

April 5, 2017

Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.

I want to begin by thanking you for all you do each day for the Priests and the people of the Diocese of Savannah. As I travel around the Diocese, I hear about the good work you are doing in service to the Church. But, like all things, there is room for improvement. I am challenged to reduce expenses and increase services; to do that we must be ever vigilant on how we work. There is much that would be good to do, but often we must decide what we must do vs what we would like to do. After 5 1/2 years as your Bishop, I knew we needed to design a reporting structure that allowed more time to focus on the services we provide to Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Religious and Parishes.

Today, I want to share with you the new way I am organizing the work at the Pastoral Center. This is not a decision I made in a vacuum, but reflects input from members of the Secretariat, Father Firmin, Father Schreck and Father Pablo.

I want to thank Deacon Pat Stokely, who worked as a consultant on the project, for his prayerful and thoughtful leadership and guidance.

For most of you there will be no change in your work or reporting; for others, there will be significant change. While adjusting to change can be difficult, I believe that when you understand the thinking behind these changes you will be able to envision the results.

Let's begin with a passage from a homily that Pope Francis made at the Casa Santa Marta, July of last year:

“ Jesus tells us that new wine requires new wineskins. In the Christian life, and also in the life of the Church, there are old structures, outdated structures, they have to be renewed! And the Church has always been attentive to this....It always allows itself to be renewed according to places, times and persons. The Church has always done this work, right from the beginning! Don't be afraid of this! Don't be afraid of the innovation of the Gospel. Don't be afraid of the innovation that the Holy Spirit works within us! Don't be afraid of the renewal of structures! If we are afraid, we know that our Mother is with us and, like children who are a bit afraid, let's go to her and she – as the most ancient antiphon says will 'guard us with her mantle, with her protection as mother...’ ”

Let me take a moment to take you through the process and what was learned:

Deacon Pat conducted interviews with each member of the Secretariat the week of February 27 and presented to Fr Firmin and me a preliminary report on March 13 that was further refined on March 14. This week, the design was communicated to each member of the Secretariat and the affected persons met with Father Firmin. This new organizational structure will be in place by July 1 and ask that all of us begin to work now to ensure a smooth transition.

Those who were interviewed confirmed that a new reporting structure is needed. There was the recognition of the need to do so at this time especially with Fr Firmin's recent appointment as Administrator of St. Michael's on Tybee Island.

Lastly, those interviewed, stated their desire and commitment to better serve and be responsive to the Parishes of the Diocese. I want to thank you for sharing my vision in your conversations with Deacon Pat.

Your input led us to the following decisions that I am personally excited about as I know these will help us to be more effective in our service to the Priests and the people of the Diocese!

I am implementing a Cabinet structure with the Vicar General, Judicial Vicar, Chancellor, and CFO as direct reports. This structure not only follows Canon Law but will help me to focus my energy to these important areas of Diocesan pastoral and temporal responsibilities. Ginger will continue to support me administratively and has graciously agreed to assume the added responsibility to support Bishop Boland.

The Vicar General role led by Father Firmin has been streamlined to focus on the areas of Education, Evangelization, Operations, Properties and Construction. He will be assisted by Maggie Blanc who has also agreed to support Father Migone.

Michelle Kroll in her expanded role of Director of Education will now have responsibility for our PREP program and catechists. This will allow for a unified approach to the mission of teaching the faith to all the children of the Diocese regardless of where they receive their primary education.

Under Ann Pinckney as the Director of Evangelization, we have followed a similar approach and have organized Family Life, Hispanic and Black Catholic ministries along with the current Youth and Young Adult and Campus ministries. I am thrilled about the potential of the sharing of the diversity of these ministries and for leveraging their talents across each of these important segments of the people we serve.

Jo Ann Green will assume the role of Director of Operations with Human Resources responsibilities. Barbara and her Communications team will report to Jo Ann as they work together to create a new vision for communications within an ever-changing landscape of people we serve and

technologies available to reach them. Beverly will be that first welcoming face for all who visit our Pastoral Center and I am thrilled to have her represent us so well in that new role!

Of course, we need facilities that are well constructed, maintained and insured to offer these services. Paul Nott and his team will continue to support all our efforts including the diocesan cemetery and their staff.

Father Schreck will continue to oversee the Tribunal and has agreed to serve as the point of contact for Ecumenism and Consecrated Life; both areas that from time to time require his canonical expertise and wisdom.

Our Chancellor and Vocations Director, Father Pablo will continue to serve as my secretary and has agreed to assume from Father Firmin the responsibility to assist me in researching and recommending to me, resolutions to various Priest and Deacon personnel matters that arise from time to time. Maggie Blanc will support Father Pablo and Father Firmin in their roles.

Under Larry's leadership as CFO, the Director of Stewardship, Joe Stong and the Director of Catholic Charities, Sister Pat Brown, will now report directly to him. This recognizes the connection between the Bishop's Annual Appeal and the work of the Parishes and Diocesan support delivered under the umbrella of Catholic Charities. In addition, the Director of IT, Jake Blackmon with the associated functions of records and data base management will now report to Larry.

I am thrilled to announce that Liam O'Connor, who will continue to serve as the Executive Director of the Catholic Foundation of Georgia, has agreed to fill the role of Controller reporting to Larry. I look forward to his expertise in evaluating and implementing continued improvements in our accounting processes and systems.

So where do we go from here? What are the next steps we all need to take? The goal is to be fully functional and operational July 1, so we need to begin work today. I would ask that those impacted, schedule a meeting as soon as possible with their new leader for 2018 budget planning purposes. I would also ask that you look at your current work space and begin the process to realign areas to best match the organization design. Jo Ann Green will serve as the overall coordinator for any and all requests and will be supported in this effort by Paul Nott and Mike Nadeau to insure smooth implementation.

What I ask of you as we proceed with this "new wine skin" is your continued commitment to the mission and active and positive support of these decisions. I ask for your prayers and to pray for all most affected by these changes. Change is always challenging so I ask for your patience and perseverance as we move to this new way of delivering even better support for our Priests and Parishes. And now, one thing more!

I want us to continue to maintain clear communications throughout the Pastoral Center. The Cabinet will meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday's of the month with the decisions and actions communicated Pastoral Center wide within 72 hours. The Cabinet members will have the opportunity to invite individuals from their teams to present and inform us on current topics. I will also schedule Pastoral Center wide meetings once a quarter so that I may personally inform you on current initiatives; answer your questions and hear your input. My hope is that this will help all of us in our ministry of service to the Priests and Parishes of our Diocese.

When Deacon Pat was here leading us through a total of 8 days of training; he reminded me of the Phases of Performance we all learned. He shared that these also apply to organizations such as ours as we move to this new structure. He took the time to show how they fit beautifully into the very passage I led with this afternoon from Pope Francis.

Here it is!

INFORMATION: The Church has always done this work, right from the beginning!

PERSONAL: Don't be afraid of the innovation the Holy Spirit works within us!

IMPLEMENTATION: Jesus tells us that new wine requires new wineskins.

IMPACT: There are old structures, outdated structures, they have to be renewed!

REFINEMENT: And the Church has always been attentive to this...It always allows itself to be renewed according to places, times and persons.

I want to thank each and every one of you again for your continued service as you share your unique gifts and talents and we together build the Kingdom of God here in this part of the world we call the Diocese of Savannah!

Let us conclude with this passage as our closing prayer again from Pope Francis' homily:

“...we know that our Mother is with us and, like children who are a bit afraid, let's go to her and she – as the most ancient antiphon says – will 'guard us with her mantle, with her protection as mother...”

and together let us pray: “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. AMEN!

And may almighty God Bless you, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! AMEN!