

Update: Progress on the Beacons of Light Process Holy Spirit Family of Parishes

On August 26, Father Francis called a joint meeting of the parish finance committees and parish councils. The leadership team facilitated the meeting to continue the canonical process of bringing the four parishes together as a Family of Parishes: St. Augustine, St. Benedict, Our Lady of Grace, and Queen of Martyrs. The meeting had two primary purposes: to initiate regular communication among pastoral and finance councils as one family, and to establish a combined finance council charged with overseeing the shared finances of the four parishes.

Each parish finance committee was asked to nominate three members to serve on the combined finance council for the Holy Spirit Family of Parishes. Nomination of persons was due September 15. The newly constituted combined finance council held its first meeting on September 29. At that meeting, members were briefed on the council's purpose and reviewed the governance guidelines that will direct its work.

A central discussion point introduced by Father Francis was a shift from equal expense shares to an equity-based model in which each parish's contribution toward shared costs is calculated as a percentage of its income rather than divided evenly. To develop the percentage model, the combined finance council formed a four-member subcommittee with one representative from each parish.

On October 16, the subcommittee met and reviewed Archdiocesan materials on parish assessment models. Using those guidelines as a reference, the subcommittee recommended percentage allocations for shared expenses to avoid discrepancies and to reflect each parish's capacity. The subcommittee presented its recommendations to the full combined finance council on October 30. The proposed contribution range for shared expenses fell between 58% and 66% of each parish's assessable income, consistent with Archdiocesan guidance. The council is hopeful to implement the new model beginning January 2026.

Operational details under consideration include:

- Creation of a single special account under the tax ID of one of the parishes to receive contributions and pay shared expenses.
- Initial "seed" contributions from each parish are proportional to the agreed percentage to fund the account before January implementation.

- Shared-account responsibilities to include salaries and benefits for employees who serve the Family of Parishes, clergy housing and living expenses, clergy salaries and retirement/health benefits, and additional clergy and transportation costs.

Phase 4: Family Unity Discernment and Facilities Assessment.

As part of Phase 4, the Family Unity Discernment process will assess financial, pastoral, and facility factors across the four parishes to inform long-term planning. The Archdiocesan Vitality Office worked with Miss Lynn Mosley on October 16 to prepare tools and worksheets to support this assessment. Initial building evaluations have already begun, focusing on HVAC systems, boilers, plumbing, and roofs.

On October 19, the Unity Team was formed and briefed on its responsibilities. The team includes eight members: the four representatives from the combined finance subcommittee and four members from the building committee. The Unity Team will coordinate facility assessments, compile sacramental and attendance records, and support the broader discernment process.

Next steps and how you can help

- The Unity Team and the combined finance council will continue meetings to finalize percentage allocations, finalize the special account logistics, and complete facility assessments.
- Parishioners will be invited to participate in consultative sessions and information meetings as Phase 4 proceeds. Your input, ideas, and cooperation are essential to a successful pastoral process.

Thank you for your continued dedication to this shared work. We will provide further updates as the process advances.

Submitted by Fr. Francis Tandoh, C.S.Sp.
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