

**The Roman Catholic Community  
of  
Mt. Desert Island**

5 December 2005

Dear Parishioner,

SUBJECT: *PARISH CLUSTER CONCEPT*  
Ellsworth and Mt. Desert Island Area

The Diocese of Portland is in the process of re-organizing the Catholic Churches of Maine in order to address some critical issues, namely a decline in the number of active priests, a shifting population between geographic regions within Maine, and the resulting negative financial impact on some parishes.

The existing 135 parishes of the Diocese will be organized into 27 “clusters”. Cluster #11 includes the churches in Bar Harbor, Blue Hill, Ellsworth, Green Lake, Islesford, Northeast Harbor, Southwest Harbor, and Winter Harbor; the Cluster #11 Planning Committee is comprised of our two priests and 13 lay members of the churches assigned to the cluster. We have been tasked to analyze the specific issues for our group and develop a recommendation to be sent to the Bishop for his review and approval.

The purpose of this letter to you is simply one of communications. We recognize and appreciate your affiliation with our churches here in Maine and will do our best to keep you informed as the process unfolds. Our plan is to provide you with periodic updates as well as suggesting that you visit the web sites listed below.

[www.portlanddiocese.net](http://www.portlanddiocese.net)

[www.mdicatholics.com](http://www.mdicatholics.com)

[www.ellsworthme.org/stjoseph](http://www.ellsworthme.org/stjoseph)

Attached, for your information, are two documents. One is our “charter” as a cluster committee. The second one is a listing of the various cluster groups and the schedule for completion. Please note that on the back of your letter is a list of committee members with contact information. We welcome your comments and suggestions and encourage you to participate.

Love & Peace,

Fr. Jack O’Hara

Attachments (2)

## Roman Catholic Diocese of Maine

### Cluster # 11 Planning Committee

### Member Contact Information

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Poulin, Grace	10 Liberty St. Ellsworth, ME 04605		(207) 667-2387
Renault, Eleanor	PO Box 312 Northeast Harbor, ME 04662	<a href="mailto:hbrwalker@midmaine.com">hbrwalker@midmaine.com</a>	(207) 276-5886
Sargent, Edward "Bill"	PO Box 335 Ellsworth, ME 04605	<a href="mailto:double_eagle@prexar.com">double_eagle@prexar.com</a>	
Smallidge, Robert L. Jr.	PO Box 599 Mt. Desert, ME 04660	<a href="mailto:rsmallid@localnet.com">rsmallid@localnet.com</a>	(207) 244-7969
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Iverson, Jane	Secretary		
Murphy, Matt	Facilitator		

**Cluster # 11 Planning Committee  
Goals & Charter**

**CRITICAL ISSUES**

Due to a decline in the number of active priests to service the existing parishes in Maine, a shifting member population (needs of the more rural northern & eastern parishes differ from those of the larger southern and southwestern parishes), and financial factors (population declines in turn have a negative impact on the financial stability of some parishes), the Diocese has determined that the current 135 parishes in Maine will be clustered into 27 groups. In order to accomplish this goal 27 "Cluster Planning Committees" have been formed throughout the state to analyze the issues and prepare recommendations.

**CLUSTER #11** – Includes church sites located in Bar Harbor, Northeast Harbor, Southwest Harbor, Islesford, Ellsworth, Blue Hill, Green Lake and Winter Harbor. This cluster will be assigned two (2) priests.

**GOALS** – The Cluster Planning Committee will do everything possible to fulfill these goals:

Clusters should pool resources (people & finances) for more effective use.

Clusters should work more collaboratively (sense of ownership & belonging). Collaboration demands good communications.

Worship sites should remain open. If it is necessary in the future to close any worship sites, the Bishop will do so only after receiving a recommendation from the cluster.

While mass schedules may need to be adjusted, the Eucharist should remain central in the life of the cluster.

All sacramental events should be conducted as normal at local churches but all records should be maintained for the cluster at a central office.

Priests should focus on providing sacramental services and other pastoral duties which can only be performed by an ordained priest.

Certified and paid lay leadership should "perform all other duties" associated with running a parish. Each cluster should have a pastoral life coordinator and a business administrator. In some wide-spread clusters a parish coordinator may be needed.

Councils and committees should be consolidated and they should foster bridge-building and promote effective management of time, talent and treasure. Each parish should have a fully-operable pastoral council and finance council.

Financial matters should be combined and all key administrative staff should be centrally located in one administrative center which services all worship sites in the cluster.

All employees should report to lay personnel.

**CHARTER** – The Cluster Planning Committee is charged with the task of generating a formal cluster planning report for the Bishop no later than June 2006.

The Cluster Planning Committee will be comprised of our two priests and 13 lay members of the churches assigned to the cluster and will meet monthly, or more frequently if deemed necessary, in order to complete the report by June 2006. (Full implementation of the cluster plan is to be accomplished as soon as possible but no later than five years after the report is completed.)

In order to generate the report the Committee will be responsible for performing the following tasks:

- Assess which functions currently done by a priest could be assumed by lay personnel.

- Review current resources, staffing, & finances:

  - Income & Expense Statements

  - Balance Sheets

  - Member Demographics (location, age, attendance, etc.)

- Review existing worship sites & recommend future needs

  - Assess the physical condition of existing properties

  - Determine Short-term Structural Needs

  - Determine Long-term Structural Needs

  - Review existing Mass schedules & recommend adjustments if appropriate

  - Other as identified

- Review existing church/parish programs.

- Define what our parishes are and develop a “vision” for the future.

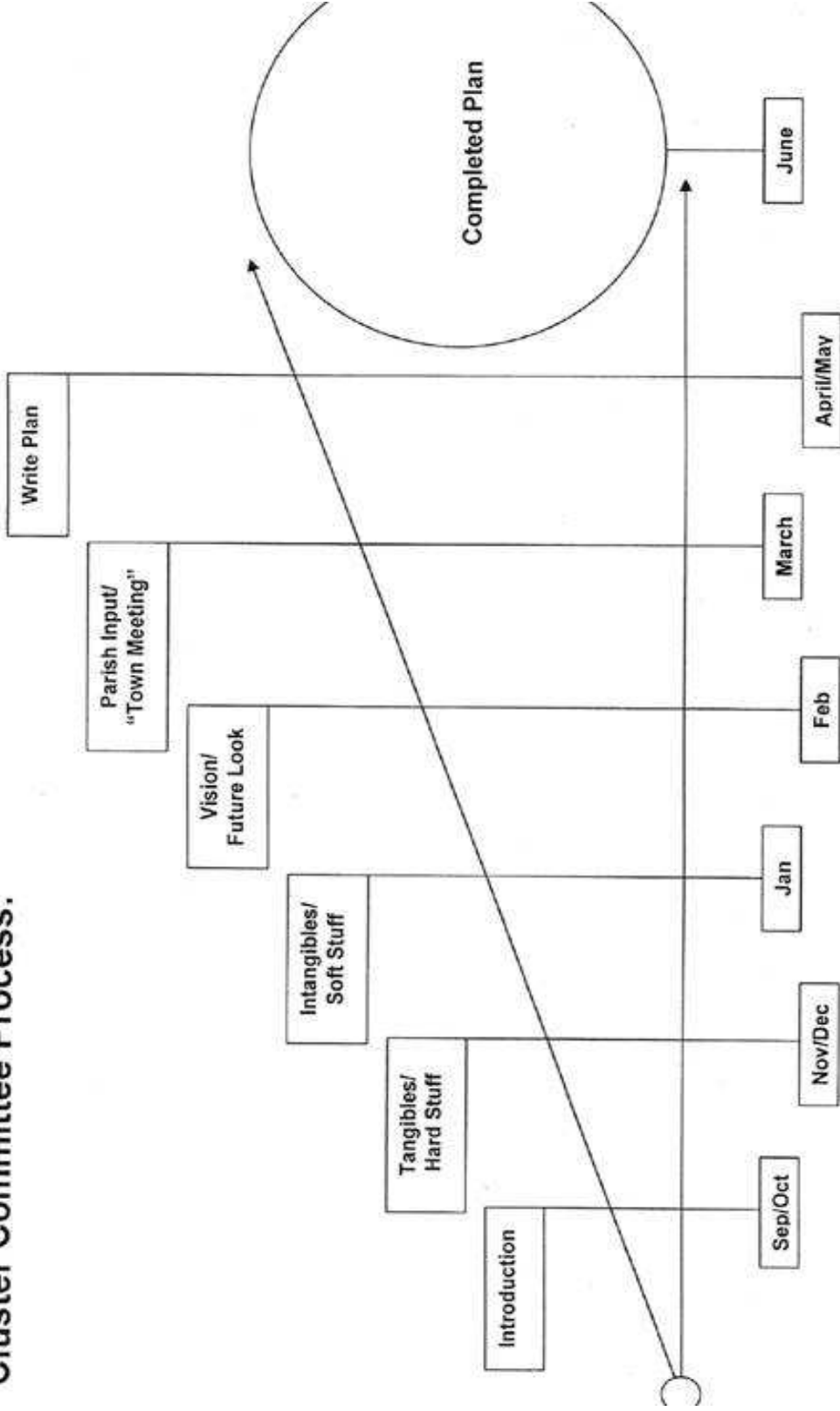
- Analyze the four (4) proposed structural models (as identified by the Diocese) and select the most appropriate for the cluster, based on the foregoing reviews.

- Communicate to all parish members and seek their input regarding cluster planning (using parish bulletins, announcements at mass, parish websites and a cluster-wide “town meeting” in March 2006).

## Clusters

<p><b>Cluster 1:</b> 1 Priest Eagle Lake, Wallagrass, Fort Kent, St. Francis, Allagash</p>	<p><b>Cluster 15:</b> The Marist Fathers (or with 2 Diocesan Priests) Bath, Brunswick(St. Charles, St. John), Harpswell, Pejepscot</p>
<p><b>Cluster 2:</b> 3 Priests, possibly the Marists Frenchville, St. Agatha, Birch Point, Sinclair, Madawaska (St. Thomas, St. David), Grand Isle, Van Buren, Hamlin, Long Lake</p>	<p><b>Cluster 16:</b> 2 Priests Auburn (Sacred Heart, St. Louis, St. Philip), Mechan Falls, Oxford, Norway</p>
<p><b>Cluster 3:</b> 3 Priests Caribou (Holy Rosary, Sacred Heart), Fort Fairfield, Limestone, Stockholm, Ashland, Portage, Washburn, Presque Isle, Mars Hill.</p>	<p><b>Cluster 17:</b> 3 Priests Lewiston (Holy Cross, Holy Family, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, Sts. Peter &amp; Paul ), Lisbon Falls, Sabattus, Greene</p>
<p><b>Cluster 4:</b> 1 Priest Houlton, Island Falls, Patten, Danforth, Vanceboro</p>	<p><b>Cluster 18:</b> 1 Priest Rumford, Roxbury Pond, Mexico, Dixfield, Bethel</p>
<p><b>Cluster 5:</b> 1 Priest Millinocket, East Millinocket, Benedicta, Sherman</p>	<p><b>Cluster 19:</b> 2 Priests Farmington, Jay, Oquossoc, Sugarloaf, Rangeley, Stratton</p>
<p><b>Cluster 6:</b> 1 Priest or the Oblates Howland, Lincoln, Winn, Kingman</p>	<p><b>Cluster 20:</b> 1 Priest Greenville, Rockwood, Jackman, The Forks</p>
<p><b>Cluster 7:</b> 1 Priest  Dover-Foxcroft, Sangerville, Milo, Dexter, Pittsfield</p>	<p><b>Cluster 21:</b> 3 Diocesan Priests plus the Religious Priests presently serving in the city Peaks Island, Long Island, Portland (Cathedral, Sacred Heart/St. Dominic, St. Louis, St. Peter, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, St. Plus)</p>
<p><b>Cluster 8:</b> 2 Priests Baileyville, Indian Township, Calais, Eastport, Pembroke, Perry, Machias, Cherryfield, Lubec, Campobello</p>	<p><b>Cluster 22:</b> 2 Priests Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, Pine Point, S. Portland (Holy Cross, St. John)</p>
<p><b>Cluster 9:</b> 4 Priests Bradley, Indian Island, Old Town, Orono (Our Lady of Wisdom, St. Mary), Bangor (St. John, St. Mary), Brewer (St. Joseph, St. Theresa), Hampden, Winterport</p>	<p><b>Cluster 23:</b> 3 Priests Gorham, East Sebago, Westbrook, Bridgton, Fryebur Windham, Raymond</p>
<p><b>Cluster 10:</b> 1 Priest plus 1 Senior Priest Belfast, Isleboro, Bucksport, Stonington, Castine</p>	<p><b>Cluster 24:</b> 1 Priest and 1 Senior Priest Falmouth, Yarmouth, Freeport, Gray</p>
<p><b>Cluster 11:</b> 2 Priests Bar Harbor, Northeast Harbor, Southwest Harbor, Isleford, Ellsworth, Blue Hill, Green Lake, Winter Harbor</p>	<p><b>Cluster 25:</b> 3 Priests Biddeford (St. Andre, St. Joseph, St. Mary), Biddeford Pool, Lyman, Old Orchard Beach, Saco (Most Holy Trinity, Notre Dame)</p>
<p><b>Cluster 12:</b> 4 Priests Fairfield, Oakland, Belgrade, N. Vassalboro, So. China, Waterville, Winslow, Madison, Bingham, Skowhegan</p>	<p><b>Cluster 26:</b> 3 Priests Kennebunk, Wells, Ogunquit, Sanford (Holy Family, Ignatius), Springvale, Limerick</p>
<p><b>Cluster 13:</b> 3 Priests Augusta (St. Andrew, St. Augustine, St. Mary), Gardiner, Hallowell, Richmond, Whitefield, Winthrop, Monmouth, Litchfield</p>	<p><b>Cluster 27:</b> 2 Priests Kittery, York, York Beach, Berwick, So. Berwick</p>
<p><b>Cluster 14:</b> 2 Priests Boothbay Harbor, Newcastle, Camden, Vinalhaven, North Haven, Rockland, Thomaston</p>	

## Cluster Committee Process:



### Roles:

- **Facilitator:** Moderates meetings, guides committee's focus to key issues & points, facilitates the setting of meeting agendas (at end of each meeting) and guides the process outlined above.
- **Secretary:** Takes minutes of each meeting, focusing primarily on key issues, points & decisions.
- **Chair:** Serves as the contact person for the committee.
- **Priests & Parishioners on Cluster Committee:** Participate in the process outlined above.

### Documentation:

- List of key points
- List of topics for future consideration
- Minutes for each meeting
- Completed Plan