

**UPDATE TO THE PARISHES OF
SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA, OUR LADY OF LORETO, SAINT PAMPHILUS, SAINT PIUS X AND RESURRECTION
FROM THE BEECHVIEW–BROOKLINE CATHOLIC COLLABORATIVE TEAM**

1. *Why was this team created?*

The team was created under the sponsorship of Bishop Zubik in response to two equally important realities. The one is Bishop Zubik's call for every parish to be vibrant in worship, evangelization, catechesis, formation and stewardship, to be *The Church Alive!* The second is to live out this call in a sustainable manner given the resources available, from the number of priests available to lead parish communities to finances, people and buildings. Given challenges facing our five parishes, the pastors approached our regional vicar, Father Robert Guay, and requested that a process of prayer, study and reflection be inaugurated. Bishop Zubik's sponsorship of this team is his response to that request.

2. *What is the purpose of the team?*

The purpose of the team is to join together to develop a blueprint to direct the future of our Beechview and Brookline Catholic faith communities to serve the faithful while addressing the operations and resources of our parishes.

3. *How do the members of the team understand their role?*

The team members want to create a unified vision for the future of the Catholic communities of Beechview and Brookline so that the faith deeply rooted in these communities may not only be sustained but also grow.

4. *What is the work plan of the team?*

In general terms, the team is working to answer four fundamental questions to fulfill its purpose: (a) What are the facts? (b) What are the possibilities? (c) What is a logical plan of action? (d) How would this plan affect people?

5. *How far along is the team in its work plan?*

The team has begun to assemble and analyze facts. The first set of facts is demographics. For

whom are we planning? Since the Church's mission is to the world, the team is looking at general demographics. But the team is also looking at the Catholics of the five parishes, those who live in the neighborhoods the parishes were established to serve, as well as those who travel from outside the parish boundaries to belong. The team is considering those who are active and inactive, those contributing and those not contributing at this time. After this, the team will consider finances, buildings, programs, services and ministries as well as the needs and aspirations of parishioners.

6. *What decisions have already been made?*

The only decisions made to date relate to the operation of the team itself. For example, the team is committed to hear the voices of parishioners. How this can best be done is still under investigation, but one opportunity being explored is the invitation of a random sampling of parishioners from the five parishes to participate in one or more focus groups.

7. *What is the timeline for the work of the team?*

The team anticipates that they will refine, test and finalize its recommendation to the parishes and to Bishop Zubik no later than December 2015.

8. *How will Father Mitolo's announced retirement this summer affect the work?*

Father Mitolo's pending retirement is an example of one of the realities shaping the future and adds to the sense of urgency of the team's work. There are a declining number of priests to serve the 199 parishes of the Diocese as well as the many educational, health and social service institutions in the six counties of the Diocese. 42 (18%) of active priests are already over the age eligible for retirement and another 46 (20%) will be eligible for retirement within the next five years.

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*Beechview–
Brookline
Catholic
Collaborative:
Rooted and
Growing in Faith*

Happy are those
whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law they meditate day and night.
**They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.**

Drawing its inspiration from the verses of Psalm 1 quoted above, and with a play on words from the names of the neighborhoods (**Brookline** and **Beechview**), the collaborative planning team, sees itself like a tree that is both rooted and growing. The roots are first and foremost in the Gospel of Christ and the life, teachings and ministry of His Church. Those roots are also in the people and neighborhoods served by the Church that can be traced back to 1891. Those roots, because they have been fed by the living waters of Christ in Word, Worship and Service have blossomed, grown and borne much fruit.

Through the years, that growth can easily be measured by the addition of new parishes, new buildings, and new members since the 1902 founding of Saint Catherine and the 1909 founding of Resurrection. But more significantly, the growth must be measured in terms of the how the people of God have given witness to and sought to extend the Kingdom of God.

The Beechview–Brookline Catholic Collaborative Team seeks to ensure that the tree planted ultimately by God will continue to grow and prosper in our neighborhoods.