



Diocese of Bridgeport Parish
Pastoral Plan “Building a Bridge
to the Future”
**Brazilian Catholic Community Our
Lady of Aparecida**

ABSTRACT

Brazilian Catholic Community Our Lady of Aparecida two-year strategic pastoral action plan, addressing challenges the Fourth Diocesan Synod identified, to maximize the effectiveness of pastoral ministry and spiritual life in the community.

Diocese of Bridgeport Parish Pastoral Plan “Building a Bridge to the Future”

Part One: Introductory Information

Catholic
Community:

Brazilian Catholic Community Our Lady of Aparecida

Episcopal Vicar
for Brazilians:

Leonel Soares Medeiros

Date:

September 27, 2016

Parish Task Force Members

Leadership Position

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1) Mr. Ademar da Silva | Finance Team Member |
| 2) Mr. Aislan Sartori | Tithe Commission Member |
| 3) Mr. Daniel Decastro | Catholic Charismatic Renewal Leader |
| 4) Mrs. Eleni Silva | Lector |
| 5) Ms. Gabriela Pereira | Youth Group Leader |
| 6) Mr. Jamir Costa | Formation and Retreat Coordinator |
| 7) Dr. João V. Nunes | Task Force Leader |
| 8) Mr. Leonidas Decarvalho | Men's Rosary Leader; African Mission Coordinator |
| 9) Mrs. Lícia Alves | Baptism Team Leader |
| 10) Mr. Sandro Doblins | Religious Education Director |
| 11) Rev. Leonel S. Medeiros | Episcopal Vicar for Brazilians |

Signature of the Episcopal Vicar for Brazilians:



Part One: Introductory Information (continued)

I. Purpose of the Pastoral Plan

Answering the call of the Fourth Diocesan Synod convened by Diocesan Bishop Frank Caggiano, Father Leonel Medeiros, Episcopal Vicar, assembled the Planning Task Force to craft a two-year strategic pastoral action plan for the Brazilian Catholic Community Our Lady of Aparecida (**BCCOLA**), Diocese of Bridgeport. Consisting of lay leaders of the Community, including members of the Pastoral and Finance Councils, the task force developed a plan that addresses global and administrative challenges to maximize the effectiveness of pastoral ministry and spiritual life in the community. The plan is to be delivered **September 30, 2016**, via e-mail to Patrick Turner, Director of Strategic and Pastoral Planning, pturner@diobpt.org.

II. Process:

- a. The Task Force reviewed:
 - i. **Sacramental and financial snapshots** (State our community is: sacramentally sound, financially sustainable)
 - ii. **Disciple Making Index (DMI)** (States our community is situated among the top three parishes, nationally)
 - iii. **Self-Assessment** (Showcases our community strengths and highlights our community needs)
- b. The wide community was engaged in discussing the challenges through groups, assemblies, announcements from the pulpit and in bulletins. Heads of the several ministries gave and sought pertinent information from members.
- c. Ongoing trimestral meetings are set for the members of the Task Force to report their verification and evaluation of progress in the timeline of the steps under each member's responsibility, set in motion to accomplish the stated goals in each of the addressed prioritized challenges. The meetings will also allow the Task Force to make any necessary adjustments triggered by the reports to ensure the best possible outcomes for the Pastoral Plan.

III. Strategy stemming from the DMI

The DMI describes our community favorably, both in relative and absolute terms, which gives us joy, but we are keenly aware that the Holy Spirit requires much more of us. The Planning Task Force aligned areas identified by the survey respondents with community needs. DMI questions are organized on a Likert scale: "Strongly Agree" is the highest possibility, "Strongly Disagree," the lowest, and "Agree" smack in the middle, or, respectively, HOT, COLD, and LUKEWARM. Respondents who strongly agree are already benefitting at peak and stand to be even more satisfied, along with the entire community, from attention paid to those who "Agree." Thus we are focusing our **efforts** and **resources** on the "Agree" groups, the action most likely to produce the best outcomes. Outliers, in any statistical analysis, must be accepted and may or may not shift to the other groups.

Part One: Introductory Information (continued)

IV. Addressed priorities

a. Highlighted: Prioritized global challenges

i. Liturgy and Worship

ii. Evangelization

iii. Family Life

iv. Leadership

v. Catechesis and Education

b. Highlighted: Prioritized temporalities

i. Buildings and Facilities

ii. Finances

iii. Community Life

Prioritized temporalities

N.B. Although the financial “snapshots” describe our community as solvent, thriving, and sustainable, it lacks autonomy and flexibility to make essential financial and administrative decisions to support its mission and goals. Therefore, we must address challenges “Buildings and Facilities” and “Finances” together as complementary.

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #1: Liturgy and Worship

A. Pastoral Challenge to be addressed

X Liturgy and Worship

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority Area

The global challenge *Liturgy and Worship* is a **Priority** because it is at the very center of our religious life. The Synod calls all Catholics to FULL, CONSCIOUS, AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION in the worship life of the Church and recommends:

- a. Welcoming and hospitality to accompany prayer and worship.
- b. Preparing and delivering homilies that are relevant, inspirational, engaging and challenging to those who attend Mass and other sacramental celebrations.
- c. Celebrating culture and ethnic diversity in our worship life.
- d. Revitalizing ministries associated with the celebration of the sacraments

Two hundred nine (209) persons, a representative sample of our community, responded to the DMI survey. We interpreted DMI questions numbers 4, 7, and 9 as pertaining to Liturgy and Worship. The DMI reveals that of respondents to question # 4, **Parish Spiritual Growth**, 66% “Strongly Agree” and 39% “Agree”; of respondents to question # 7, **Growth via Mass**, 58% “Strongly Agree” and 38% “Agree”; and of respondents to question # 9, **Preaching**, 57% “Strongly Agree” and 39% “Agree.” The “Agree” column in the DMI as a whole shows that a troubling percentage of our respondents are lukewarm to the efforts put forth on Liturgy and Worship, suggesting the community needs something more, and prompting us to develop and use the “**Strategy stemming from the DMI,**” stated in Part One.

C. Liturgy and Worship: Statement of the Goal to be achieved

To offer fitting and conscious worship to the Lord, all must engage in their own personal commitment to their Christian formation through liturgy. We ought to †Make all members of our community CONSCIOUS of all efforts and resources, including human, being dedicated to Liturgy and Worship. †Provide opportunities for ACTIVE participation. †Identify and invite individuals and accept volunteers to ACTIVELY participate according to interests and talents. †Specify steps to concretize participation.

a. Liturgy and Worship: Action Step #1

- i. Explanatory Masses: A series of Masses explaining, according to Church teachings and traditions, the integral components of Mass, their origins, importance, and proper placement to instruct the community, helping members become conscious worshipers and grow in the knowledge of our faith.
- ii. Sunday morning Mass at the Brazilian Pastoral Center added to the official schedule at 9:00am, starting on 9/11/2016. It is now an ongoing reality that will mitigate a loudly voiced need of a significant number of the faithful.

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #1: Liturgy and Worship (continued)

- iii. In a year's time, we plan to concretize the offering of a contemporary bilingual (Portuguese/English) Sunday Mass. This is in response to a stated need of the community's young who are more proficient in their native English, along with their parents, who are transitioning between the two languages and cultures.

All will be invited for i, ii, and iii through

- ✓ Permanent addition of the Masses to the official calendar
- ✓ Announcements from the pulpit
- ✓ Announcements in routinely distributed pamphlets
- ✓ Announcements in all pastoral ministries

Summary Information for Action Step #1

- Timeline for completion:

†One Explanatory Mass once per trimester, three trimesters (winter, spring, and fall) per year, in 2017 and 2018. Review for adjustments after the first year.

†One additional, ongoing early morning Sunday Mass (start date: 9/11/2016). Review for adjustments after the first year.

†Additional offering of a contemporary bilingual (Portuguese/English) Sunday Mass to become ongoing in a year's time. Review for adjustments after the first year.

- Responsible person/Task Force: Liturgy Ministry Coordinators Marinete M. Da Silva and Marcia Pereira and Father Leonel Medeiros
- Diocesan Office assistance (if any): None
- Projected Costs (if any): No monetary costs; human effort is pledged

Note 1: Cost of space, utilities, and supplies: Our members provide for all costs associated with supporting the spiritual, social, cultural, administrative, and financial needs of the community. A significant portion of the costs is defrayed through in-kind contributions: members volunteer for all aspects of the Lord's work. Members also give generously, organize and run monetary net gain-producing social events, and return the tithe. All together, these efforts translate into service and generate funds used to pay for supplies, contracts, utilities, mortgages, and use of space. The latter includes contribution of 25% of the community's gross income to St. Peter's Parish to use its church's physical space in alternate fashion with the American and Hispanic communities.

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #1: Liturgy and Worship (continued)

b. Liturgy and Worship: Action Step #2

Formation of Lectors and Psalmists:

†Invite individuals and accept volunteers for ACTIVE participation according to interest and talent.

†Provide opportunities for ACTIVE participation.

†Delineate and take specific steps to concretize participation.

Summary Information for Action Step #2:

- Timeline for completion: Two (2) morning-long interactive workshops a year, as detailed in the table below, each with a specific agenda delineating all steps to be taken for the liturgical formation of lectors and psalmists. Breakfast is included along with opportunities for socialization. Review for adjustments after the first year.

Liturgical Formation Planning for lectors and Psalmists (2016/2018)

ACTION	THEME	DATE	WHERE
Workshop for Lectors & Psalmists	Liturgical Biblical Formation	Nov/2016	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Workshop for Lectors & Psalmists	Liturgical Symbols and Objects	Jun/2017	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Workshop for Lectors & Psalmists	Handling Lectionary & Word Meditation	Nov/2017	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Workshop for Lectors, Psalmists & Choirs	Music and Liturgy	Apr/2018	Brazilian Pastoral Center

- Responsible person/Task Force: Liturgy Ministry Coordinators Marinete M. Da Silva and Marcia Pereira and Father Leonel Medeiros
- Diocesan Office assistance (if any): None
- Projected Costs (if any): No monetary costs; human effort is pledged. (See **Note 1**)

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #1: Liturgy and Worship (continued)

c. Liturgy and Worship: Action Step #3

Permanent formation of Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers of the Holy Communion: The Church calls lay Eucharistic Ministers to be in the service of Jesus before the community, and consequently to:

- †Be deeply connected with Christ
- †Raise awareness of the Word of God
- †Understand the needs of the community
- †Support individuals and groups of the community.

Summary Information for Action Step #3:

- Timeline in the table that follows. Review for adjustments after the first year.

Timeline: Permanent Formation of Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers (2016-2018)

Date	Theme	Time	Place
2016			
Septmber 4	Research and Study of Documents	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
October 2	Liturgy: Doctrines and Rules	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
November 6	Church Catechism: Sacraments	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
December 4	Worship, Rosary, and Social Breakfast	10:30am	Brazilian Pastoral Center
2017			
January 8	Vatican Ecumenical Council II	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
February 5	Church Catechism: Liturgy	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
March 5	Worship, Rosary, and Social Breakfast	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
April 2	Catholic Church History: Part 1	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
May 7	Catholic Church History: Part 2	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
June 4	Moral Theology: Human conscious, freedom, and moral conscious	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
July 2	Moral Theology: Individual sin, social sin, and sin of omission	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
August 6	Instruction on Roman Prayer Book	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
Septmber 3	Worship, Rosary, and Social Breakfast	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
October 1	Lumen Fidei Study	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
November 5	Encyclicals and Pope's letter	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
December 3	Altar Practice	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
December 9	Confraternization	7:00pm	Brazilian Pastoral Center
2018			
Janury 7	Study of "Be a Minister," a book by Father Paulo Ribeiro de Freitas	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
February 4	Worship, Rosary, and Social Breakfast	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
March 4	Study: Our Lady	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
April 1	Study of the Liturgy of the Hours	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
May 6	The seven gifts of Eucharistic Ministers	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
June 3	Book Study: "Manual for Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers of the Holy Communion and Obsequies"	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement

July 1	Code of the Canonical Right	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
August 5	Worship, Rosary, and Social Breakfast	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement
Septmber 2	Intro to: Congregation of Divine Worship and Discipline of Sacraments	10:30am	St. Peter Church Basement

Spiritual Formation Encounters for Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers (2017-2018)

Date	Theme	Time	Place
July 10 & 11 of 2017	Eucharist and Service	10:30am – 5:00pm	Brazilian Pastoral Center
July 16 & 17 of 2018	Call for the Mission	10:30am – 5:00pm	Brazilian Pastoral Center

- Responsible person/Task Force: Eucharistic Minister Leaders Jamir Costa and Aislan Sartori and Father Leonel Medeiros
- Diocesan Office assistance (if any): None
- Projected Costs (if any): No monetary costs; human effort is pledged. (See **Note 1**)

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #2: Evangelization

A. Pastoral Challenge to be addressed

X Evangelization

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority

The global challenge Evangelization is a **Priority** because the community aspires to ongoing missionary discipleship and to be evangelized through effective witnessing of the Gospel.

The Synod:

†Calls every Catholic to ongoing missionary discipleship.

†Sees an urgent need to create a variety of strategies to engage Catholics who are marginalized to participate in the life of the Church, and to respect diversity within our communities of faith.

†Invites people of good will to be evangelized through effective witnessing of the Gospel.

The task force interpreted DMI questions numbered 5, 6, and 10 as pertaining to challenges in Evangelization. For question #5, Recommend Pastor, the DMI reveals that 60% “Strongly Agree,” while 31% “Agree”; for question #6, Formed as Disciple, 53% “Strongly Agree” and 44% “Agree”; and for question #10, Sharing Personal Story, 42% “Strongly Agree” and 48% “Agree.” DMI analysis suggests considerable overlap between “Evangelization” and “Catechesis and Education.”

C. Evangelization: Statement of the Goal To Be Achieved

Evangelize all pastoral leaders, including all catechists, so they can take up, embody, and discharge their roles in the life of the Church.

a. Action Step #1

- i. Pastoral Leadership Formation Workshops for all lay leaders (pastoral ministry leaders and catechists) of the community.
- ii. Monthly ongoing formation of catechists

Summary Information for Action Step #1

- Timeline for completion: All pastoral ministry leaders and all catechists will attend *one* (1) yearly Leadership Formation Workshop and *the Pentecost Encounter*. All are *encouraged* to attend *all* Spiritual Formation Encounters (in the table below). Review for adjustments after the first year.

Spiritual Formation Encounters (2017-2018)

Theme	Date	Where
Marriage Encounter	01/14/17 & 01/15/17	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Youth Encounter	04/22/17 & 04/23/17	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Pentecost Encounter	06/03/17 & 06/04/17	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Marian Encounter	10/07/17 & 10/08/17	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Our Lady of Aparecida Mass	10/12/18	St. Peter’s Church
Leadership Encounter	11/04/17 & 11/05/17	Brazilian Pastoral Center
2018		
Marriage Encounter	01/13/18 & 01/14/18	Brazilian Pastoral Center

Youth Encounter	04/07/18 & 04/08/18	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Pentecost Encounter	05/19/18 & 05/20/18	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Our Lady of Aparecida Mass	10/12/18	St. Peter's Church
Marian Encounter	10/13/18 & 10/14/18	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Leadership Encounter	11/03/18 & 11/04/18	Brazilian Pastoral Center

Dates for Formation of Catechists (2018 not yet shown)

2016		Where
October 30		Brazilian Pastoral Center
November 20		Brazilian Pastoral Center
December 4		Brazilian Pastoral Center
2017		
January 28		Brazilian Pastoral Center
February 25		Brazilian Pastoral Center
March 25		Brazilian Pastoral Center
April 29		Brazilian Pastoral Center
May 27		Brazilian Pastoral Center
June 24		Brazilian Pastoral Center
July 29		Brazilian Pastoral Center
August 26		Brazilian Pastoral Center
September 30		Brazilian Pastoral Center
October 28		Brazilian Pastoral Center
November 18		Brazilian Pastoral Center
December 16		Brazilian Pastoral Center

- Responsible person/Task Force: Jamir Costa and Father Leonel Medeiros
- Diocesan Office assistance (if any): None
- Projected Costs (if any No monetary costs; human effort is pledged. **(See Note 1)**)

b. Action Step #2 and Timeline

Religious education and faith formation

- For the parents of all children in Religious Education to further increase their awareness as Catholic parents that they are their children first catechists at home (Domestic Church).
- AEC (Adolescents' Encounter with Christ Ministry) meetings and one weekend retreat.

Summary Information for Action Step #2

- Timeline for completion:
 - Development of faith formation days for years 2016 and 2017 (shown), and 2018, for the parents of all children in Religious Education. Review for adjustments after the first year.

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #2: Evangelization (continued)

Faith Formation Dates for the Parents (2018 not yet shown)

2016	Where
October 16	Brazilian Pastoral Center
November 13	Brazilian Pastoral Center
2017	
January 15	Brazilian Pastoral Center
March 19	Brazilian Pastoral Center

- ii. Adolescents’ Encounter with Christ Ministry: Monthly meetings and one yearly weekend Spiritual Formation Encounter in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Review for adjustments after the first year.
 - Responsible person : Sandro Doblins, Luciana Oliveira, and Licia Alves.
 - Diocesan Office assistance: None
 - Projected Costs: No monetary costs; human effort is pledged. (See **Note 1**)
- c. Action Step# 3 and Timeline**
- i. Catholic Charismatic Renewal (Prayer Group): Ongoing: weekly prayer meeting, weekly visitation with the sick and dying, weekly visitation with afflicted families, monthly mass for healing and liberation, and Pentecost Spiritual Encounter once a year.
 - ii. African Missionary Initiative: The Charismatic Renewal Prayer Group has generated this initiative, making possible the (almost completed) construction of a nutrition center which is *currently operational* in a sadly poor, deprived, and extremely needy section of the Nampula Province in Mozambique. The ongoing mission initiative culminated with a 13-day trip in early 2013 and a 12-day trip in 2014 of an ambassador delegation from our community. The delegation worked with the (Marrere, Nampula, Mozambique) St. John Baptist Mission and with (Mother Theresa) Sisters of Charity directly. Our community raised and sent funds that made the charitable work and construction possible. The Mozambican beneficiaries are continuing the work with zeal and joy while our community awaits the proper occasion to again send an ambassador delegation to Mozambique.
 - iii. Youth Group, biweekly meetings with evangelization activities.

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #2: Evangelization (continued)

- Detailed Timeline Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) and Prayer Group

Ministry Formation and Spiritual Encounters September 2016 – August 2017

Action	Subject	Date	Place
Formation for didactic and spiritual growth	Children's Ministry	11/11/2016	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation for increased intimacy with Jesus as an intercessor	Intercession Ministry	12/10/2016	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation: Learn more about the music ministry in CCR	Music & A Ministry	11/18-20/2016	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation: Bible Study	Preaching Ministry	02/03/2017	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation for increased spiritual and personal growth	Healing Ministry	03/05/2017	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation to implement the ministry to the prayer group	Social Co. Ministry	05/03/2017	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Spiritual Encounters	Pentecost	06/3-4/2017	Brazilian Pastoral Center

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #2: Evangelization (continued)

Ministry Formation and Spiritual Encounters September 2017 – August 2018

Concrete Action	Subject	Date	Where
Formation: Skills development	Children's Ministry	09/03/2017	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation: Increase personal relationship with Christ	Music&A Ministry	09/15-17/2017	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation: Skills Development	Healing Ministry	01/18/2018	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation: Skills Development	Preaching Ministry	02/04/2018	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Spiritual Encounter	Pentecost	06/19-20/2018	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation: Skills Development	Social Co. Ministry	06/24/2018	Brazilian Pastoral Center
Formation: Charismatic gifts of the Spirit	Intercession Ministry	08/25/2018	Brazilian Pastoral Center

- Detailed Timeline for YOUTH GROUP Meetings and Spiritual Encounters for 2017

January 8 and 22

February 5 and 19

March 5 and 19

April 1 and 2 – Youth Spiritual Encounter, Preacher: Father Fabio Camargo

April 9 and 23

May 7 and 14

May 21 – Mother's Day Serenade

June 4, 11 and 25

July 9 and 23

August 6 and 20

September 3 and 17

October 1 and 15

November 12 and 26

December 10 – Youth End of Year Event

Part Two: Pastoral Challenge #2: Evangelization (continued)

- Detailed Timeline for YOUTH GROUP Meetings and Spiritual Encounters for 2018

January 7 and 21

February 4 and 18

March 4 and 18

April 7 and 8 – Youth Spiritual Encounter

April 22

May 6 and 13

May 20 – Mother’s Day Serenade

June 3, 17 and 24

July 9 and 22

August 5 and 19

September 2, 16 and 30

October 14 and 28

November 11 and 25

December 9 – Youth End of Year Event

- Responsible person/Task Force: Daniel Decastro and Gabriela Pereira
- Projected Costs: No monetary costs; human effort is pledged. (See **Note 1**)

Part Three: Temporalities and Administrative Challenges: Buildings and Facilities and Finances

A. Pastoral Challenge to be addressed

i. Buildings and Facilities

ii. Finances

B. Rationale for Choosing these Priority Areas:

i. Buildings and Facilities

The Brazilian Catholic Community Our Lady of Aparecida **lacks** the essential physical space to meet its individual and collective sacramental needs in order to encourage, support, sustain, and renew the faith of community members. For example, this lack of essential physical space precludes celebration of daily and Sunday Masses at multiple strategic times, something the community members strongly desire.

A community of faith, ironically it lacks the physical space to address, encourage, and support the various aspects of community life, including 30 vibrant pastoral ministries and pastoral services, individual and group faith development, Bible study, and the development and delivery of varied didactic themes.

It lacks the physical space to accommodate the needs of the faithful who add their number to its astonishing daily growth; its more than 700 officially registered families (and an estimated 700 plus other families not yet registered); its many children, adolescents, and youth; its many exceptionally well-attended religious, social, and cultural events.

The **BCCOLA** relies on St. Peter's church's physical space in alternate fashion with the American and Hispanic communities. The American community claims scheduling priorities, leaving our community with only two weekly scheduled Sunday Mass, one monthly Baptism service, held on a Sunday, and special occasion Masses, all scheduled on a non-priority basis.

Our community contributes *25% of its gross income* to St. Peter's parish.

We believe the just contribution should be 15%, which would amount to the value of the cathedraticum. Such an arrangement would free 10% of the **BCCOLA's** gross income, which the community envisions applying toward securing the proper space it sorely needs. Ten percent of the community's gross income is a significant sum that would go a long way toward securing and abating funds for capital projects.

Our community also relies for Masses, meetings, and events on the Brazilian Pastoral Center Our Lady of Aparecida, located at 61 Liberty Street, in Danbury. Thanks to our community's due diligence, the building is in fairly good overall condition, although it still needs a new kitchen, a new boiler and air conditioning systems, and replacement of all windows. The Pastoral Center, although a cherished asset, does not meet the space needs of

Part Three: Temporalities and Administrative Challenges: Buildings and Facilities and Finances (continued)

the community, even when its square footage is added to that of St. Peter's church; the center's parking lot barely fits 10 cars, tightly and in awkward fashion, leaving most members to park elsewhere.

Our community of faith needs much more space than is currently available. That notwithstanding, it does the Lord's work consistently and hopes to soon mitigate the need in order to be able to support the spiritual and socio-cultural life of its growing population, as the Fourth Diocesan Synod recommends. It is nothing trivial to schedule any one activity for our community of faith, let alone to maintain its complex schedule of activities. The community does all it does because the members' strong desire for a collective life in Christ renders them immensely tolerant of repeated and pervasive logistical frustration. Members do what they can to shrug it off.

Yet trusting in the Holy Spirit, our community remains optimistic.

It is important to note that the **BCCOLA** has a realistic appraisal of all this, which includes the expectation of high costs. It is prepared to offset these with in-kind contributions of expert labor, donation of materials, organization and execution of net financial gain-producing social events, and capital fund raisers above and beyond those already in place. Also, if it can add to these assets the 10% of its gross income that could be freed from its current 25% obligation to St. Peter's Parish, the community would apply such accrual appropriately, amply covering projected future costs.

ii. Finances

The **BCCOLA**'s need for space is coupled with the need for administrative and financial autonomy to effectively manage the elements and systems that support its operation, which would be resolved if it were a parish.

Even though it fulfills its responsibilities and has the necessary human talents who are eager to serve and even though the "snapshot" says it is solvent, thriving, and sustainable, not being a parish precludes its having autonomy and flexibility to make essential financial and administrative decisions to support its mission and goals.

It is imperative to ask the Bishop to set in motion the process by which the Brazilian Catholic Community Our Lady of Aparecida becomes a parish within the Diocese of Bridgeport.

The **BCCOLA** is thankful to St. Peter's Parish. Having the administrative flexibility conferred by its status, it was St. Peter's Parish that assisted our community in purchasing the Pastoral Center building. Our community has, through the years, faithfully kept paying the mortgage and upkeep of the Pastoral Center building, not knowing whether it can legally use the building as an asset-developing tool. For example, could it use the building as collateral for the purchase and development of land to build suitable space for its activities?

Part Three: Temporalities and Administrative Challenges: Buildings and Facilities and Finances (continued)

A. Statement of the Goal:

It is our *vision* and hope to *eventually* build the *Shrine to Our Lady of Aparecida* that would link our many Catholics living from Massachusetts to Washington, D.C., and beyond on the east coast of the United States. The shrine, integral part of the Diocese of Bridgeport, would become a unifying physical point that Catholics currently lack.

Our community is keenly aware that no timeline can be set for concretizing our vision until the Bishop's and Diocesan offices' and institutions' approval. We request their assistance to examine the feasibility of the planned **ordered steps** we offer instead toward giving the community the space it needs. We invite consultation of *estimates* prepared by Doyle/Coffin Architecture to inform the decision making process.

Action Steps

1. First: Because our community needs to attain autonomy and flexibility to make essential financial and administrative decisions to support its mission and goals, the community asks to become a parish on a par with the other parishes in the diocese, for which it must follow the Bishop's guidance.
2. Second: Going forward, we request freeing and returning to the community 10% of the 25% of its gross income, which the community pays to St. Peter's parish. The community would instead contribute 15%, a fair sum that covers the cathedraticum.
3. Third: Assess lots, locations, and prices and their suitability at all levels and plan to build a multi-store energy-efficient building that would accommodate 700 people, have space dedicated to worship, convertible space for social events and activities, pastoral and clerical offices, meeting rooms for all our pastoral ministries, rehearsals, etc., and a rectory residence for clergy. The pre-estimates prepared by Doyle/Coffin will be useful in this planning.

Summary Information for the Action Steps

- Timeline for completion: Needs discussion with Bishop Frank J. Caggiano, Vicar General Thomas W. Powers, and designated diocesan officers
- Responsible person/Task Force: Dr. João V. Nunes, MD, Daniel Decastro, M.A, Mr. Leonidas Decarvalho, Mr. Jamir Costa, Mr. Aislan Sartori and Father Leonel Medeiros, M.Div. will follow up the process with the Bishop and/or designees.
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): At the discretion of the Bishop
- Projected Costs (if any): Estimates and negotiation needed