



**Pastoral Planning News
affecting
St. Charles Borromeo,
Our Lady of Mercy
and
Holy Name of Jesus**

As you may know, Fr. John Gagnier took on the leadership of Our Lady of Mercy parish last June, in addition to serving as pastor of Holy Name of Jesus. The priests of our Eastern Greece/Charlotte parishes, including those of us here at St. Charles Borromeo, have helped with the weekend Mass schedule at Our Lady of Mercy. Now Bishop Clark, the Priest Personnel Board, and the members of the Eastern Greece/Charlotte Steering Committee have recognized that the planning group could and should provide additional support to Our Lady of Mercy and Fr. Gagnier beyond that put into place last June. They also expressed the need for Our Lady of Mercy parish to be stabilized and experience as few changes as possible during the time that a new pastoral plan is being developed. After shared conversation, the following decisions were reached:

1. Fr. John Gagnier will remain as parochial administrator at Our Lady of Mercy until a pastoral plan is completed and affirmed by Bishop Clark. This is estimated to be sometime between December 2009 and June 2010.
2. I have been asked by the diocese to help Our Lady of Mercy parish and Fr. Gagnier for this time period. My role will be as follows:
 - ❖ to attend meetings of the Our Lady of Mercy pastoral council and perhaps the finance council along with Fr. Gagnier
 - ❖ to meet regularly with Fr. Gagnier, Our Lady of Mercy's Deacon Dick Lombard and Karen Rinefiel (planning group liaison) to strategize on the best ways to keep their parish stable and to communicate with parishioners during the planning process.
3. The priests of the planning group recommit to maintaining the present Mass schedule for Our Lady of Mercy and Holy Name of Jesus throughout the planning process.

I was asked by our representatives on the Eastern Greece/Charlotte Steering Committee how my new responsibilities will affect our parish. Clearly my priority *is* Saint Charles. You have been through some very difficult times and I will do nothing that will take away from my role as your pastor. However, a neighboring parish is going through its own time of uncertainty and struggle. I am glad to do what I can to assist Fr. Gagnier and the people of Our Lady of Mercy to stabilize their parish as we go through pastoral planning. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Fr. John Firpo