



**DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE**  
**Office of the Bishop**

April 4, 2013

Thursday within the Octave of Easter

The 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dear Priests, Deacons, Religious, Parish Life Coordinators, Principals, and Department Directors,

My FORMAL RESPONSE to the information gathered from our parishes and schools in THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING was mailed to all Priests, Deacons, and Parish Life Coordinators on Tuesday, April 2, 2013. If you do not receive it by the end of the week, please contact Mrs. Hoffman at my office. Additional paper copies are available from the Chancery, if you pick them up yourself (a limit of two per parish). I personally distributed copies to the Priests at the Hincke-Sense Residence at lunchtime today.

Attached you will find the entire document in a .pdf format allowing you to place it on your website and to print copies in booklet format for easy use by your parish or school staff, or for distribution to your parishioners. I am also attaching to this letter the OVERVIEW and my PASTORAL LETTER (in word format) to facilitate making copies for distribution to your parishioners after an appropriate introduction and explanation from the pulpit.

Please read and study my FORMAL RESPONSE carefully before you begin to speak about it with the faithful. I urge you to discuss it with your parish/school leadership as well as with those most active in preparing the response to my initial THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING questionnaire. Please make every effort to explain that this PASTORAL PLAN will have a direct impact on every parish.

I would like to call to your attention several key points.

1. THE PASTORAL PLAN FOR PARISH RENEWAL AND RESTRUCTURING goes into effect immediately.
2. The former parish clusters have been dissolved. They are replaced by the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS.
3. The leadership of the PARISH PARTNERSHIPS must begin to meet as soon as possible but no later than Monday, April 29, the Feast of St. Catherine of Sienna.
4. Each PARISH PARTNERSHIP must submit a 1-2 page report by September 15, 2013, signed by the leadership of all parishes in the PARTNERSHIP. The report should indicate how many meetings the PARISH PARTNERSHIP has had since the promulgation of the FORMAL RESPONSE.
5. Each PARISH PARTNERSHIP must submit a STRATEGIC PASTORAL MODEL by December 31, 2013, signed by the leadership of all parishes in the PARTNERSHIP. This document should indicate how many meetings the PARISH PARTNERSHIP has had since September 15, 2013.
6. The Deaneries are to be replaced by VICARIATES, effective May 1, 2013.
7. The terms of the current Deans end on June 30, 2013, unless I have selected the new Vicars Forane prior to that date.
8. All of the Priests of each new VICARIATE should meet as soon as possible to surface a *terna* of names for my consideration in appointing new Vicars Forane.
9. Where necessary, elections should take place for members of the Presbyteral Council who have been displaced by the change in the boundaries of the former Deaneries.
10. Elementary Schools that are not now in compliance need to develop a specific plan by December 31, 2013, to be in compliance with the four main directives of my RESPONSE.

It is important for you to review the entire RESPONSE for additional dates and directives.

I am also attaching a sample letter introducing THE PASTORAL PLAN that you may wish to adapt for your parish.

Thank you for your complete cooperation in this important effort.

Appreciatively yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward K. Braxton".

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton  
Bishop of Belleville

