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NEWS RELEASE

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TIMELINE ESTABLISHED FOR PLANNING PARISH CONSOLIDATION AND RESTRUCTURING

The statutes of the Second Synod of the Diocese of Allentown assign to the Diocesan Pastoral Council oversight responsibility for the formulation of recommendations to the Bishop for the consolidation and restructuring of parishes.

The first concrete steps were taken on March 15, 2007. The Diocesan Pastoral Council action followed the February 28, 2007, special convocation at which all diocesan priests were given projections of the number of diocesan priests who will be available for parish ministry in the future. According to the presentation, the number of priests will decrease from 129 currently serving in parish ministry to a projected 111 by June 30, 2010.

Synod Statute 3 states, "Within each deanery, and where appropriate between deaneries, the Vicar Forane shall organize groupings of parishes subject to the review, modification and consent of the Diocesan Bishop." Each grouping of parishes is called a Deanery Region.

The Statute also calls for each Deanery Region to be represented by pastors, parochial vicars and two representatives of each parish who are designated by their respective pastor. The Diocesan Pastoral Council will provide guidelines, which will be used by the Deanery Regions in planning the consolidation and restructuring of parishes. Using these guidelines, the representatives from each Deanery Region shall study and evaluate the parishes within its region and make a recommendation to the Diocesan Pastoral Council as to which parishes, if any, should be consolidated or restructured.

The following is the proposed timeline for the establishment of Deanery Regions as well as the timeline for planning the consolidation and restructuring of parishes:

PROPOSED TIMELINE

February-March 2007

The Vicars Forane (Deans) developed first drafts of the Deanery Regions.

March 15, 2007

The Diocesan Pastoral Council accepted the first draft and recommended that the Deans present this first draft to the priests at their respective Spring Deanery Meetings. This provides the priests the opportunity to review the draft and to make recommendations to this first draft at the Spring Deanery Meetings.

Early to Mid-May 2007

Each pastor will designate two representatives from his parish(es) to serve as representatives to the Deanery Region.

May 2007

The recommendations made by the priests at their Spring Deanery Meetings will be incorporated into a second draft. Each Deanery Region will meet and this second draft will be presented to representatives of each Deanery Region. The representatives of each Deanery Region will be invited to make recommendations based upon this second draft.

June 4, 2007

The Deans will submit the final drafts incorporating the recommendations made by the representatives of the respective Deanery Regions to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Late June-Early July 2007

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will review the final drafts of the Deanery Regions and will make recommendations to Bishop Cullen for his review and final approval.

September 2007

Diocesan Pastoral Council will initiate Parish Self-Evaluations in which all parishes participate.

October 2007

Each parish will receive the findings of their Parish Self-Evaluation from the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Using the guidelines from the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the representatives of each Deanery Region will begin meetings to evaluate those findings and, where applicable, to plan the consolidation or restructuring of parishes within its region.

October 2007-June 2009

Representatives from Deanery Regions, which call for the consolidation and restructuring of parishes, will formulate a plan as early as possible for their region and

submit it to the Diocesan Pastoral Council for review and final approval by Bishop Cullen. Once approval of a plan is obtained, implementation of the plan may begin. All planning must be completed by June 30, 2009.