

Interim Report of Marks of Mission Giving Table Task Force

The Marks of Mission Giving Table Task Force was appointed by the Bishop to carry out a resolution adopted at the 234th Convention in 2018 to review the Marks of Mission Giving Table. The Task Force will be presenting its recommendations to the 236th Convention in 2020.

As constituted the Task Force seeks to reflect the demographic, geographic and financial diversity of our Diocese. We began our work in August by reviewing the materials and conclusions of the Accountability and Fair Share Task Force that recommended the Fair Share Table adopted in 2013 which ultimately became the Marks of Mission Giving Table. We also reviewed the revised Canon 16 adopted at the 233rd Convention mandating that the dollar amounts prescribed by the Giving Table become mandatory effective 2020. We then reviewed the characteristics of our constituent parishes as reflected by the parochial reports.

We are very grateful to and thank the members of the Accountability and Fair Share Task Force for their extensive efforts. Our Task Force has sought through prayer and mutual collaboration how best to accomplish the task before us.

Giving commitments by the parishes of the Diocese since the adoption of the current Canon 16 manifest widespread reluctance to pledge the amounts contemplated by the Giving Table. In considering this phenomenon, the Task Force has been considering not only the methodology and mechanics of the Giving Table, but also the ways in which the Giving Table and reactions to it reflect the relationship between our parish communities and diocesan fellowship. A review of methodology and mechanics appears to reveal widespread disparities in parish approaches to preparation of the parochial report, particularly the calculation of operating income. This observation will be tested with further research in the coming months.

We have also been considering apparent concerns about the equities of the Giving Table in its present form. Do a proportion of parishes consider the Table to be in some respects unfair? If so, why? Thus we have undertaken a series of sit downs at various parishes to listen about their respective approaches to Marks of Mission Giving. These are listening and learning sessions for the Task Force, separate from a parish decision to meet with the Board of Consultation. If your parish would like to afford us the opportunity for a listening opportunity with representatives of your parish, please contact the Task Force chair, Gerald Harvey, at geraldcharvey@gmail.com.

The Task Force is also participating in a diocesan wide survey of attitudes, approaches and reactions to Marks of Mission Giving. Ultimately we want input from every parish on this important issue.

The Diocese is a fellowship of parish communities. Ultimately how we as a whole approach Marks of Mission Giving reflects our understanding of that fellowship. Ultimately giving is sharing. As people and as parishes we embrace a belief in fair share. The challenge for the Task Force is to translate that belief into a Marks of Mission Giving Table that enjoys widespread support and that grows discipleship.

Gerald Harvey, Task Force Chair, Dr. Alan Appleby, Dcn. Gail Bennett, Mr. Kirk Bonamici, Mr. Dwight Brandon, Rev. Susanna Cates, Ms. Regina Lamptey, Dcn. Clive Sang, Mr. Charles Thorne, Mr. Sebastian Vazquez, Canon Phyllis Jones, Staff Liaison

RESOLUTION

Be it resolved, That the 235th Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey appreciates the ongoing work of the Marks of Mission Giving Table Task Force as reflected in its interim report, Document 24, and recognizes that its conversations with parishes could not be completed prior to this meeting of the Convention as had been envisioned in the authorizing Resolution passed by the 234th Convention; and be it

Further resolved, That the Task Force continue its work and report to the 236th Convention in 2020 its recommendations as to the appropriate levels of giving that will foster diocesan fellowship and discipleship, expressed through the Marks of Mission.