be presented at the spring Deanery meetings for the advice and consultation of the priests of the Diocese.*

## **Rationale for Establishing Regional Vicariates**

Bishop Zubik has asked that a study be made to implement a Regional Vicariate system of governance in the Diocese of Pittsburgh to replace the current Deanery system. The Bishop's goal is to strengthen the Diocese of Pittsburgh as a servant Church by providing the diocesan Bishop with vicars who enjoy the appropriate duties and faculties as envisioned by the Church in her teachings and laws. This will allow pastoral governance of, and service to, the Diocese to be carried out in the most effective manner possible.

## **Overall Objectives of Regional Vicariates**

1. To assist the diocesan Bishop in the exercise of the Bishop's pastoral office (a) as the moderator of the ministry of the Word, (b) the moderator, promoter and custodian of the liturgical life of the Diocese, and (c) minister of governance for the Diocese by providing pastoral supervision and administrative support in implementing directives and practices of the Church;
2. To extend the presence of the diocesan Bishop, especially into the parishes of the Diocese;
3. To support, promote, and coordinate the work of the apostolate for the building up of the Church and the spread of the Gospel by encouraging and coordinating common pastoral activity;
4. To provide a vehicle through which the diocesan Bishop can consult with the parish communities on broad-based Diocesan issues;
5. To provide a line of communication between the local parish and the diocesan pastoral services regarding developing trends and issues;
6. To assist in ascertaining the most efficacious assignment of priests and deacons.

## **Qualifications for a Regional Vicar**

A Regional Vicar is a qualified priest with pastoral and administrative experience appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to oversee a specific region of the Diocese. He assists the Bishop in the exercise of his pastoral office in that region and represents the Bishop on a daily basis to the clergy, religious and laity. The Regional Vicar represents the Bishop to the parishes in issues of administration, pastoral planning and sacramental life within his assigned region.

Canon 478 indicates the basic qualifications to be appointed a Regional Vicar.

1. a priest not less than thirty years of age.
2. holding a doctorate or licentiate in canon law or in theology or at least being truly expert in these disciplines.
3. recommended by reason of their sound doctrine, integrity, prudence, and experience in handling pastoral, personnel and administrative matters.
4. not related by blood to the Bishop up to the fourth degree.

The Regional Vicar is to be a man of devout prayer who draws his strength from the Lord (Ephesians 6:10). As a person, he is to display "heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience," as well as an openness to forgive by wearing the garment of love (Colossians 3:12-14). The Regional Vicar is to be a teacher who is always loyal to the Church demonstrating "love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:3-5). It is expected that the Regional Vicar will be a man of and for the Church who will "proclaim the word: be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient: convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). The Regional Vicar "stands in the midst of his people as one who serves" (Luke 22:26-27). He is to be a man of self control who builds up the Body of Christ in word and deed by giving "slander to no one, to be peaceable, considerate, exercising all graciousness toward everyone" (Titus 3:2). And he is to "bear all things for the sake of the chosen ones" (2 Timothy 2:10), always following the way of love (1 Corinthians 13:1-13).

The Regional Vicar is to have served or is currently serving as a Pastor and is to be a priest who has displayed a strong fraternal sense for the flock, a particular solicitude for the Clergy, and a genuine respect and regard for the Church hierarchy.

The Regional Vicar is to have a proven competency in the following areas:

1. Communion — He is to be a pastor who builds bridges and effects unity. He is to be inclusive, recognizing and accepting the various roles and ministries in the Church. To reach this end he is to demonstrate openness and flexibility but also a firm resolve.
2. Communication — A priest with developed skills in interpersonal and organizational communication, he is an authentic communicator that needs to speak effectively and listen attentively.
3. Collaboration — He is to manifest an ability to work with others for the good of the Church. As an animator of collaboration, he is to encourage trust in the Church as well as his own abilities.
4. Motivation — A well organized individual who can manage time and tasks, through his words and actions he is to be a model of motivation and encouragement. This discipline must also include a healthy self esteem to endure difficulties that may emerge.
5. Administration — He is to have proficiency with administration and the tasks therein which include computer skills, documenting, filing, familiarity with policies, budgets, audits, sacramental records, etc.
6. Vision — Personifying a mindset that transcends his own self and builds up the Church for the honor and glory of God, he is to demonstrate knowledge in pastoral planning and the processes involved therein.
7. Commitment — He is to live a life of fidelity to the Church and the tasks and responsibilities entrusted to him.
8. Stewardship — With a facility for fiscal management as well as an appreciation for and respect of the patrimony of the Church, he is to practice responsible stewardship of Church resources.
9. Leadership — He is to manifest an ability to supervise and direct people for a common good in the spirit of Jesus Christ who came not to be served but to serve. Such "servant leadership" demands pastoral zeal, genuine humility and patience.
10. Propriety — A gentleman of sound decorum, he is to be polite, well mannered and respectful of others.

## **Term of Office for a Regional Vicar**

The Regional Vicar is appointed for a term of five years, which can be renewed once in the same vicariate.

## **Authority of a Regional Vicar**

The Regional Vicar possesses, within his pastoral region, the same ordinary executive authority which the universal law of the church gives to the vicar general of the Diocese but only over the region of the

Diocese that has been entrusted to his care. The Regional Vicar possesses the same executive authority which belongs to the Diocesan Bishop, that is, he possess the power to place all administrative acts with the exception of those which the Diocesan Bishop has reserved to himself or which in law requires a special mandate of the Bishop (c. 476 and 479).

The Regional Vicar must report to the Diocesan Bishop on the principal matters which are to be treated and which have been treated, and he is never to act contrary to the will and mind of the Diocesan Bishop (c. 480).

A request which has been denied by a Regional Vicar in his vicariate cannot be granted validly by another vicar in the same vicariate (c. 65). A request which has been denied by a Regional Vicar and later procured from the Diocesan Bishop without mentioning this denial to the Diocesan Bishop is invalid (c. 65). A request which has been denied by the Diocesan Bishop cannot be granted by a Regional Vicar without the consent of the Diocesan Bishop (c. 65).

## **Duties and Responsibilities of a Regional Vicar**

### ***Pastoral***

The Regional Vicar is expected to bring the pastoral care and vision of the diocesan Bishop to the people of the region. He will coordinate pastoral activity within the region, most especially by ensuring that each parish and cluster of parishes is engaged in long-range pastoral planning. He will develop a pastoral relationship with parishes and foster the spirit of evangelization and ecumenism within each parish and the region. It is expected that the Regional Vicar will perform the following pastoral tasks:

1. Visit on a scheduled basis parishes in the vicariate and conduct an in depth pastoral audit by meeting with priests, deacons, staff and members of the pastoral and finance councils as well as ensuring that all diocesan policies are being implemented (e.g., finance, charter compliance).
2. Attend cluster and group meetings (e.g., Holy Name, DCCW, Youth Ministers, Catechetical Administrators, Marriage Preparation Team, Serra Club and Catholic Men's Fellowship) within the region as needed to promote and encourage pastoral and spiritual well being.
3. Identify and work with potential and existing problems, specifically those related to the management of resources: personnel, facilities and finances.
4. Attend a variety of gatherings: parish, civil, ecumenical and ethnic.
5. Assist in seeking appropriate remedies for parishes and schools which are in financial distress.
6. Meet twice each year with the priests and deacons of the region, assembled together, to foster the development of a shared ecclesial vision and common goals, to discuss the condition of the Church in the region, particular needs and problems in the region and possible solutions.

### ***Leadership and Administration***

The Regional Vicar will direct the priests and deacons of the region to perform their duties diligently and help coordinate the Envisioning Ministry efforts in the Vicariate. He will initiate active, ongoing presence to institutions and organizations within the Diocese: parishes, schools, hospitals, colleges, convents and other civic, ecumenical, ethnic, and social groups. It is expected that the Regional Vicar will perform the following leadership and administrative tasks:

1. Act as an advisor and consultant to the diocesan Bishop by membership on the Episcopal Council along with the Vicars Generals of the Diocese and other Regional Vicars.
2. Serve as an ex-officio member of the Personnel Board, the Priest Council, and the Administrative Board.
3. Investigate and resolve conflicts within a parish and between parishes.
4. Make referrals and direct requests to appropriate diocesan offices.

5. Manage prompt response to all written and verbal communications.
6. Keep records and files accurately and preserve important materials for the personnel files at the Pastoral Center or the Archives.
7. Work in collaboration with various diocesan departments to plan and evaluate the regions needs and to offer the pastoral aspect to changes within a parish or school.
8. Establish and maintain a vicariate budget.

### ***Liturgical and Ceremonial***

The Regional Vicar will see to it that the liturgy and other sacraments are celebrated in accord with the prescriptions of the law and diocesan directives. It is expected that the Regional Vicar will perform the following liturgical and ceremonial tasks:

1. Preside at and /or celebrate Sunday Liturgies in parishes of the region, where appropriate.
2. Be present for and participate in parish events whenever possible.
3. Celebrate Liturgy for special groups within the region.
4. Attend funerals of clergy, religious and parents of clergy within the region.
5. Serve as the official representative at community, parish or regional events as directed by the diocesan Bishop.

### ***Temporal Goods***

The Regional Vicar will ensure that ecclesiastical goods are appropriately administered and that church property and furnishings are carefully maintained. It is expected that the Regional Vicar will perform the following tasks related to temporal goods:

1. Grant permission for the expenditures above \$40,000 to \$100,000 when no borrowing is needed.
2. To be a signatory on all bank accounts of the parish.
3. Review the financial accounts of the parish.
4. Review with the pastor the audit report and verify the implementation of corrective measures.
5. Address at first instance parish petitions for spending, loans, capital campaigns, building projects and alterations in terms of the needs of the cluster and the vicariate.
6. Monitor maintenance and upkeep of all parish facilities and refer to risk management reports.

### ***Canonical Tasks***

The Regional Vicar will have certain defined responsibilities in regard to Canon Law. These include:

1. Grant dispensations and permissions regarding marriage, which will be used only when recourse to the Office of Matrimonial Concerns is not possible.
2. Change or alter the Sunday and Holy Day Mass schedule of parishes in accordance with diocesan policy.
3. Grant permission to a priest to confirm adults who had been baptized in the Catholic Church.
4. Grant permission to priests or deacons to assist validly at marriages on a specific occasion even if they are not assigned to the parish of celebration.
5. Depute qualified members of the Christian Faithful to act as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist.
6. Permit Catholic burial services for members of other Christian Churches.
7. Grant permission for additional Masses on Sunday and Holy Days on a singular occasion.
8. Ensure that the parish sacramental and death registers and Mass offering book are correctly inscribed and carefully maintained.
9. Ensure appropriate custody of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

### ***Clergy Responsibilities***

The Regional Vicar will have certain defined responsibilities in regard to the clergy in his region. He will be expected to:

1. Assist priests and deacons who are ill.
2. Direct the priests and deacons to participate in opportunities for spiritual renewal and continuing formation.
3. Encourage programs to foster the spiritual life of priests and deacons, fraternity and cooperation.
4. Ensure that the priests and deacons have access to spiritual assistance with special attention given to those who find themselves in special difficulty for whatever reasons.
5. Maintain contact with and be concerned for the well-being of retired priests and deacons living in the region.
6. Visit the sick and hospitalized priests and deacons.
7. Encourage priests and deacons to make their annual retreat and participate in spiritual enrichment programs.
8. Assist priests in obtaining coverage when they are away from the parish.

### **The Option of Delegation**

As one who possesses ordinary power in the law, the Regional Vicar can delegate for one time or in an ongoing fashion some task or responsibility entrusted to the Regional Vicar. Given the scope of responsibilities of the Regional Vicar and the limited amount of time he may have to discharge the full array of his duties, he may, after consultation with the diocesan Bishop, elect to delegate some of his duties. Rather than build this into the program from the outset, it seems most prudent (a) to allow the newly appointed Regional Vicars time to ascertain his needs and (b) to allow for discretion at the regional vicariate level to determine *whether* delegation is needed, *which* duties ought to be delegated, and *how many* delegates may be appropriate.

### **The Process for the Selection of Regional Vicars**

Following the Spring deanery meetings (after March 18, 2009), priests, deacons, diocesan staff and members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council will be invited by the diocesan Bishop to submit up to three names of priests that meet the qualifications set forth in this report who they believe have the necessary qualities and the reasons for their selection.

### **Budgeting for the Regional Vicar**

The cost for the regional vicariates will be absorbed within the budget of Diocesan Administration. The following assumptions have been made:

1. The position of Regional Vicar will be full-time.
2. The Regional Vicar's office will be located in excess space in an appropriate parish or diocesan facility, if available. The budget includes office rental fee.
3. The budget covers normal administrative expenses, such as stationery, postage, land line and cellular telephone services, personal computer and Personal Digital Assistants, etc.
4. Each Regional Vicar will have administrative support in a dollar amount equivalent to the salary and benefits of a full-time secretary with a personal computer.
5. Each Regional Vicar and his administrative support staff will be compensated within the normal diocesan salary and benefit structure.
6. Any additional required administrative or analytical support will be furnished by the diocesan Central Administration.
7. The Regional Vicar will reside in an appropriate parish rectory or comparable diocesan facility, if available. The budget includes Room & Board.
8. Because of heavy travel requirements, each Regional Vicar will be assigned a leased vehicle or an equivalent dollar amount per month.

- Regional Vicars will be reimbursed for normal non-vehicular travel expenses, such as meals, and for moderate entertainment expenses incurred in visits to parishes.

Approximately \$500,000 would have to be obtained through increased revenue, decreased costs or some combination thereof to maintain a balanced budget to cover the expenses for three regional vicars. The amount to be covered to balance the diocesan budget increases to approximately \$800,000 for five regional vicars.

Expenses Per Vicariate	Annual Cost
Vicar's Salary & Benefits	\$55,000
Room & Board	5,000
Miscellaneous Domestic Support	5,000
Leased Vehicle and Related Expenses	8,400
Food Expense	8,400
Office Rental	12,000
Secretary's Salary & Benefits	50,000
Subscriptions, Fees, Dues, etc.	5,000
Conventions/Meetings/Seminars	10,000
Other Administrative/Operating Expenses	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$168,800</b>

### The Number of Vicariates

It is proposed that the existing configuration of parishes into deaneries not be the starting point for considering how the regional vicariates should be configured. Rather, the following considerations would be taken into account based on a subdivision of the Diocese using the major roadways, which have become the primary determinant in the development of this region:

- How many registered Catholics are there in a given region?
- How many Catholics go to Mass on a typical Sunday in a given region?
- How many people are in the general population in a given region?
- Is the region under consideration heterogeneous (e.g., urban, rural, small town, suburban)?
- What is the maximum travel time from the farthest points in a given region?
- How many institutions are in a given region?
- What school districts are in a given region?
- What minor civil divisions (towns, boroughs, townships, cities, etc.) exist within a given region?
- What are the economic, social and cultural risk factors in a given region?
- How many parishes exist in a given region?
- Is the division into regional vicariates intuitively logical?

In regard to the number of Regional Vicars, the following considerations need to be factored in as well:

Three Vicariates (approximately 71 parishes)	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Least expensive financially</li> <li>Requires the fewest number of priests who must be removed from their current assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could spread the Regional Vicar too thin, thereby inhibiting the ability to achieve the overall purpose of regional vicariates or to fulfill the full range of the vicar's responsibilities</li> </ul>

Five Vicariates (approximately 43 parishes)	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spreads the Regional Vicar the least thin, thereby increasing the likelihood that he could achieve the overall purpose of regional vicariates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most expensive financially</li> <li>Requires the largest number of priests who must be removed from their current assignment</li> </ul>
Four Vicariates (approximately 54 parishes)	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A middle position between 3 &amp; 5 that has some of the advantages of each</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A middle position between 3 &amp; 5 that has some of the disadvantages of each</li> </ul>

## Timeline

Over last summer, at the request of Bishop Zubik, an Ad Hoc Committee on Regional Vicariates was formed to study this new form of pastoral governance for the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Bishop Zubik appointed Bishop Bradley, General Secretary, to serve as chair.

The Committee is made up of members of diocesan administration, priests, deacons and lay leaders. In the fall, Bishop Zubik met with the priests of the Diocese for their advice and consultation. As a result of the feedback of the priests, the Ad Hoc Committee formed work groups to study the issues listed above. A preliminary discussion was also held with diocesan staff.

In January, the work groups made their reports to the Ad Hoc Committee, the Administrative Board, the Priest Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The Ad Hoc Committee then met to refine those studies based on that consultation. Diocesan staff was also informed of the progress.

In December, Bishop Zubik wrote to pastors advising them of developments and asking that before the next Deanery meetings parish staff and lay leadership be advised of the Regional Vicariate proposals. This material has been developed specifically to help inform and consult with parish staff and lay ecclesial ministers as part of the consultation leading up to the Deanery Meetings.

The Deanery meetings will be held from February 26 through March 18 to receive the feedback of the priests to the revised proposals. The consultation on the naming of the Regional Vicars will begin as described above after the deanery meetings. On April 2, the Ad Hoc Committee will meet to review and analyze the input from the deanery meetings and the financial impact.

The Ad Hoc Committee will meet again in early May to refine the proposal and throughout May it will be reviewed by the Administrative Board, the Priest Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Regional information meetings will then be held for parish leaders and the final proposal will be reviewed by the consultative bodies in July. After the final proposal is reviewed by the Administrative Board in late July, operational details and personnel matters will be finalized.

The plan calls then for the Regional Vicariate proposal to be promulgated in September and implemented in October.