

Dear Friends in Christ,

“Whenever we do something together, something good, something beautiful, everyone changes, all of us change in some way and this does us good.” This quote from Pope Francis reminds us that change can be good. Today as we find ourselves in the midst of change, we are called to work together to embrace it and to grow closer to God, the Church and our Parishes. The Eastern DuPage Deanery of the Joliet Diocese consists of 17 parishes that collaborate to provide the best discipleship, evangelization, and charity that we possibly can with our pooled resources. Our committees include Priests, Deacons, and parishioners that come together with a mission to create a spirit of collaboration among our parishes to foster the building of the Kingdom of God. We are working to find creative ways to grow our ministries and to generate excitement within them. Some examples include marriage enrichment programs, liturgical ministry fairs, combined youth groups and confirmation retreats, adult formation seminars, combined parish missions, penance services and many other exciting collaborative initiatives. As we share resources we are able to better serve you in the Parish Communities.

Our steering committee, composed of representatives from all the parishes, began in March of 2014 in response to Bishop Conlon’s request for greater collaboration at the deanery level. We began our meetings with a focus on multiple ministries and developed many great plans for collaboration. After completing our first full year of working together, we decided to reorganize as we prepared to execute our plans. Currently, our steering committee is broken down into six, individual groups including a liturgical group, communications, and four implementation groups organized into local clusters with representatives from each parish. The first group includes Ascension, St. Pius, Sacred Heart, and Christ the King parishes. The second group includes St. Alexander, St. Joseph, Our Lady of Lebanon, and St. John the Apostle parishes. The third group includes St. Alexis, St. Philip, Holy Ghost, St. Peter, and St. Andrew Kim parishes. The fourth group includes St. Charles Borromeo, Visitation, Immaculate Conception, and Mary Queen of Heaven parishes. You are invited to have an active role in this meaningful journey to a collaborative deanery environment. We know that it will be a long-term initiative and have faith that it will, eventually, be embraced by all.

This process of greater collaboration is God’s project. As Bishop Conlon stated in his article, *Working Together*, in the January 2014 issue of *Christ is Our Hope* magazine, “The Church is an instrument in God’s hands, designed by Him to do His work. Thus, we must pray constantly about this effort and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” Everyone is welcome to join us at these open meetings to help the Eastern DuPage Deanery to live this promise. You can get involved by contacting your deanery representative or by going to our website at www.easterndupagedeanery.org for meeting dates and times.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving,

Very Reverend Thomas Paul, V.F.
Dean of the Eastern DuPage Deanery of the Diocese of Joliet
Pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, Elmhurst