

Ben Babaran, St. James Kansas City

- Thank you, Sharon!
- Bishop Johnston, reverend fathers, reverend sisters, administrators, parish representatives in the pastoral planning process, parishioners and friends – GOOD EVENING!
- I am BEN BABARAN, the parish administrator of St. James Kansas City. From the start, I have been very involved in the process helping our parish representatives, Pat Marrin and Joy Eke. Pat, Joy, maraming salamat sa inyo (Thank you very much in Filipino). It was my joy in organizing parochial listening sessions as part of the pastoral planning process and attending sessions when parish representatives come together to give the feedback and updates of their respective parishes. The latter must be the reason why I was picked to present the plan for Deanery 1. So, let us talk about the plan....
- While the pastoral plan assigns designations like clustered, merged or stand alone, the family of parishes decided to put aside these designations and chose to exist and work in collaboration, which is something I believe, as an organization-development planner, all parishes of the diocese have to do. May I echo our diocesan vision - ONE FAMILY: RESTORED IN CHRIST – EQUIPPED FOR MISSION. *As one family, we work together!*
- The parishes will collaborate in the following areas:
 - Contractors—electricians, plumbers or maintenance personnel
 - Communication—parish events shared in each parish’s bulletin, a common newsletter or yearly review.
 - Adult Faith Formation days, at least once a month together with some small faith-sharing groups.
 - Social Services information—listing of parish’s Social Services available as well as other agencies’ programs available in the Deanery.
 - Social Justice Ministry—continue work in the areas of affordable housing, voter rights, race, poverty, policing, the environment, gun violence as example. Focus on working with our ecumenical group and interreligious groups committed to positive change.
 - Youth Ministry—our next generation. Evangelizing the youth, inviting and engaging them in the family of parishes with projects. One example is installing solar powered charging stations in

churches. Millennials can attend church and charge their phones as well.

- Student Volunteers from colleges and universities—volunteer opportunities get students in parishes.
- Community Building—Last but not least. St. James has a sign “ALL ARE WELCOME!” Parishioners continuously invite neighbors especially those new in the area, and welcome all who come in the doors of the church as well as the office.
- As this process ends, the family of parishes in Midtown KC would like to remind us all that we are still in the period of Synod on Synodality. May we use the synodal process to develop the above collaborative efforts and programs to address the diminishing presence of the church in the urban core even as more federal funding promises to revitalize the Troost corridor and the east side of our city.
- During the implementation process, we propose focusing our energies on exploring how to build community while maintaining the unique aspects of each parish. St. James proudly displays 24 flags of countries of origin of our parishioners. There are 19 languages spoken at St. James. We are proud of our diversity. But with our program “From Diversity to Inclusion,” we are working to be inclusive. In the same vein, the family of parishes in Midtown Kansas City is diverse. Now, we are called to be **inclusive**.
- With that, I respectfully pass the mic and floor to Matthew Jacobs and J.K. Smith from Deanery 2 parishes.