

***Saint Brigid Parish, Blessed Sacrament Parish,  
and Assumption BVM Parish***

January 17, 2006

Dear Parishioners of Saint Brigid Parish, Blessed Sacrament Parish, and Assumption BVM Parish:

We hope that you have had a holy and joyous Christmas and extend our wishes to you for happiness and peace in 2006.

The next step in the Midland Catholic Cluster Project will take place at Saint Brigid Parish from 9 until noon on Saturday, January 28, in the Cardinal Hickey Parish Hall. This will be another important moment in the process. We would like to place the January 28 gathering in the context of the journey we began together in the fall of 2004.

**Where we have been**

We began the Midland Catholic Cluster Project with the two very successful gatherings with close to 600 Midland Catholics participating in the two days and providing a tremendous amount of valuable input, all of which was carefully transcribed.

Next, the Cluster Process Committee, comprised of the three pastors and four parish staff members, analyzed the transcriptions and found that six theme areas appeared most frequently: 1) Liturgy and Sacramental Ministry, 2) Priest Shortage/Vocations, 3) Shared Resources among our three parishes 4) Catholic Schools, 5) Youth Faith Formation and 6) Adult Faith Formation. While many other important topics were also raised, we believe it is important to focus our energies on those areas most frequently named at the Fall Gatherings.

Last year task forces assigned for each of the first three of these theme areas developed proposals which were presented at a listening session to which all Midland Catholics were invited. We, the pastors, then decided which of the proposals to implement right away. One of them was the decision to offer a weekly Sunday afternoon Mass at Saint Brigid Parish. This change has been very well received. There were other decisions made dealing with vocations and the priest shortage and sharing resources among the three parishes that are in various stages of implementation.

Late last year three new task forces were charged with the responsibility of developing proposals for the second set of three theme areas: Catholic Schools, Youth Faith Formation, and Adult Faith Formation. It is the proposals generated by these teams that will be presented at the listening session at Saint Brigid Parish on January 28.

## **What will happen on January 28?**

The January 28 gathering is another important moment in the Midland Catholic Cluster Project because it is your opportunity to come and give your input on the proposals that the three new task forces have created. These proposals deal with the direction of Catholic Schools in Midland, as well as with potential ways of further enriching the faith of youth and adults, doing it together, and in ways that make learning about our faith more appealing to both groups.

Those who do attend will have the chance to review each proposal, discuss it and indicate their level of support. There will not be “voting” on the proposals. The group that comes on the 28th will serve to provide counsel to us, the three pastors, who by Church law are the ones who have to make the decisions on each proposal.

## **Please RSVP**

In order that we may have an accurate estimate of the number of attendees for this meeting, we ask that you RSVP for the event. Simply telephone the Saint Brigid parish office at 835-7121 and let us know how many will be attending.

As has been the case through the entire process, all the input captured in the fall 2004 gatherings is available online at [www.midlandcatholics.org](http://www.midlandcatholics.org). In addition, a complete copy of all documents is available in each of the three parish offices during normal business hours.

Lastly, we ask that you continue to pray often that our work together be guided by the Holy Spirit and so lead to lives enriched in faith for all Catholics in Midland.

Prayerfully,  
Your pastors,

Fr. James W. Bessert  
Saint Brigid Parish

Fr. Peter J. Gaspeny  
Blessed Sacrament Parish

Fr. Richard M. Filary  
Assumption BVM Parish