

2022 & Beyond:

Foundations for Our Future

Beacons of Light & the Synod on Synodality

<u>Section One:</u>	<u>Beacons of Light</u>	<u>Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio</u>	
First subsection:	> Pastoral Planning – Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality		5pps
	> Roles of Key Stakeholders in Pastoral Planning		1page
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Second subsection:	> Pathway, The Pathway & The Pathway Platform		2pps
	> Fr. Earl Fernandes - <i>Journeying Together</i> : Theological Foundations for Pastoral Planning		7pps
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Third subsection:	> Guiding Principles, Vision points, Parameters	revised 2/9/2022	6pps
	> <u>overview Guiding Principles & Foundational Principles detailed one page articles (currently two ^{four} pages)</u>		7pps
	<i>The overview and the Eucharist were disbursed through the Bulletin originally</i>		
	> Guiding Principles & The Governance of Families of Parishes (Not yet available/located)		
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Fourth subsection:	> Guiding Principles and Parameters for Pastoral Planning (original)		4pps
Fifth subsection:	> There Is Nothing Like Family		1page
	> Beacons of Light- <u>Pastoral planning for Our Third Century-Becoming People Who Radiate Christ</u> (2yr timeline)		3pps
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Sixth subsection:	> Beacons of Light- <u>Pastoral planning for Our Third Century</u>	Glossary	10/14/2021 2pps
	> Beacons of Light- <u>Pastoral planning for Our Third Century</u>	Fr. Earl Fernandes - <i>Journeying Together</i> :	6pps
>	> Beacons of Light- <u>Pastoral planning for Our Third Century</u>	Full Document <u>Study Guide</u>	released 2/9/2022 1page
>			

Plastic Pocket

Section Two: Synod on Synodality Vatican City Italy

~Introductory Materials:

- > OPENING OF THE SYNODAL PATH HOLY MASS HOMILY (transcription) 10/10/2021 Pope Francis 2pps
- > What Pope Francis wants us to know about The Nativity Optional -----
- > Synod on Synodality Communication, Participation, and Mission – released USCCB 11/18/2021 1page

~Dayton North – Region II: Synod on Synodality - round table discussions

- > Pink Bulletin Insert, North Dayton Deanery gathering sheet, and Discussion Questions Data 6pps

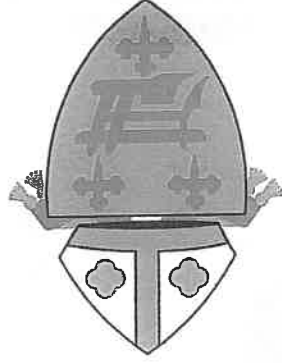
~Synod 2021-2023 For a Synodal Church Communion Participation Mission (Preparatory Document) 20pps

Pastoral Planning Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality

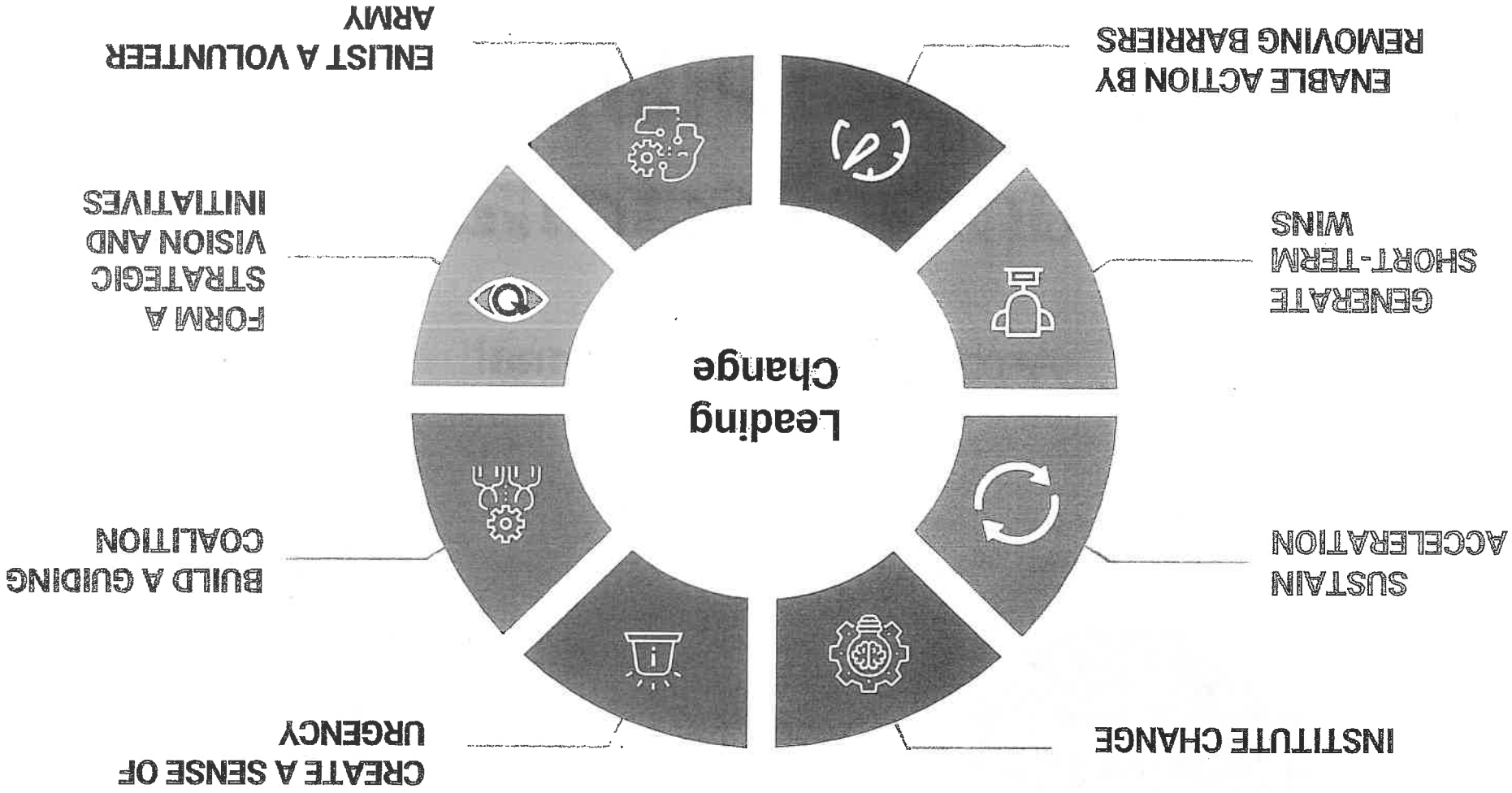
Archdiocese of Cincinnati
2020-2027



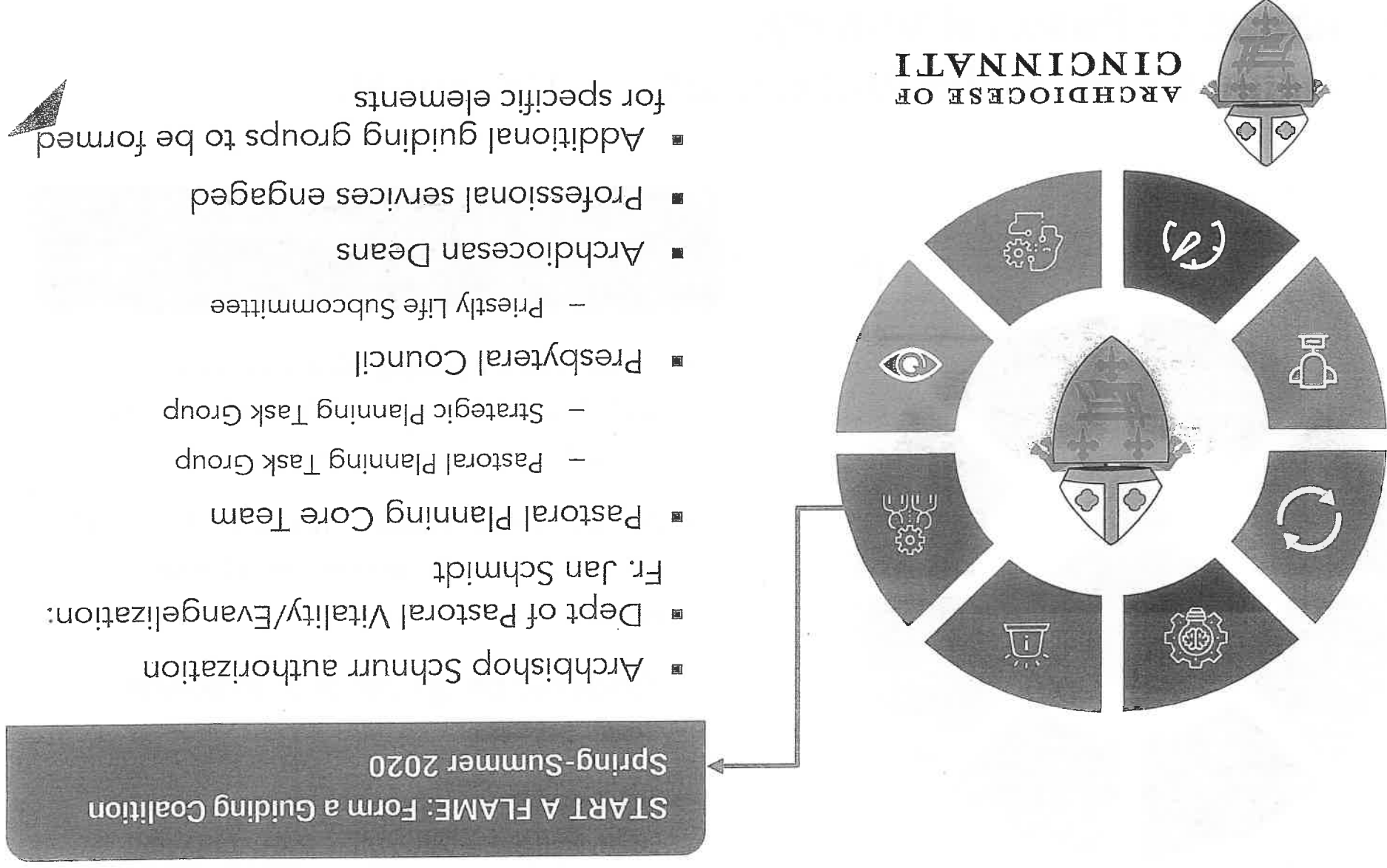
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RADIATE CHRIST



John Kotter's 8 Steps of Change Model



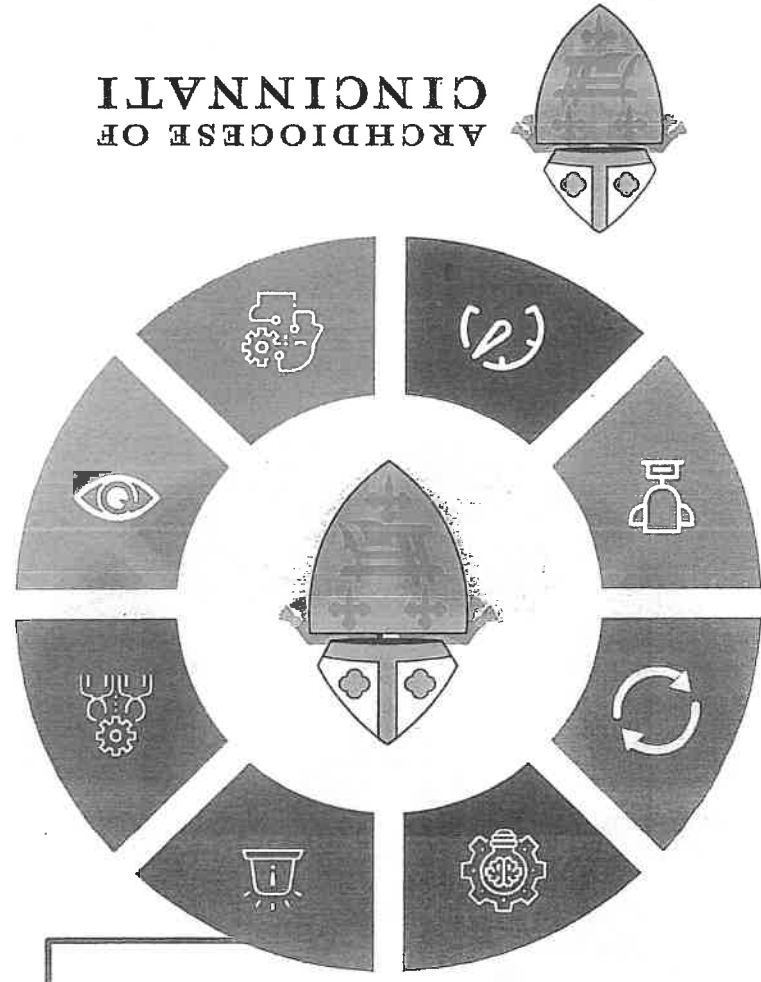
Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality: Radiating Christ in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati



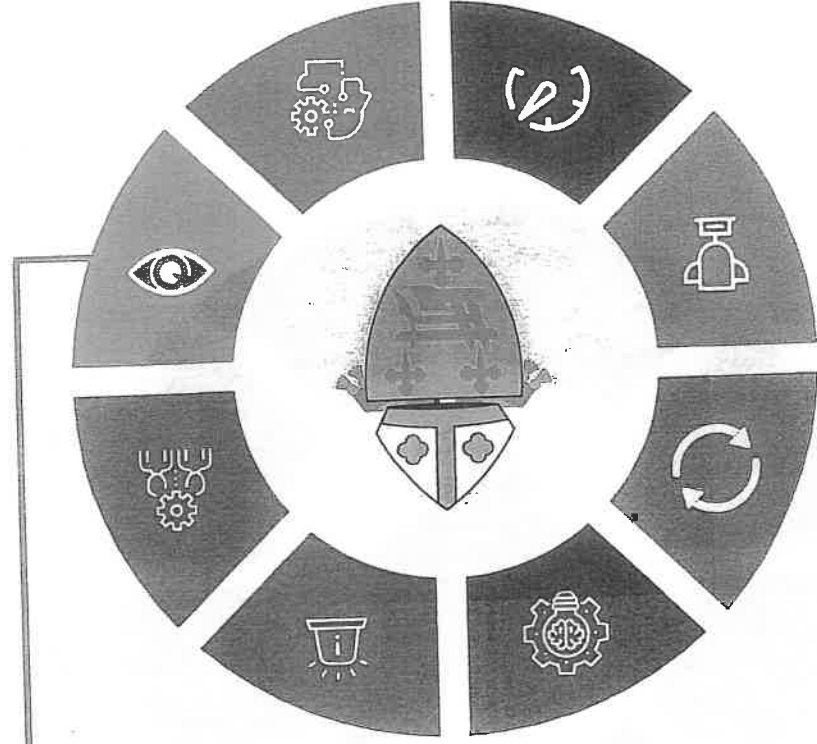
Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality: Radiating Christ in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

STRIKE THE MATCH: Establish Urgency
Fall 2019-Summer 2020

- Preliminary conversations among archdiocesan and parish leaders about need for pastoral planning.
- Archdiocesan deans brought into initial conversations to assess need and feasibility.
- Pandemic brings clarity to structural deficiencies.
- Publication of pastoral letter *Radiate Christ* (June 2020) for bicentennial.
- November 2020: Presbyteral Convocation focused on planning



Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality: Radiating Christ in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

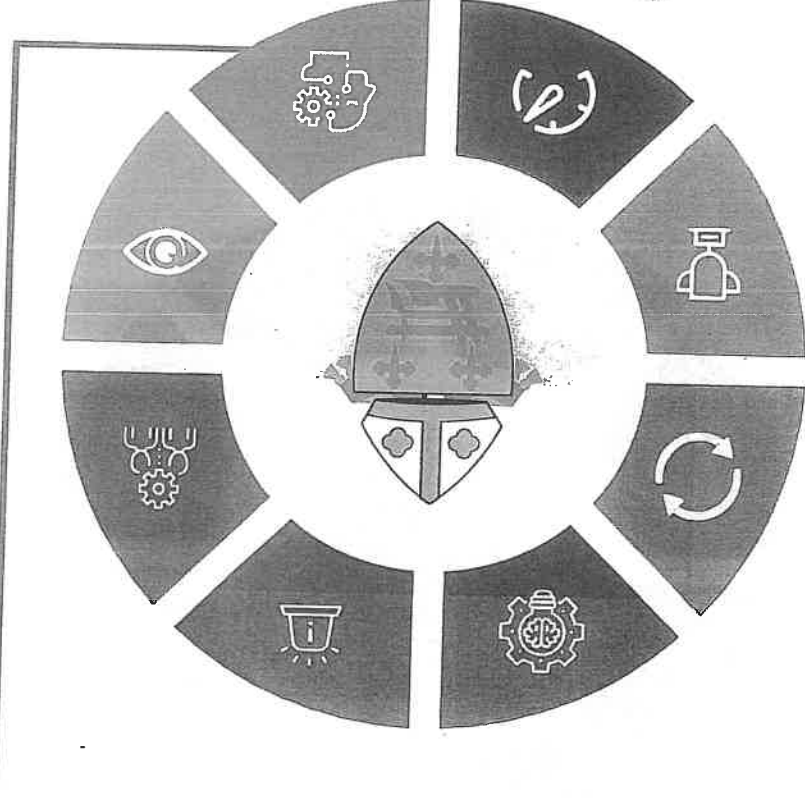
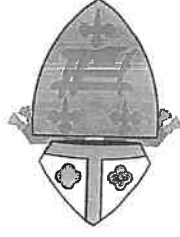


- Continuing reflection upon *Radiate Christ*.
- Data collection from parishes
- Planning parameters approved by Archbishop Schnurr
- Creation/Adoption of Principles as Vision for future
- Nov 2020: Regional Presbyteral Convocations focused on planning

FAN THE FLAME: Form Strategic Vision
Fall 2020-Winter 2021

Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality: Radiating Christ in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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- Deans accept new leadership responsibilities
- Pastors are equipped to lead planning efforts in their parishes/regions
- Pastoral Center staff are equipped to support the planning process

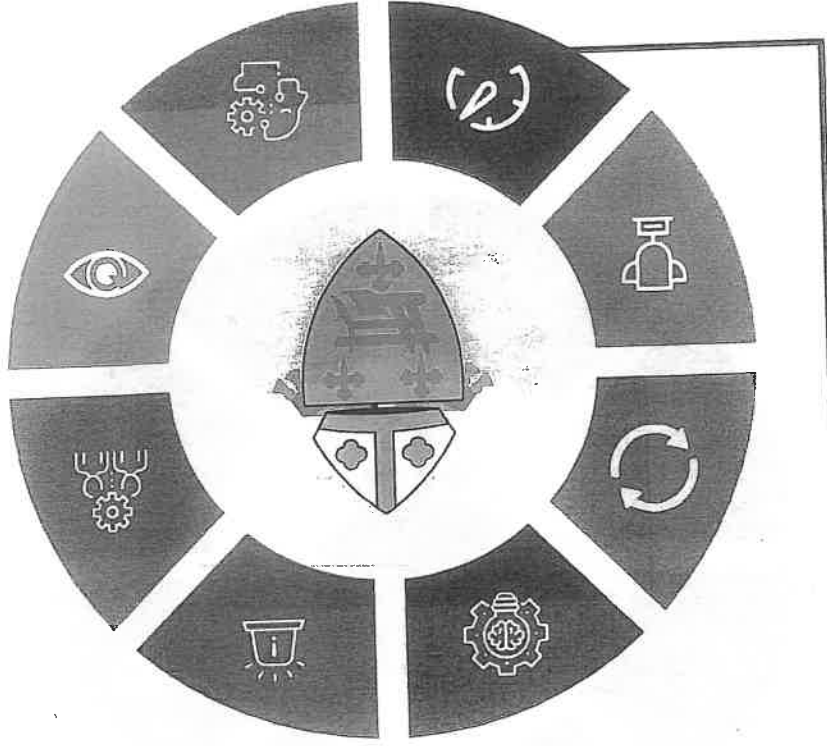
ADD THE FUEL: Enlist Others
Winter 2020-21

Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality: Radiating Christ in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati



RELEASE THE FIRE: Enable Action
2021

- Parish/school short-term plans continue
- Deanery-based strategic planning – Families of Parishes determined
- Planning process continues
- Presbyteral leadership development opportunities



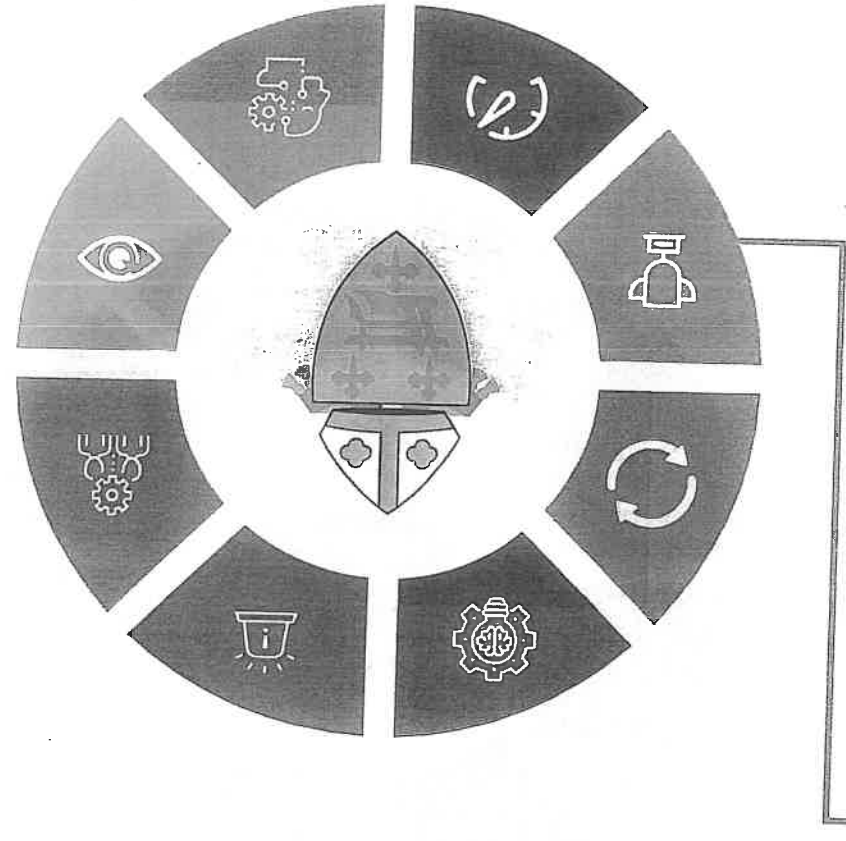
Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality: Radiating Christ in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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- Bicentennial celebration
- Inventories of parish life to identify strengths
- Honor departing pastors and vicars and welcome new.

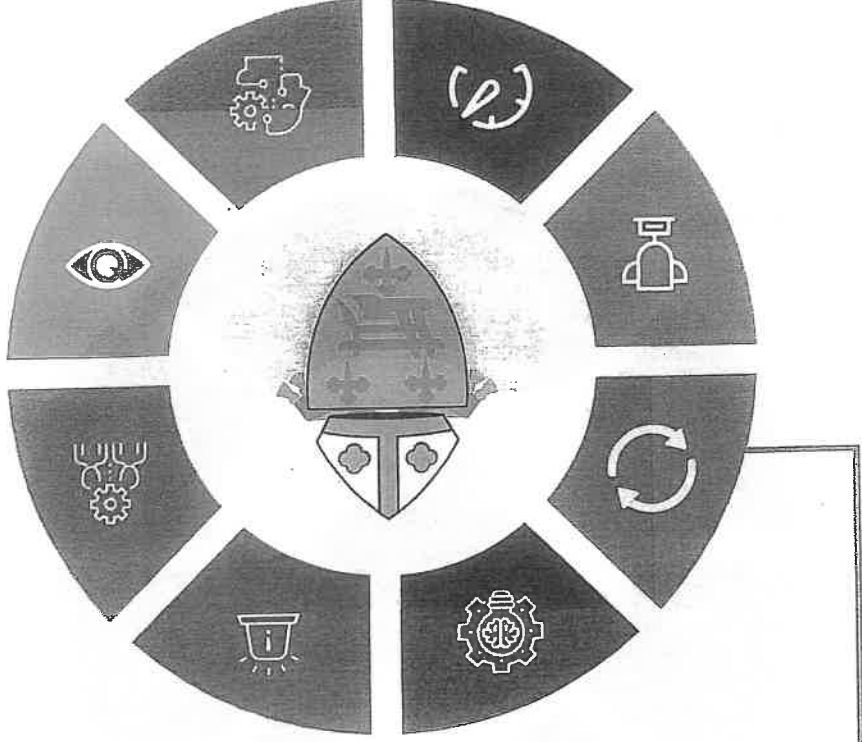
GENERATE SHORT-TERM WINS
Summer 2021 – Spring 2022



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SUSTAIN ACCELERATION
Spring, 2022 – On-going

- Phase 0: Warmup begins and kickstarts pastoral planning in Families of Parishes



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Roadmap to Pastoral Vitality: Radiating Christ in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

RADIATE CHRIST: Institute Change

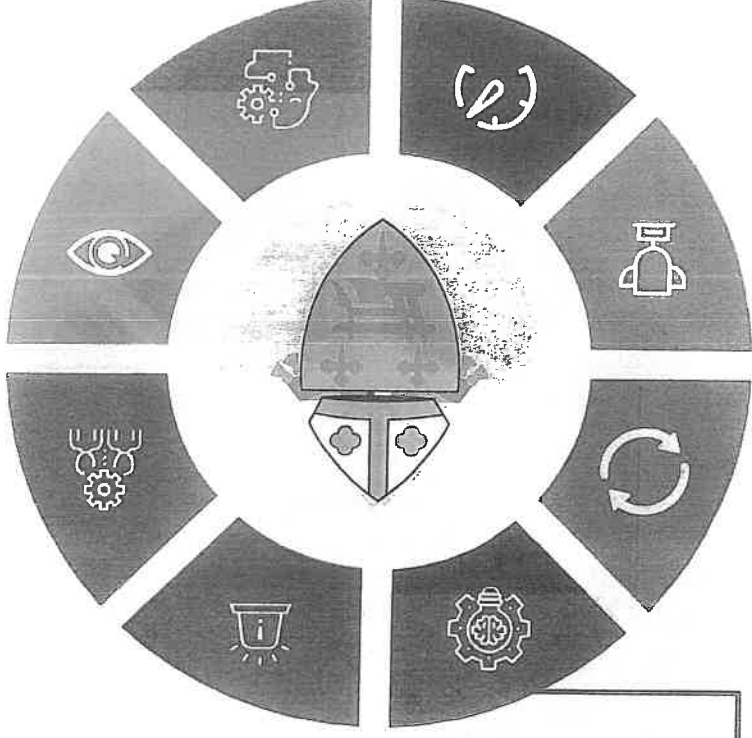
July 2022-June 2027

- Gradual movement towards each Family of Parishes becoming one canonical parish:

- Adjust Mass schedules
- Combine councils
- Merge staff
- Build community
- Discern use of buildings, resources



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Roles of Key Stakeholders in Pastoral Planning

Archbishop

- Chief shepherd of the flock
- Provides the vision in *Radiate Christ* for parish vitality
- Initiator of Beacons of Light
- Sponsor of pastoral planning activities, including accountability

Deans

- Local representatives of archbishop
- Coordinates among pastors within the deanery for pastoral planning
- Advocate for Beacons of Light (especially among priests) in the local area

Pastors

- Responsible for leadership of pastoral planning within the Family of Parishes
- Accountable for the progress along the Pastoral Planning Pathway

Pastoral Center

- Support for the mission of parishes, schools, and other institutions
- Extension of the archbishop's teaching, governing, and sanctifying ministry

Dept of Pastoral Vitality

- Delegate of archbishop for the management of Beacons of Light at the archdiocesan level
- Responsible for creating and supporting the Pastoral Planning Pathway
- Primary support for all stakeholders in the pastoral planning process
- Coordinates among all Pastoral Center entities who support the pastoral planning process
- Supports Families of Parishes in strategic planning initiatives, including mergers, closures, consolidations, etc.
- Coordinates the data collection and information sharing for planning activities

Liaisons

- Supports and coaches the pastor and planning team of each Family of Parishes in their pastoral planning activities
- Assists in connecting parish leaders to Pastoral Center staff for planning work.
- Brings together Families of Parishes for the sharing of best practices.

Planning Team

- Establishes vision for the Family of Parishes
- Creates and implement a pastoral plan for parish vitality.

PATHWAY

Each Family of Parishes will follow the *Pastoral Planning Pathway* to guide its future. This *Pathway* will assist each Family in creating a pastoral plan for the parishes in the Family, articulating how they will live out the six *Beacons* principles and abide by each of the parameters, all aimed towards vital, mission-driven parish life within the Family of Parishes and ultimately, as one canonical parish.

THE PATHWAY:

- Is based upon the six *Beacons* principles, and considers each of them in each phase
- Includes parameters (“musts” and “must nots”) approved by the archbishop to guide the planning process.
- Is the means of providing accountability to Archbishop that the *Beacons of Light* process is being undertaken in each Family of Parishes, led by the pastor.
- Is meant to bring together the leaders (clergy, staff, councils) of all parishes within the Family for prayer and cooperation in its creation.
- Is multi-year, with phases that are marked by clear completion steps and specific measurement criteria allowing for each Family to progress at their own pace.
 - Phase 0: Warmup
 - Phase 1: Leadership
 - Phase 2: Vision
 - Phase 3: Culture
 - Phase 4: Planning
 - Phase 5: Strategy
- Uses the four-fold process of Assessment-Design-Implementation-Evaluation for the *Pastoral Planning Pathway* overall and also within each phase.
- Is supported by a Liaison and other Pastoral Center staff.

- Is more “portfolio” than “timed”, allowing for each Family to proceed at their own pace, rather than along a precise universal timeline.
- Includes periodic review by deans.
- Allows for and supports canonical processes as the Families of Parishes unite as a canonical parish, including discernment of the utilization of church buildings and other parish facilities.

VALUES supporting the *Pathway*:

Conformity to canon law & the Vatican instruction on parishes “The pastoral conversion of the parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church.” (2020)

Grounded in prayerful discernment.

A theology of Families of Parishes grounded in Church teaching, including *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Journeying Together*.

Pastoral planning within the Family of Parishes supports vocational discernment and supports family life as the “domestic church”.

Co-responsibility among ordained and lay ministers within the Family for planning.

Coordination among Families within the deanery, led by the dean.

A Planning Team in each Family (led by the pastor) to oversee the planning process.

Support from the Pastoral Center for each Family in the planning process.

THE PATHWAY PLATFORM:

- Will be a digital framework including all of the tools needed by a Family of Parishes to do pastoral planning.
- Is organized around the six *Beacons* principles, administration, and communication.
- Includes general material about *Bacons of Light*, the theological foundations for pastoral planning, and other essential resources for parish leaders.
- Is freely available to parish leaders and anyone who needs access for pastoral planning.
- Does not duplicate existing assets on Pastoral Center office web resource pages (policy docs, webpages, etc.) but links to them.

Included on the principle/focus area pages are each of the following:

- Principle or focus statement
- Vision points for the principle/focus area
- Parameters for the principle/focus area
- Links to related existing civil law, canon law, other particular and universal Church law, and AOC policy documents
- Introductory video pertinent to the principle/focus area
- Prayer materials for each principle/focus area
- Theological content (scripture, magisterial) for each principle/focus area
- Essential documents needed for planning (e.g. quarterly or annual reporting tools)

Things also included in the platform for each principle/focus area:

- Assessment tools for aspects of parish life (e.g. liturgical, catechetical, facilities, etc.)
- Recommendations
- Best practices

- Strategy documents (e.g. “How to combine your parish councils into a Family Council”)
- Meeting outlines (e.g. “Worship Commission agenda for revising Mass schedules”)
- Helpful media (videos, podcasts, etc.)
- Links to external sources
- Contact info for key Pastoral Center staff
- Digital assets (logos, wordmarks, etc.) for use in local communications and publishing

I am convinced that Beacons of Light, born of great hope, will enable us to form stronger parishes, centered on the Eucharist, that radiate the love of Christ and joy of the Gospel... God has abundantly blessed our first two centuries and will certainly bless the next.

— ARCHBISHOP DENNIS M. SCHNURR

*Journeying Together:
Theological Foundations for Pastoral Planning*

Families of Parishes: Discernment and Co-Responsibility

Fr. Earl Fernandes

The road that lies ahead for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati with Beacons of Light will not be an easy one. It will require discernment, both at an individual and communal level. In *the Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis invited every particular church to enter into a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform so that the missionary impulse of the Church might be more focused, generous, and fruitful, adding that the important thing is "to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, and especially under the leadership of the bishops, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 30; 33)

To recognize. Three phrases that help us understand discernment are: *to recognize; to interpret; and to choose.* Individuals and Families of Parishes must be able to confront situations and difficulties in life; they need to be able to recognize and name these difficulties. At the same time, they also must possess a sense of self-awareness. Many today are well-educated in the sciences and have a refined background, but are illiterate when it comes to affectivity. Hence, there is a serious need to form people and communities in recognizing the interior movements of the Spirit and to have an honest assessment of one's own identity. There must be a recognition of those movements of the Spirit which bring joy and which last, and those that do not.

To interpret. Individuals and Families of Parishes must not only recognize challenges, but also learn to interpret experiences, especially in light of faith. As individuals and communities attempt to understand the *meaning* of that which they are experiencing and how to evaluate experiences, the hierarchy of truths of the Catholic Faith can assist in the discernment process.

Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* (n. 20), calls all of us to discern: "Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel."

The process of discernment and deliberation is critical. People and parishes will need to weigh the pros and cons, using faith and reason, when making proposals or decisions. Laity, across the spectrum, are called to fulfill the responsibilities of their baptism, to work for the sanctification of the world, and to take part in the evangelizing mission of the Church, offering insights from their professional, personal and spiritual experiences.

Religious men and women, are uniquely positioned to illuminate the transcendent and eschatological dimensions of some of the issues that arise. As co-workers of the bishop, priests, and especially pastors, offer their theological, spiritual and pastoral insights, possessing the experience of shepherding and accompanying the flock, standing as Christ in their midst.

To choose. Discernment demands being able to choose. Mindful of their duty to listen to the flock, pastors must have the "smell of the sheep." Locally, the Archbishop ultimately has a personal

and specific responsibility to witness to the truth and to preserve the unity and integrity of the faith and the flock. After careful discernment, flowing from the unanimity of the consent emanating from the deliberations, he will have to make decisions, but his choices will come only after input from the people and clergy of the Archdiocese and after prayerful discernment.

For example, in the Beacons of Light process, the grouping of parishes into “families of Parishes” demanded gathering insights and data from lay men and women, through their pastors, pastoral councils, and staff, and working together to look at possible groupings. Input was sought from the Deans, Presbyteral Council, and heads of Archdiocesan Departments. Priests and School Principals were invited to offer their insights. Finally, after a three-week period of public comment, the Archbishop decided to finalize the groupings. Later in the process, each Family of Parishes will propose a pastoral plan, and the Archbishop will have to decide whether to approve that plan.

This consent – this choosing – is never an assertion of power but remains a service to the Church in the name of the Lord Jesus. Ultimately, discernment is of a communitarian nature and an expression of the co-responsibility that believers have; it demands that its members have an ecclesial conscience leading to communion. The keyword is “co-responsibility.”

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI said:

It is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as “collaborators” of the clergy but truly be recognized as “co-responsible”, for the Church’s being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity. (Benedict XVI, “Discorso all’apertura del convegno pastorale della diocesi di Roma sul tema: ‘appartenenza ecclesiale e corresponsabilità pastorale,’” May 26, 2009)

Difficult decisions and choices must be made. No one cannot expect to experience some pain in the process, but, if the process is a shared process, then, in the end, it is hoped that our local church will be in a better position to carry out the mission of evangelization and that our parishes will truly be Beacons of Light.



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Journeying Together:
Theological Foundations for Pastoral Planning

Synodality In and Of the Church

Fr. Earl Fernandes

In this series, we have attempted to ground our understanding of the Beacons of Light initiative in the understanding of the Church as the Family of God. As the Family of God, we journey together in a synodal way, imitating the walking together of the Trinity. This “walking together” requires walking also with Christ, to whom we united ourselves in the Eucharist, and whom the Church must radiate to the world. . The whole Church is guided also by the Holy Spirit, who calls us together and who leads along our journey. It was the Spirit who overshadowed Mary at the conception of Jesus and who descended upon the Apostles when they were at prayer with Mary at Pentecost.

Trusting in the power of Christ and His Spirit and taking confidence in the Virgin Mary, whose children we have become, the People of God in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati prepare for the journey that lies ahead. In speaking of the Church as a family that journeys together, we can speak of synodality *in the Church* and *of the Church*.

Synodality *in the Church* refers to the divine life in which members of the Church share in the synodality of the Trinity; this sharing happens in a variety of ways, most prominently through the liturgy and sacraments, in which the whole People of God journey toward the heavenly Jerusalem, with members of the Church exercising their diverse charisms and ministries. Ecclesial synodality takes on flesh in institutions (diocesan synods, parish finance councils, pastoral councils, etc.), especially when those structures are animated by the Risen Lord and attentive to what the Spirit says.

These “institutions” will be extremely important in Beacons of Light as “Families of Parishes” develop pastoral plans. Difficult decisions will need to be made about how to work together, about finances, schools, and facilities. The focus cannot be about clinging to the past or holding on to power; rather, the focus must be on the mission of evangelization and discovering what the Risen Lord and the Spirit have prepared.

Synodality *in the Church* is also related to *koinonia*, which refers to the new relationship that disciples have with God and one another. The communion of the Church is revealed as an initiative of the Trinity rather than a result of the will of people who associate for reasons of convenience, common interests, or business.

Koinonia is an unconditional gift from God who desires that all share in the life of His Son and share solidarity with one another; it is also a spiritual work involving sharing in the suffering and consolation of others (Rom 12:13; 2 Cor 1:5-7; Phil 3:10; 4:14) and performing concrete works of charity (cf. Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:13; Gal 2:9; Phil 1:5; Phil 6). *Koinonia* refers to a spiritual union *and* to a visibly operating concordance of hearts and minds (Acts 2:42), beginning with baptism through which one is incorporated into the life of Christ *and* the Church, forming a *societas*.

Journeying together as a family is one of the most visible and meaningful forms of ecclesial communion, involving many modes of participation in the Church. If communion is a sharing in the

faith and mission of the Church, this journeying is the sign and fulfillment of communion through which communion appears in all its complex dimensions: divine and human; invisible and visible; animated by the Spirit and organized by humans.

Of course, there will be some resistance from those unwilling to change or fearful of change. Patience will be necessary. Each person and each parish within a family must ask: Am I a bridge to unity within the parish or am I a barrier? Are we truly searching for the way forward or serving as obstructionists? How are we becoming an evangelizing community?

In addition to synodality *in the Church*, we can also speak of synodality *of the Church*. This refers to the Church which is like a "sacrament or sign and instrument both of a very close-knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" and which "desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission." (*Lumen Gentium*, 1) It describes the journey of the Church with all of humanity in history.

This way of being is properly understood not as an expression of power but as a *representatio ecclesiae*, whose authority comes from Christ for the service of humanity. What type of face do we as a Church want to show forth? Can we be a Samaritan Church? Precisely because the Archdiocese of Cincinnati offers so many services through schools, hospitals, Catholic Charities and the like to so many non-Catholics, we must be conscious of our responsibility toward those in the wider community whom we serve. A focus on *service* rather than *power* can help us discern the way forward in promoting the common good and bringing the joy of the Gospel to those around us.



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*JOURNEYING TOGETHER:
THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR PASTORAL PLANNING*

SYNODALITY: WALKING WITH CHRIST, THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THE VIRGIN MARY
FR. EARL FERNANDES

Living a synodal life begins with the Holy Trinity. In this article, I want to explore more deeply the roots of this “journeying together” as the Family of God, beginning with Christ and His Eucharistic Presence, then turning to the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Remaining Connected to Christ

Synodality is a way of living the faith in a permanent manner at every level in the life of the Church and is rooted in the Paschal Mystery beginning with baptism, through which individuals share in the communion of the Trinity. Baptism involves the human response to the call to live in union with Christ through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 1:9). This communion purifies the person from sin, making him or her a new creation, an adopted child of God and member of the Church, opening the door to the other sacraments, including the Eucharist.

It is the Church which makes the Eucharist, just as the Eucharist makes the Church. In virtue of the Eucharist, the People of God as the Body of Christ journey together with diverse members (1 Cor. 10:17) under the headship of Christ. Christ, the Good Shepherd, leads the flock on its journey. He not only leads, but He also feeds the flock. In the reception of Holy Communion, communion with God is deepened vertically and horizontally. God's own agape is received bodily, so that His saving work may continue in and through the Church. Conscious of the gift, the Church goes forth to draw all of humanity together in unity. A parish or Family of Parishes must remain intimately connected to Christ in the Eucharist, prioritizing Sunday Mass and access to the Eucharist.

Pouring Out The Holy Spirit

At the baptism of Christ, the voice of the Father was heard and the Holy Spirit descended over Him like a dove. This same Spirit, which was poured out on the apostles at Pentecost, has been poured into our hearts in baptism. The Holy Spirit introduces order (1 Cor. 12:1-20) amid the diversity of members and charisms in the Body of Christ so that members work together for the good of the whole Church (1 Cor. 12:14-31). Each member is given some manifestation of the Spirit in view of the good of the body. The gifts of the Spirit are gathered in the Church, where members serve and listen to one another reciprocally. The Church understands herself as a collective “we” in prayer, liturgy and discernment.

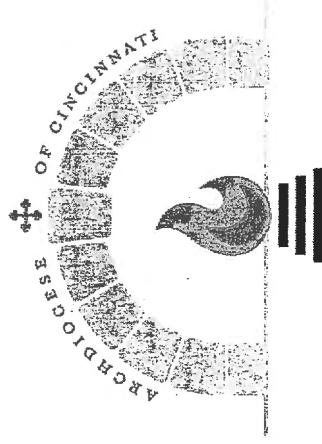
Mary, a Model For The Church

The Holy Spirit, who is at the core of this ecclesial "walking together," also overshadowed Mary, Mother of the Church and the model of discipleship, who lived this journey in a privileged way. Although the Spirit was operating from the dawn of creation, in the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4) a qualitative leap was made in salvation history. By the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived the Word of God, who, in turn, was given as a gift to humanity. Mary and the Spirit "journey together" from the Annunciation through Pentecost.

If, in the economy of salvation, the Holy Spirit represents the condition of possibility for the self-communication of God in Jesus on the part of the Divine, then Mary, with her fiat, represents the condition of possibility of this communication on the part of humanity. Through her attentive listening and openness to God, she fulfilled her mission in bringing Christ to the world. She demonstrates the characteristics of living this journey. She journeyed with and in the Trinity, willingly receiving the love of the Father, bearing the Son within her womb, and becoming a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Mother of God is a model for all disciples and an icon of synodal life, reminding us of the universal call to listen attentively to God with an openness to the Holy Spirit.

Mary and the Holy Spirit will help guide us along the path of discernment. Therefore, let us entrust ourselves to them, concluding with a prayer to Christ from the Swiss mystic Adrienne von Speyr:

"Dear Lord, grant that we contemplate and affirm you and your Church, and carry out what our mission demands, in an ever-new spirit, in the spirit of your Mother's consent. Grant also that we pray for this Spirit. We know you yourself are where you send your Spirit. The Spirit brought you to your Mother: the Spirit enabled her to carry you; and because in her you found again your own Spirit, you formed your Church. Since you have called us into this Church, make from each one of us a place where the Spirit of your Church blows, where the will of your Father is done together with you and with the help of the Holy Spirit. Amen."



Journeying Together: Theological Foundations for Pastoral Planning

Families of Parishes: Journeying Together

Fr. Earl Fernandes

In the first two articles of this series, we explored the foundations for the Beacons of Light initiative being undertaken in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, first describing the Church as the Family of God and then offering characteristics of an evangelizing community. Each "Family of Parishes", formed through the process, is called to make known the joy of the Gospel. The experience of being a "family of parishes" will be new and will bring challenges and blessings. Here, I would like to describe Beacons of Light as a journey and to show how this journey is rooted in our belief in the Triune God.

Growing up, almost every one of us took a family trip or journey – with hopes for renewal, filled with many joys, along with a few mishaps. As the Archdiocese of Cincinnati journeys into the future, we do so together. The Greek word *synodos* means "to be on the journey together" as in a caravan or religious pilgrimage (Lk 2:41-44).

We are a "pilgrim Church," journeying toward the heavenly Jerusalem. Significantly, in *Lumen Gentium* (LG 9-17), the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the Second Vatican Council treated the "People of God" before treating the hierarchy. If a pyramidal view of the Church, with the bishops and priests on top and the laity on the bottom, had dominated previously, now all the baptized, with their distinctive roles, could understand their vocations as a service to the Church.

Synodality is a way of living the faith in a permanent way at every level: in the parish, the family, and at the peripheries. All Church members, not just the clergy or experts, are to be engaged in this way of living. Synodality describes the journeying together in history of the People of God toward the New and Eternal Jerusalem.

Pope Francis calls us to be a synodal church, a church that walks together. He spoke of this in 2015, stating that it is "precisely this path of *synodality* which God expects of the Church of the third millennium." (Address during the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, October 17, 2015) Echoing Pope Benedict XVI that synodality was a "constitutive element of the Church," he described it as "nothing other than the 'journeying together' of God's flock along the paths of history towards the encounter with Christ the Lord."

A synodal church is one that listens and "which realizes that listening is more than simply hearing." This involves listening not only to each other, but also to the Spirit to know what "he says to the churches." (Rev 2:7) Listening affirms each person's dignity and expresses respect for the voices, legitimate desires, problems and sufferings of the People of God.

The process of listening begins with the People of God, who, in virtue of their baptism, share in the prophetic office of Christ. Priests and bishops, attentive to the voice of the flock, listen to God to act rightly and to give credible witness to the apostolic faith. The process converges to a point of unity in faith, facilitating an encounter with the Lord in Truth.

But what would be the theological foundations for understanding the Church as a Family of God that journeys together? That is, if parishes will be grouped together into “Families of Parishes” in order to discern a future together that best serves evangelization, on what theological basis would this be done?

We begin almost every prayer with the sign of the cross, invoking the Trinity. While next month, we will delve deeper into the theological foundations of Beacons of Light, our belief in the Trinity is a good starting point. There is a clear Trinitarian imprint on the understanding of the Church in the documents of Vatican II, which describes the Church, as “a people made one with the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” (LG, nn. 2-4) One speaks of a “Trinitarian synodality” *ad intra*, referring to the dynamic relationship of the Persons of the Trinity as a communion of love, and a “Trinitarian synodality” *ad extra*, in which the persons of the Godhead “journey together” toward all of creation, the Church, and humanity in history. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the model for all forms of synodal living, and, therefore, of a model of living as the Church.

The Scriptures allude to this in the Divine “We” in the story of creation (Gen 1:26), in the visit of the three guests to Abraham (Gen 18:1-5), and in the journey of God toward His people through the covenants of the Old Testament, culminating in the Messiah, who offers salvation to Jews and Gentiles alike. The New Testament, especially the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38), recounts the Incarnation as a Trinitarian action – a journeying together: the Father sends the Spirit to overshadow the Virgin so that the Eternal Word of the Father might become incarnate. In the Trinity, there is communion and reciprocity among the Persons *and* an outpouring of love toward humanity.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit journey together in harmony. The Triune God journeys together toward all of humanity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit journey with us as we discern the way forward for our Archdiocese. In turn, we as “Families of Parishes” must journey together, open to what the Spirit says and guided by the living Word (cf. Ps 119:105).



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*Journeying Together:
Theological Foundations for Pastoral Planning*

Families of Parishes as Evangelizing Communities

Fr. Earl Fernandes

We have reflected on the image of the Church as the Family of God. We need to think not only of parishes as families, but of multiple parishes as extended families or “Families of Parishes”, as we move from maintenance to mission. Beacons of Light is a means for channeling our resources in a way that best serves the mission of evangelization. I concluded with an invitation to dream about how our parishes can be evangelizing communities.

What are characteristics of an evangelizing community? **First, we are a Church that goes forth.** We are missionaries. Going forth demands courageously leaving our comfort zone. In an interview in 2013, Pope Francis said:

“Instead of just being a church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent. The ones who quit sometimes do it for reasons that, if properly understood and assessed, can lead to a return. But that takes audacity and courage.”

Second, the community of missionary disciples shows initiative. The Spanish word *primerear* captures this idea of being proactive rather than reactive. The Holy Father writes:

“An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative; he has loved us first, and therefore, we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.”

Here in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, we cannot afford to wait for people to come to us; rather, we must seize the initiative and become “spiritual entrepreneurs”.

Third, the evangelizing community is engaged with its members. Pope Francis sometimes uses the word *balconear*, which means to stand on the balcony to see what is happening without personal engagement; a person sees and criticizes everything without ever personally getting involved in the mission. The Pope proposes Jesus as the opposite of this sort of person:

“Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples, ‘You will be blessed if you do this.’ An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people’s daily lives; it bridges distances. It is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others.”

The priest cannot do everything; he must engage his people to get involved rather than remain indifferent by identifying and utilizing the talents and gifts of the flock.

Fourth, a community of missionary disciples accompanies others. Speaking in Assisi in 2013, Pope Francis said:

I repeat it often: walking with our people, sometimes in front, sometimes in the middle, and sometimes behind: in front in order to guide the community, in the middle in order to encourage and support; and at the back in order to keep it united and so that no one lags too far behind, to keep them united.

A father of a family must lead his family, spend time with his family and offer encouragement, keeping the family together. Accompaniment entails guiding, encouraging and supporting, and uniting.

Fifth, the evangelizing community is *fruitful*. Commenting on the parable of the weeds and wheat, the Holy Father says:

“An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient with the weeds. The sower when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear.”

Fruitfulness demands discernment and patience. The parable of the weeds and wheat speaks of discerning what is from the Son of Man, who sows good seed in the field from the weeds, sown by the devil. In Greek, the word for weeds is *zizania*, which refers to ryegrass. *Zizania* looks like wheat initially, but only when it is mature can one discern the difference. Jesus warns of the need to be patient and to discern because things are not always initially clear.

Patience and discernment allow us to move forward. This will be particularly necessary during Beacons of Light. Hastiness can doom the process. Although there is urgency, patience is necessary to help people understand why Beacons of Light is happening and to accept the reality of change.

The final characteristic of an evangelizing community is *joy*. The Eucharist is the sacrament of Christian joy. In the Eucharist, the joy that Jesus has won is not only preserved and shared, but perdures. The Church celebrates the Eucharist with the spousal joy of one promised to Christ. It is a foretaste of the banquet in which those invited will share in the heavenly banquet of the kingdom in its fullness.

Families of Parishes, nourished by the Holy Eucharist, will have the courage to go forth, to seize the initiative, to be engaged, and to accompany others so that they might bear fruit that will last. They will be evangelizing communities, marked by the joy that comes from the Gospel and the Eucharist.



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Journeying Together:
Theological Foundations for Pastoral Planning

The Church as the Family of God

Fr. Earl Fernandes

The Church is a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all men and women who are called to bring the joy of the Gospel to the whole world. One scriptural image used by the Second Vatican Council which may be helpful for understanding the forthcoming parish groupings and the Beacons of Light process is that of the Church as the Family of God – “the house of God in which His family dwells; the household of God in the Spirit” (cf. Eph. 2:19, 22).

The image of the Church as a family is ancient, and the idea of a family as a “domestic church” has re-emerged in recent times. Parishes are communities of families, gathered under a pastor, a “father” of the family, in communion with the bishop, to worship God and to build the Kingdom. The family is a place of belonging, a privileged place to experience love and growth, an original sign of Christ’s love for His Church, given to us by God the Father. It is both a building block of society and a critical means by which we are introduced into a decisive relationship with God.

The family exists to generate life and deepen the companionship between believers as they journey toward their common destiny. Family stability is critical for the future. This is true not only of our individual families, but also of our parish families. Every family, including a parish family, has a mission to build up the Church and increase the Kingdom of God in the world; to be a community of love in which people experience a sense of belonging; and, to be a beacon of light and hope to others.

In the Family of God we continually meet and encounter Christ who, according to Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus caritas est*, “gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.” In our personal families, we learn to confront difficulties and face the realities of life, enlightened by His Presence. In family life, we encounter Christ in each other. In both our individual families and parish families, our companionship comes together in a space, in our daily living and working together, on a common journey with a common goal: our destiny with God.

The Church can be understood as the Family of God. Jesus addresses God as Father and the early Church addressed its members as *adelphoi* (brothers and sisters). The Church is not principally an administrative grouping, organized and occasionally re-organized like a company; rather, its distinctive characteristics are prayer and the Eucharist. Believers are called by name to be part of this family and are drawn together and constituted as a family by the Holy Spirit. No family is perfect, and there are always members of the family with different temperaments, but there is one fundamental bond: faith.

The Church, constituted by God, is mandated to evangelize. Every family and every parish must have a missionary outlook. We must radiate Christ to the world, and yet, we are experiencing profound change, which makes the task of evangelizing more challenging. Pope Francis frequently says, “we live not so much in an epoch of change as in a change of epoch.” Acknowledging this and

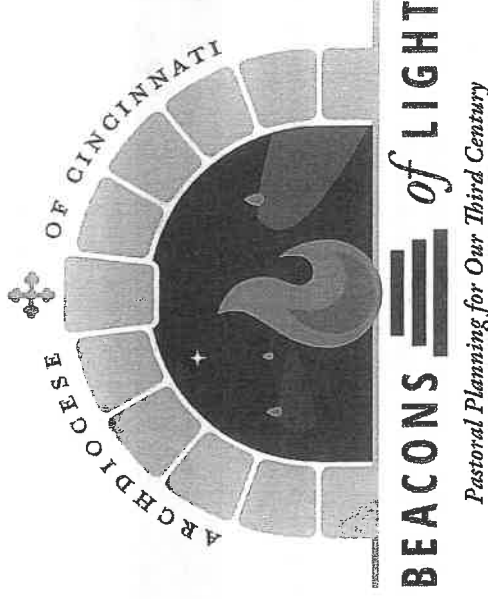
the current reality of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, which includes demographic shifts and fewer priests, it is essential to adapt to effectively carry out the Church's mission in a changed environment.

Beacons of Light is not principally about a priest shortage; it is about the mission of evangelization. At the beginning of his Pontificate, Pope Francis described his dream for the Church in *The Joy of the Gospel*: "I dream of a 'missionary option,' that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation."

I invite you to dream about how our parishes can be evangelizing communities, beacons that radiate the light of faith and respond to the needs of the whole Family of God.



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES, VISION POINTS, PARAMETERS

As Families of Parishes are formed, parish staff, the pastoral council, and other leaders will create a plan through which the parishes will come together as one faith community. Each plan will be unique to the Family of Parishes, celebrating the history, culture, and strengths of each of the parishes in the Family. Principles, vision points, and parameters will guide the development of the plans for all the Families of Parishes, building on the common vision of the parish as a beacon of light.

Principles

Archbishop Schnurr has approved six **principles** that will be the foundation for the plans each Family of Parishes will develop.

Vision Points

Vision points will guide leaders to consider what living the principle to its fullest would mean for the Family and to plan toward fulfilling that vision. Parish leaders must keep the **vision** of the parish as a beacon of light in mind as they create the plan for their Family of Parishes.

Parameters

Archbishop Schnurr has approved **parameters** to guide the pastoral planning process, establishing common expectations for each Family of Parishes. These parameters will address things that all Families must or must not do as they come together.¹

¹ Parameters are only the topline, essential norms to be observed in each area. Below each set of parameters will be other categories such as suggestions, best practices, strategic imperatives, and planning checklists. Also found in each section of the Pathway will be relevant canons, universal and particular Church law, other archdiocesan policies, all to be observed at all times.

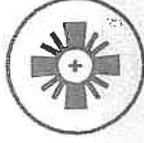
General Parameters

1. Families of Parishes must follow canon law, civil law, all universal and particular Church law, and archdiocesan policies.
2. Families of Parishes must develop a pastoral plan for parish vitality, submitted at least annually, reviewed by the dean, to be approved by the archbishop in conformity with the parameters of the Pastoral Planning Pathway according to the published timeline.
3. By September 1, 2022, every Family of Parishes must form a Planning Team, led by the pastor, to coordinate pastoral planning geared toward the unification of the Family by June 30, 2027.



EUCHARIST

The Mass is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. Accordingly, the Eucharist is the essential moment for building up and strengthening the parish community, along with the sacraments and other celebrations of the paschal mystery — the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Vision Points

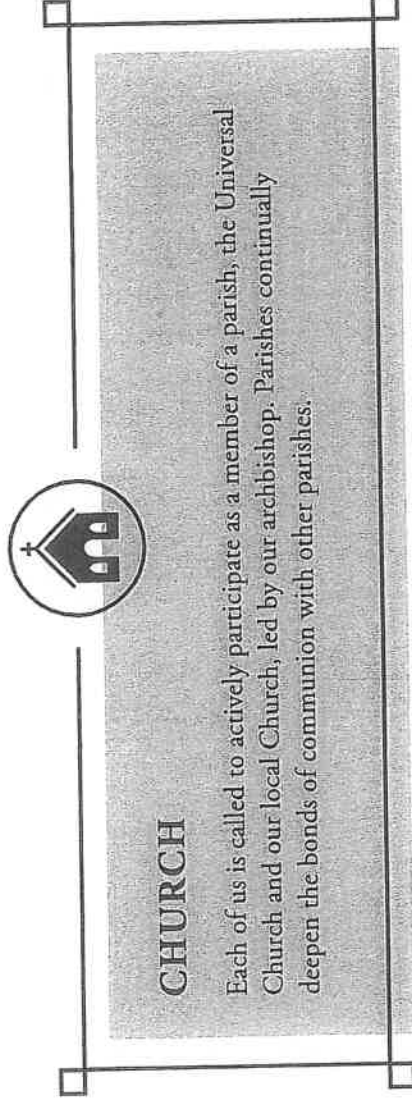
- **Sunday Mass:** The Sunday Eucharist is the essential gathering of the parish community each week and is the “paradigm for other Eucharistic celebrations” (*Dies Domini*, 34); therefore life-giving, beautiful, and transformative celebration of Sunday Mass is critical.
- **Christ’s Presence:** Sacramental celebrations and other parish and school liturgies are true encounters with Jesus Christ present in Word and Sacrament, in the ministry of the priest and in the gathered assembly. (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 7)
- **Unity:** As the sacrament of unity (1 Cor 10:17), celebrations of the Eucharist within the Family are opportunities for members of the parishes to worship together. The cultural traditions of the members of the Family of Parishes are honored and celebrated, particularly on special feasts.
- **Formation:** Every Family of Parishes offers liturgical and sacramental formation “with zeal and patience” (*CSL*, 19), deepening an appreciation of the sacred mysteries.
- **Ars Celebrandi:** Attention to the art of celebrating the liturgy is important: fidelity to texts and rubrics as well as a prayerful understanding of liturgical texts, feasts, and seasons kindles full, conscious, and active participation among the faithful. (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 38) Preaching and music are foremost among the liturgical arts and are well-prepared for liturgical celebrations.
- **Trained Ministers:** Priests, deacons, and lay liturgical ministers are well-trained and formed for leadership of communities at prayer and are “imbued with the spirit of the liturgy.” (*CSL*, 14)
- **Sacred Space:** Churches, chapels, and other sacred buildings should be “truly worthy and beautiful, signs and symbols of heavenly realities,” the house of the Church and the house of God, “suitable for carrying out the sacred action and for ensuring the active participation of the faithful.” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 288)



- **Adoration:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is readily available within the Family of Parishes with proper catechesis for all.

Parameters

4. The regular Mass schedule for a Family of Parishes may not assume more than two Masses per day per priest.
5. A regularly scheduled Mass for the Sunday precept must have annual average attendance of at least 50% of the church capacity.
6. The regular Mass schedule must provide the opportunity for priests to spiritually prepare for and be present to the community after Mass.
7. There must be a sufficient number of trained and formed liturgical ministers to serve as readers, servers, EMsHC, music ministers, et al. for liturgical celebrations.
8. Sacramental formation must be provided.



Vision Points

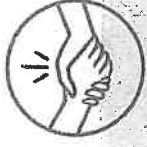
- **Deaneries:** The archdiocese is organized in canonical parishes, grouped into Families of Parishes, which are gathered into deaneries.
- **Archdiocese:** In communion with the pope, the bishop exercises leadership in the local Church.
- **Subsidiarity:** Deaneries enhance regional subsidiarity; explore cooperative ministries between Families of Parishes.
- **Culture & History:** As they become one Family, the culture and history of the parishes are acknowledged, honored and, where possible, preserved as we move from maintenance to unification in the mission of Christ. Efforts are made to blend cultural differences with compassion and compromise.
- **Local & Universal:** People come to understand the nature of the parish as the people within a given territory and therefore grow in understanding themselves as members of Christ's Body, the Church.

Parameters

9. In pastoral planning and parish life, every Family of Parishes will adhere to the spirit and norms of the Vatican Instruction: "The pastoral conversion of the parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church." (2020).
10. Families collaborate with other Families within the deanery to provide coordinated pastoral ministry (e.g. hospitals, care facilities, young adult evangelization, high schools, jails, etc.)

LEADERSHIP

Pastors, in collaboration with parochial vicars, deacons and lay ministers, according to their proper roles and charisms, share responsibility for pastoral leadership. The spiritual, physical and mental health and ongoing support of ordained and lay leaders is vital for Families of Parishes.



Vision Points

- **Pastor:** The Family of Parishes is led by a single pastor who is appointed by the archbishop. He is ultimately entrusted with the care of souls and therefore is responsible for the leadership of the parish.
- **Unified:** The Family moves toward becoming one parish led by one pastor.
- **Deacons:** Deacons are part of the diocesan clergy and are appointed by the archbishop to serve the Family of Parishes.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** All members of the Family of Parishes support and foster the health and well-being of all leaders; in doing so, we ensure the well-being of the Church.
- **Co-responsibility:** Pastors, staff, and parishioners share responsibility for bringing all relevant perspectives to the process of discernment, according to their proper roles and gifts.
- **Leadership:** Pastors actively cultivate skill in leadership and draw others into leadership with them.
- **Formation:** Clergy participate in and are accountable for their spiritual and theological formation as well as leadership development. Clergy and laity are well-formed spiritually, theologically, and for leadership in support of their respective roles.

Parameters

11. Every Family of Parishes will have a unified Pastoral Council, with other relevant and necessary consultative groups for specific areas of parish life.
12. The Finance Councils of each parish within the Family will work together to appropriately plan for and monitor the finances of the Family of Parishes.



13. Competent and qualified staff are necessary to serve the Family of Parishes, especially in the areas of worship, evangelization (including love in action), and administration. As is possible, staff will be unified to serve the entire Family.
14. Priests must have a regularly scheduled day off and must be able to take all annual vacation and retreats.
15. Priests, deacons, staff and other lay leaders will participate in ongoing spiritual formation and training for leadership.



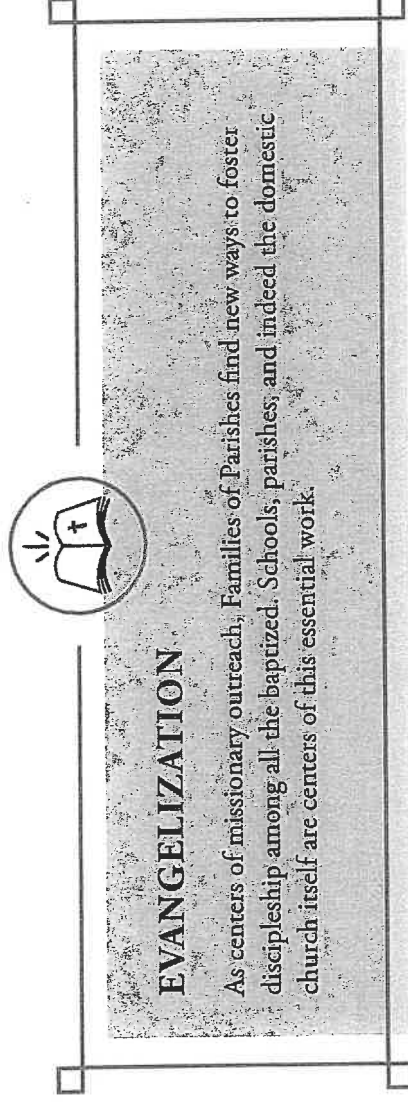
Vision Points

- ***Everyday Stewardship & Vocation:*** The Family of Parishes forms people to hear and respond to God's call in their lives – from the individual moments of each day to their overall purpose of living out their vocation.
- ***Way of Life:*** More than a program or once a year report to the parish, stewardship is fostered as a spiritual way of life and becomes an expression of discipleship.
- ***Gratitude & Giving:*** Parishioners are formed as disciples who grow in gratitude and become willing to share their time, talents, faith, and resources within the parish and beyond it.
- ***Invitation & Engagement:*** The Family actively invites and engages people of all ages and stages of life and faith to contribute in ministry, service, and giving.
- ***Hospitality & Welcome:*** The Family of Parishes is a community that warmly welcomes newcomers and offers hospitality to everyone.
- ***Meaningful Involvement & Leadership:*** The Family of Parishes seeks to meaningfully involve people as contributing members of the community. Parishioners are encouraged to take leadership roles as appropriate and are offered formation to equip them as leaders.

Parameters

16. Every Family of Parishes will form people to embrace stewardship as a way of life.

17. Every Family of Parishes will actively promote vocational discernment.

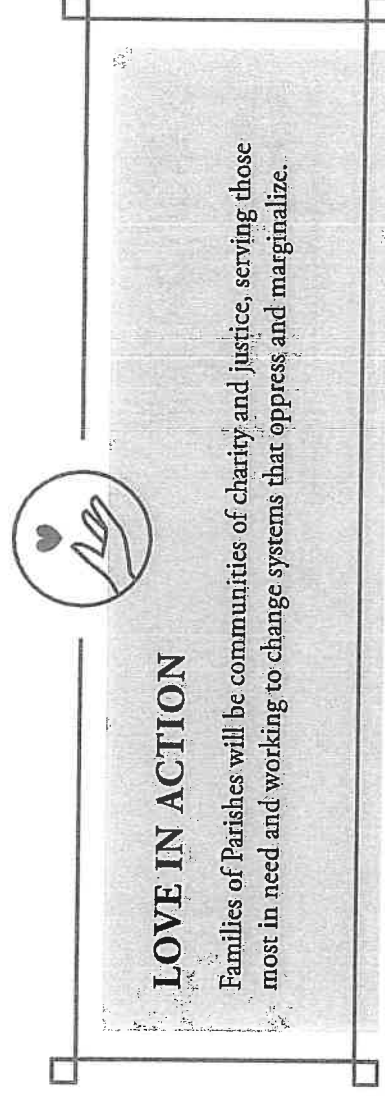


Vision Points

- ***Missionary Discipleship:*** Implement a simple and clear discipleship process for all ages that ultimately equips and commissions missionary disciples for personal apostolate and vocation.
- ***Grounded in Discernment:*** The pastor, staff, and lay leaders prioritize prayer, formation, and discernment in order to allow the Holy Spirit to inspire their evangelization efforts.
- ***Family Partnerships:*** The domestic church is the primary place of evangelization of young people and is well supported by the parish.
- ***Prioritize Adult Formation:*** The principal form for evangelization and catechesis is directed toward adults and is given priority.
- ***Effective Schools:*** Parish schools become an essential ministry of the parish by being an “effective vehicle of total Christian formation” for young people and their parents.
- ***A Culture of Vocation:*** Prepare individuals to discern and embrace their vocation. Support parents as they cultivate vocations within the family, help single young people actively discern their vocation, and accompany couples through the marriage catechumenate.

Parameters

18. Every Family of Parishes will create and implement a plan that ministers to all persons in every season of life and every stage in the process of evangelization.
19. Every Family of Parishes will have an Evangelization Team, overseen by the pastor and led by competent and qualified staff.



Vision Points

- Human Dignity:** The Families of Parishes seek ways to recognize the human dignity of each person, who is created in the “image of God.” (Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 12-32) This demands special attention to the poor and vulnerable, including the unborn and their parents; the stranger; persons who are elderly, sick, poor, imprisoned, and marginalized; persons with disabilities; and persons of all ethnicities and cultures. This also entails urgently protecting the integrity of Creation, which has its own intrinsic value and is humanity’s common home. (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 139)
- Formation:** Families of Parishes educate and form parishioners, staff, and clergy – utilizing the rich history of Catholic Social Teaching and Scripture – on what it means to be a community of “salt and light” in today’s world. (Mt 5:13-16) The Families are nurtured through liturgy and formation to grow as a people who model mercy, grace, and forgiveness and who accompany the marginalized on their journeys toward empowerment.
- Belonging:** The Family of Parishes actively facilitates the inclusion, affirmation, and meaningful participation of all Catholics in the community of faith.
- Charity & Justice:** Families of Parishes exercise the ministries of charity and justice, which flow necessarily from our sacramental life and radiate as an indispensable expression of the Church’s very being. (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 25) Significant numbers of parishioners engage in activities of both direct service to the vulnerable and public advocacy to protect all human life and dignity from conception to natural death.
- Presence & Solidarity:** Families of Parishes inspire all community members to go beyond regular Mass-goers and their buildings to be the light of Christ and to encounter Christ in all, both locally and across the globe. Parishioners practice a firm and preserving determination to commit themselves to the common good, recognizing that “we are all really responsible for all.” (Pope St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38)



Parameters

- 20.** Every Family of Parishes must offer support to their communities through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and promote a culture of life, charity, and justice.
- 21.** Every Family of Parishes will incorporate principles of Catholic Social Teaching into faith formation efforts for youth and adults.
- 22.** Every Family of Parishes will promote intercultural competence and facilitate the participation of all people in the life of the Church.



ADMINISTRATION

The six guiding principles address areas largely related to teaching and sanctifying. The parameters below are focused on the governance of Families of Parishes.

Parameters

- 23.** The parish/school financial ID # cannot be changed unless a new parish is formed or a parish formally changes its name.
- 24.** Each parish must maintain their own financial and sacramental records until parish territories are merged.
- 25.** Families of Parishes must be fiscally accountable.
- 26.** Parishes within each Family must work together to have an agreed upon and signed shared expense agreement annually when planning the yearly fiscal budget.
- 27.** Each parish/school must follow all policies within the Temporal Affairs Handbook.
- 28.** Every Family of Parishes must follow relevant civil law and archdiocesan policies for information (record) retention and location.
- 29.** Every Family of Parishes must work with the Pastoral Center Department of Human Resources to review staffing models.
- 30.** Each school must follow the approved School Change Process when making structural changes or closure decisions.

COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communications is necessary to share the Good News within the Family of Parishes and throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Parameters

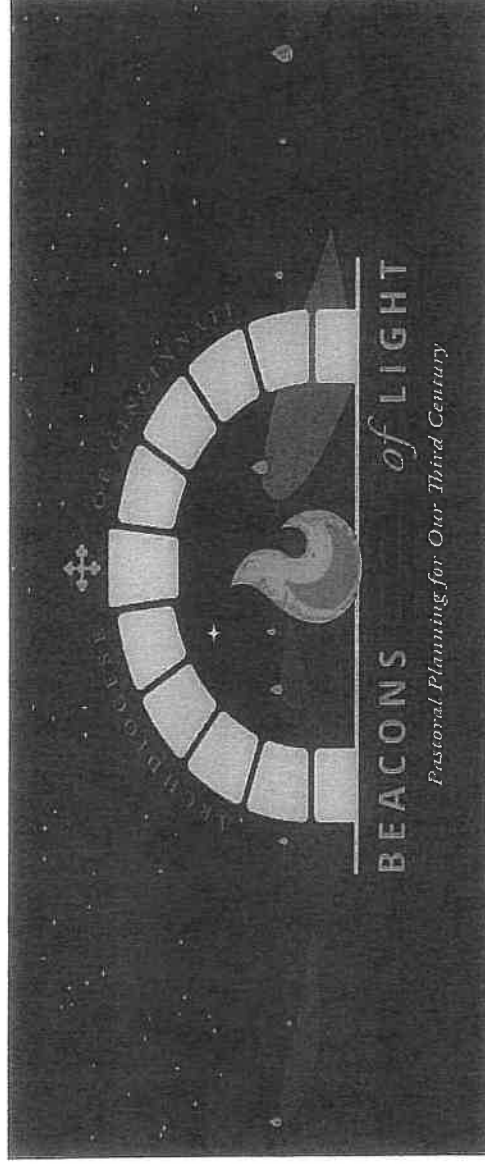
- 31.** Every Family of Parishes will utilize the archdiocese-provided census database for managing parishioner contact information and sacramental records.



Guiding Principles

Beacons of Light is a multiyear process of pastoral planning for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Rooted in prayer, groupings of parishes will come together as one faith community. These new Families of Parishes will be stronger together, focused more on mission than on maintenance. In the Families of Parishes we will grow closer to God, follow Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and radiate Christ in our lives.

1. **Eucharist:** The Mass is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. Accordingly, the Eucharist is the essential moment for building up and strengthening the parish community, along with the sacraments and other celebrations of the paschal mystery — the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. **Church:** Each of us is called to actively participate as a member of a parish, the Universal Church and our local Church, led by our archbishop. Parishes continually deepen the bonds of communion with other parishes.
3. **Leadership:** Pastors, in collaboration with parochial vicars, deacons and lay ministers, according to their proper roles and charisms, share responsibility for pastoral leadership. The spiritual, physical and mental health and ongoing support of ordained and lay leaders is vital for Families of Parishes.
4. **Stewardship:** Families of Parishes are communities of grateful disciples. Recognizing God's gifts, they use their talents, skills and resources to build up the Church and live as Christ's body in the world.
5. **Evangelization:** As centers of missionary outreach, Families of Parishes find new ways to foster discipleship among all the baptized. Schools, parishes, and indeed the domestic Church itself are centers of this essential work.
6. **Love in Action:** Families of Parishes will be communities of charity and justice, serving those most in need and working to change systems that oppress and marginalize.



FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES #1: EUCHARIST

BY JEREMY HELMES

This article is the first in a series covering each of the six foundational principles of Beacons of Light, the pastoral planning process of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The Eucharist makes the Church. This simple statement is at the heart of what it means to be a member of the Catholic Church, the community of the baptized who gather each Sunday to do what Jesus commanded: Participate in His Sacrifice on the Cross, sharing a sacred meal – His body and blood – together in His memory.

It's no surprise, then, that Archbishop Dennis Schnurr established "Eucharist" as Beacons of Light's first principle with these words:

"The Mass is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. Accordingly, the Eucharist is the essential moment for building up and strengthening the parish community, along with the sacraments and other celebrations of the paschal mystery – the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Yet, we are experiencing a Eucharistic crisis. Consistent Mass participation is declining nationally, with a sharp drop in attendance locally for the past decade. We anticipate our churches continuing to fill as the pandemic wanes, but attendance to-date remains far below even two years ago.

Perhaps it is partly because parish liturgical life isn't what it should be. The U.S. Bishops teach: "Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken and destroy it." This includes diminishment of the Eucharist's importance in our lives – some Catholics even lacking belief in Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist.

When parishes shape their new Family and plan a vibrant future together, the Eucharist's centrality must be upheld. The following goals help parish Families design effective plans that ensure the Eucharist has primary importance.

- **The Sunday Eucharist is life-giving, beautiful, and transformative:** When gathered for Mass, especially on Sundays, we are changed to be more fully like God. We experience God's love through the sacraments and He nourishes us for mission so that we can be more faithful disciples and witnesses to the Gospel.
 - **Christ's Presence is felt:** Sacramental celebrations and other liturgies are unique, privileged and true encounters with Jesus Christ, who is present in Word and Sacrament.
 - **Unity is lived:** As the sacrament of unity (1 Cor. 10:17), Eucharistic celebration is an opportunity for Family parish members to worship together, honoring and celebrating each one's cultural traditions, particularly special feast days.
 - **Formation is essential:** Catechize (teach and make real) the faithful's understanding of what they celebrate in the liturgy and how to celebrate it well.
 - **Ars Celebrandi is faithful and participatory:** Grant importance and attention to the "art of celebrating" the liturgy, such that the faithful's full, conscious and active participation are kindled and drawn more fully into the mystery of Christ through well-prepared preaching and music, fidelity to the texts and rubrics and the prayerful understanding of liturgical texts, feasts and seasons.
 - **Ministers are formed:** Priests, deacons and lay liturgical ministers should be well-trained and formed for pastoral leadership of prayer communities and imbued with the spirit of the liturgy.
 - **Sacred Space leads to God:** Churches, chapels and other sacred buildings are houses of the Church and houses of God: they should be "truly worthy and beautiful, signs and symbols of heavenly realities."
 - **Adoration is encouraged:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and catechesis regarding this holy practice, are readily available to prolong the Eucharistic Presence of Christ we experience at Mass and to adore Him as a community, even outside of Mass.
- As we, together, plan our future in Families of Parishes, the primacy of the Eucharist comes to fruition through the prayer and hard work of both parish leaders and all the faithful. There may be difficult adjustments: changes to Mass schedules, new musical repertoires, new needs for liturgical ministers, and more. Through all of these efforts, we are called to uphold the Eucharist as the heart and center of parish Family life.

BEACONS OF LIGHT:

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES # 2: EVANGELIZATION

The Catholic Telegraph / February 11, 2022 / 1k

by Sean Ater

This article is the second in a series covering each of the six foundational principles of Beacons of Light, the pastoral planning process of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

“Let us be witnesses. Let us radiate Christ.” With these words, Archbishop Schnurr challenged the Archdiocese of Cincinnati’s Catholic faithful to embrace the call to make Christ present in the world.

In his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis proposes a vision of the local parish as a “center of constant missionary outreach.” The Beacons of Light pastoral planning process gives each parish an opportunity to embrace this vision.

What does it mean for a parish to be a center for missionary outreach?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “center” with multiple meanings. One is “a facility providing a place for a particular activity or service.” We might visualize a healthy parish this way, imagining a church campus bustling with activity every day of the week; a one stop location for all spiritual and communal needs. However, an evangelizing parish is much more than that.

This alternative definition is a better consideration: “A source from which something originates.” Viewed through this lens, the Church, primarily in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, is the origin of missionary activity that radiates outward to all the world. Pope Benedict XVI uses nuclear fission to illustrate the connection between the Eucharist and mission, in that each time we receive the Body and Blood of our Lord, He sets off a transformation in us that cannot be contained, but radiates outward. It transforms the world around us as we become more empowered to be witnesses for the Gospel and heroically love our neighbors.

To truly radiate Christ to the world, Families of Parishes must first have missionary initiative toward each person in their parish boundaries. In his *Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis expresses great hope in the parish institution because of its potential to be flexible, adaptive and creative with evangelizing efforts. It must choose “a ‘missionary option,’ that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation” (*Joy of the Gospel*, 27).

Beacons of Light affords precisely this opportunity for each Family of Parishes to “transform everything” by striving for these six goals:

1. **Missionary Discipleship:** The Family of Parishes will implement a simple and clear evangelization process that ultimately equips and commissions missionary disciples, in every stage of their lives, for personal apostolates and vocations.
2. **Grounded in Discernment:** The pastor, staff and lay leaders prioritize prayer, formation and discernment, both for themselves and the faithful, so that they allow the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide their evangelization efforts.
3. **Family Partnership:** Because the family is the primary place of evangelization for young people and parents are the primary educators of their children, families are well-supported by the parish.
4. **Prioritize Adult Formation:** Priority for forming the faithful in evangelization and catechesis is directed toward adults, who can share that knowledge with others and use it in forming their children’s faith at home.
5. **Effective Schools:** As an essential parish ministry, the parish school fulfills its purpose to be an “effective vehicle of total Christian formation” for young people and their parents.
6. **A Culture of Vocation:** Families of Parishes will prepare individuals to discern and embrace their vocations by helping them recognize and respond to God’s unique call for their lives.

By embracing these six goals, Families of Parishes will become vibrant centers for missionary outreach and true beacons of light.

BEACONS OF LIGHT:

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES #3 THE CHURCH LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL

The Catholic Telegraph / March 18, 2022 / 52

by Deacon Mark Machuga

This article is the third in a series covering each of the six foundational principles of Beacons of Light, the pastoral planning process of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

What does it mean to be a member of a church? The answer lies in how we define the word "church."

In its most basic sense, "church" can simply refer to the building in which we celebrate the Mass and other sacraments. At a slightly higher level, it can be another form of the word "parish." For example, "What church do you go to?" "I'm a member of Our Lady of Victory."

We must remember, however, that our baptism makes us members of a very special "Church - the Catholic Church. This is the Church founded by Jesus Christ, formed by the Apostles and handed on to every successive generation for 2,000 years. Our local church does not exist independently, but is in union with the Universal Church under the authority of our archbishop and the leadership of the holy father.

In the context of Beacons of Light, each of these aspects of "church" has a special role: Church as a sacred space, Church as a local parish, Church as Christ's universal body. The core principle for Church, as set forth by the Beacons of Light, incorporates all these elements:

"Each of us is called to actively participate as a member of a parish, the Universal Church and our local Church, led by our archbishop. Parishes continually deepen the bonds of communion with other parishes."

Our Families of Parishes will rely upon each other for success, recognizing the heritage of our past and embracing a common future. Several goals will make this possible.

THE LOCAL CHURCH IS ORGANIZED INTO DEANERIES: Our archdiocesan church operates effectively by dividing into regional deaneries. Our new canonical parishes (i.e., "Families of Parishes") will continue to follow that organizational model and benefit through the interdependency of each parish with the other.

ARCHDIOCESAN COMMUNION WITH THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH: In communion with the holy father, the archbishop exercises leadership in the local Church.

EMBRACING SUBSIDIARITY: One of the Church's foundational social teachings is subsidiarity, which states that matters ought to be handled by the smallest, lowest or least centralized

competent authority, and higher authorities should provide assistance to the lower authorities when appropriate. This enables decisions to be made at the local level wherever possible. Deaneries enhance regional subsidiarity, operating on a local level, which empowers Families of Parishes to cooperate with each other in all forms of ministry.

RESPECTING CULTURE AND HISTORY: In one Family of Parishes, the culture and history of our individual parishes are acknowledged, honored and, where possible, preserved. Efforts seek to blend cultural and historical differences with compassion and compromise.

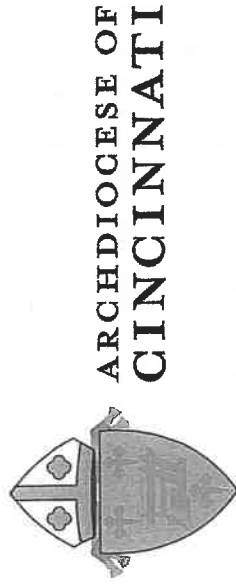
RECOGNIZING LOCAL & UNIVERSAL MEMBERSHIP: The People of God understand that the parish comprises the people within a given territory, and therefore, they grow in understanding themselves as members of Christ's Body, the Church.

We should not lose sight of the fact that our churches were brought together into Families of Parishes. This is an intentional designation. Families pray together, share their lives with each other, encourage each other and celebrate together. Just as we nourish and sustain our own families, we should strive to do likewise for our new parish family. Pray for the success of our priests, our parishes' staffs and our brother and sister parishioners. Share in each other's joys, sorrows, struggles and dreams. Encourage one another in our personal and spiritual growth. Celebrate our parishes' similarities and differences, brought together in our common Catholic faith.

Lumen Gentium, Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, tells us "The universal Church is seen to be 'a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'" As Church, we are the Body of Christ. As members of that Body we are on the journey of faith together – as one body, united in the Holy Trinity, for the good of our local church and the Universal Church. Our confidence rests in God that our parishes will truly come together as one family, one Church.



Guiding Principles and Parameters for Pastoral Planning





Guiding Principles & Parameters

Beacons of Light is a multiyear process of pastoral planning for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Rooted in prayer, groupings of parishes will come together as one faith community. These new Families of Parishes will be stronger together, focused more on mission than on maintenance. In the Families of Parishes we will grow closer to God, follow Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and radiate Christ in our lives.

As Families of Parishes are formed, parish staff, the pastoral council, and other leaders will prayerfully discern and create a plan through which the parishes will come together as one faith community. Each plan will be unique to the Family of Parishes, celebrating the history, culture, and strengths of each of the parishes in the Family. Principles, vision points, and parameters will guide the development of the plans for all the Families of Parishes, building on the common vision of the parish as a beacon of light.

Principles

Archbishop Schnurr has approved six **principles** that will be the foundation for the plans each Family of Parishes will develop.

Parameters

Archbishop Schnurr has approved **parameters** to guide the pastoral planning process, establishing common expectations for each Family of Parishes. These parameters will address things that all Families must or must not do as they come together.

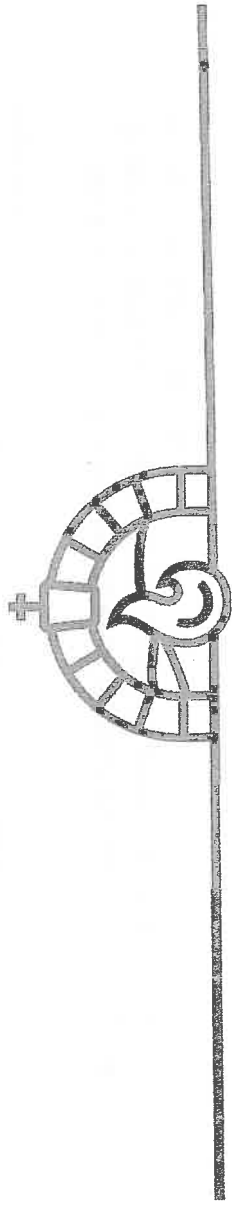
Parameters are only the topline, essential norms to be observed in each area. Below each set of parameters will be other categories such as suggestions, best practices, strategic imperatives, planning checklists. The Pathway will also include prayer resources, meeting outlines, magisterial sources, and more. Also found in each section of the Pathway will be relevant canons, universal and particular Church law, other archdiocesan policies, all to be observed at all times.

Pathway

The Pastoral Planning Pathway, including the principles and parameters, will guide the process through which Families of Parishes will shape vital, mission-focused communities of faith.

Values supporting the Pathway:

- Conformity to canon law & the Vatican instruction on parishes "The pastoral conversion of the parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church." (2020)
- Grounded in prayerful discernment.
- A theology of Families of Parishes grounded in Church teaching, including *Evangelii Gaudium*.
- Pastoral planning within the Family of Parishes supports vocational discernment and supports family life as lived in the "domestic church" (the household).
- Co-responsibility among ordained and lay ministers, led by the pastor.
- Coordination among Families within the deanery, led by the dean.
- A Planning Team in each Family of Parishes (led by the pastor) to oversee the planning process.
- Support from the Pastoral Center for each Family in the planning process.



General parameters

#1. Families of Parishes must follow canon law, civil law, all universal and particular Church law, and archdiocesan policies.

#2. Families of Parishes must develop a pastoral plan for parish vitality, submitted at least annually, reviewed by the dean, to be approved by the archbishop in conformity with the parameters of the Pastoral Planning Pathway according to the published timeline.

#3. By September 1, 2022, every Family of Parishes must form a Planning Team, led by the pastor, to coordinate pastoral planning geared toward the unification of the Family by June 30, 2027.

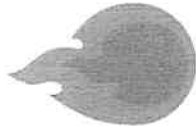


Eucharist

The Mass is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. Accordingly, the Eucharist is the essential moment for building up and strengthening the parish community, along with the sacraments and other celebrations of the paschal mystery — the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Parameters

- #4. The regular Mass schedule for a Family of parishes may not assume more than two Masses per day per priest.**
- #5. A regularly scheduled Mass for the Sunday precept must have annual average attendance of at least 50% of the church capacity.**
- #6. The regular Mass schedule must provide the opportunity for priests to spiritually prepare for and be present to the community after Mass.**
- #7. There must be a sufficient number of trained and formed liturgical ministers to serve as readers, servers, EMsHC, music ministers, et al. for liturgical celebrations.**
- #8. Sacramental formation must be provided.**

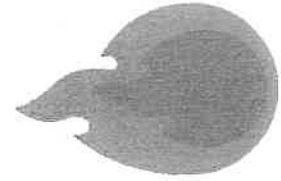


Church

Each of us is called to actively participate as a member of a parish, the Universal Church and our local Church, led by our archbishop. Parishes continually deepen the bonds of communion with other parishes.

Parameters

- #9. Every Family of Parishes will adhere to the spirit and norms of the Vatican Instruction "The pastoral conversion of the parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church." (2020) in pastoral planning and parish life.**
- #10. Families collaborate with other Families within the deanery to provide coordinated pastoral ministry (e.g. hospitals, care facilities, young adult evangelization, high schools, jails, etc.)**



Leadership

Pastors, in collaboration with parochial vicars, deacons and lay ministers, according to their proper roles and charisms, share responsibility for pastoral leadership. The spiritual, physical and mental health and ongoing support of ordained and lay leaders is vital for Families of Parishes.

Parameters

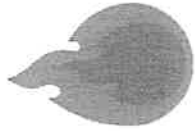
#11. Every Family of Parishes has a unified Pastoral Council, with other relevant and necessary consultative groups for specific areas of parish life.

#12. The Finance Councils of each parish within the Family work together to appropriately plan for and monitor the finances of the Family of Parishes.

#13. Competent and qualified staff is necessary to serve the Family of Parishes, especially in the areas of worship, evangelization (including love in action), and administration. As is possible, staff is unified to serve the entire Family.

#14. Priests must have a regularly scheduled day off and must be able to take all annual vacation and retreat.

#15. Priests, deacons, staff and other lay leaders participate in ongoing spiritual formation and training for leadership.



Stewardship

Families of Parishes are communities of grateful disciples. Recognizing God's gifts, they use their talents, skills and resources to build up the Church and live as Christ's body in the world.

Parameters

#16. Every Family of Parishes forms people to embrace stewardship as a way of life.

#17. Every Family of Parishes will actively promote vocational discernment.



Evangelization

As centers of missionary outreach, Families of Parishes find new ways to foster discipleship among all the baptized. Schools, parishes, and indeed the domestic Church itself are centers of this essential work.

Parameters

- #18. Every Family of Parishes will create and implement a plan that ministers to all persons in every season of life and every stage in the process of evangelization.**
- #19. Every Family of Parishes will have an Evangelization Team, overseen by the pastor and led by competent and qualified staff.**



Love in Action

Families of Parishes will be communities of charity and justice, serving those most in need and working to change systems that oppress and marginalize.

Parameters

- #20. Every Family of Parishes must offer support to their communities through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and promote a culture of life, charity, and justice.**
- #21. Every Family of Parishes will incorporate principles of Catholic Social Teaching into faith formation efforts for youth and adults.**
- #22. Every Family of Parishes will promote intercultural competence and facilitate the participation of all people in the life of the Church.**

Administration

The six guiding principles address areas largely related to teaching and sanctifying. The parameters below are focused on the governance of Families of Parishes.

Parameters

#23. The Parish/school financial ID # cannot be changed unless a new parish is formed or a parish formally changes its name.

#24. Each parish must maintain their own financial and sacramental records until parish territories are merged.

#25. Families of Parishes must be fiscally accountable.

#26. Parishes within each Family must work together to have an agreed upon and signed shared expense agreement annually when planning the yearly fiscal budget.

#27. Each parish/school must follow all policies within the Temporal Affairs Handbook.

#28. Every Family of Parishes must follow relevant civil law and archdiocesan policies for information (record) retention and location.

#29. Every Family of Parishes must work with the Pastoral Center Department of Human Resources to review staffing models.

#30. Each school must follow the approved School Change Process when making structural changes or closure decisions.

Communications

Effective communications is necessary to share the Good News within the Family of Parishes and throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Parameters

#31. Every Family of Parishes shall utilize the archdiocese-provided census database for managing parishioner contact information and sacramental records.

Pastoral Planning Pathway Parameters

History of Development

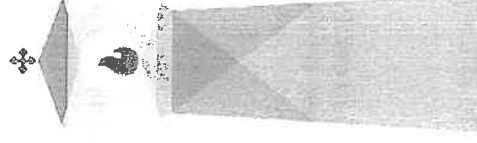
The parameters of the Beacons of Light pastoral planning process are the topline requirements for each Family of Parishes. They describe what each Family of Parishes **must** and **must not** do in the creation of their pastoral plans. While there are many lower-level suggestions, best practices, etc. as part of the Pathway, the parameters represent the fundamental requirements of a viable pastoral plan.

They have been reviewed and refined many times throughout 2021, including consultation with priests and lay leaders of all parishes, leading up to final approval by Archbishop Schnurr and publication as part of the Pathway.

Winter 2021: Draft parameters were developed by Dept of Pastoral Vitality then refined by the Oversight Group.

May 2021: Draft parameters were given to each priest for their feedback. Pastors were also asked to review the draft parameters with their staff and pastoral council and to submit feedback online to the Dept for Pastoral Vitality. Input was received from 97 parishes/regions, which included the input of hundreds of lay parish leaders. In addition to responses from 85 pastors, input was received from 5 priests with non-parochial assignments, 7 parochial vicars, and 7 retired priests.

June 4, 2021: A summary of feedback, including percentage of pastors and parish leaders who affirm each draft parameter, was provided to all priests as part of the materials for their meeting on the current reality of the planning process.

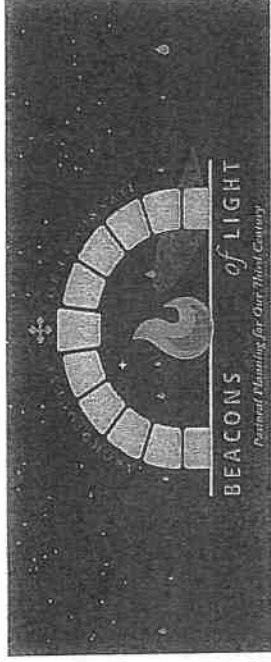


July 2021: Based on the feedback gathered from priests and parish leaders, Dept of Pastoral Vitality refined parameters and eliminated those with inadequate support. Pathway Design teams reviewed the parameters again, consulting with priests, deacons, parish staff, and lay faithful with expertise in the subject area.

Aug 2021: Final draft parameters were presented to the Oversight Group for their final review and any needed adjustments.

Sept 14, 2021: Final draft parameters were presented by Fr. Jan Schmidt to Archbishop Schnurr for his review and edits. Archbishop Schnurr approved final parameters.

Sept 29, 2021: Parameters are published, given to priests at their day-long meeting on modeling of Families of Parishes, to be included in the Pastoral Planning Pathway.



THERE IS NOTHING LIKE FAMILY

Breaking down Families of Parishes

As the pastoral planning initiative, *Beacons of Light*, moves forward, Catholic Telegraph writers are meeting with its leaders, including Father Jan Schmidt, to bring you the most up-to-date and accurate information and communication on what is happening, how decisions will be made and to provide clear descriptions of what to expect. This article series on *Beacons of Light* will appear in every issue of The Catholic Telegraph. Additionally, please visit catholicaoc.org/beacons to sign up for the weekly Beacons Update newsletter.

Is my parish going to close?

What is going to happen to my kids' school?

Will I have to change where and when I go to Mass? What is going to happen next?

These are some of the first questions that might come to mind when you hear about *Beacons of Light*. The pastoral planning process of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is underway, and as more Catholics become aware of the initiative, there will be an understandable amount of uncertainty in the hearts and minds of parishioners.

For many Catholics, their parish is like a second home. Some people have belonged to the same parish for decades. They attended school there, got married there, saw their kids baptized and receive the sacraments

there. They've made friends, volunteered, donated to building projects and worshiped in this same space for years. Is all that going to end?

First and foremost, *Beacons of Light* is not about closing parishes. It is about making parishes stronger. Through the process of collecting data, listening to pastors and lay faithful, consulting with experts and receiving feedback, parishes will be formed into 50 to 60 groups called "Families of Parishes."

Each Family of Parishes will typically consist of three to six parishes – although some will have more and others less. Each of the parishes in a "Family" will join the grouping with their own buildings, budgets, sacramental schedules, staffs and resources of a

typical parish. Decisions about life in the Family of Parishes will be made by the pastor and parish leaders within the basic guidelines in place for the entire archdiocese.

The goal is for these parishes to join together as one faith community, stronger than ever before. By coming together, this new faith community will have the resources needed to focus more on mission than on maintenance, thereby helping people grow closer to Jesus and radiate Christ throughout the cities, towns, suburbs and rural communities of the 19 counties in Western and Southwestern Ohio.

Will things change? Absolutely. But are you going to show up at Mass one Sunday to find the building locked and an eviction notice nailed to the front door? Not at all.

The pastor and parish leaders in each Family of Parishes will collaborate and embark on their own process of assessing the resources and needs for their faith family. No one in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati can wholly predict what kinds of changes each Family of Parishes will enact. Could they close buildings? Yes. Could they consolidate schools? Yes. Could they change Mass times? Yes. But those decisions will not be made centrally, they will not be made lightly, and they will not be made quickly. Those decisions will be in the hands of the priests, parish councils, parish staff and other leaders within each Family of Parishes.

Ultimately, the goal is for each Family of Parishes to come together as one, true faith community. That goal might sound scary. Change – even good change – is always a little bit scary. Will the process be easy? Probably not. Will every parishioner be happy with every decision their pastor or parish leaders make?

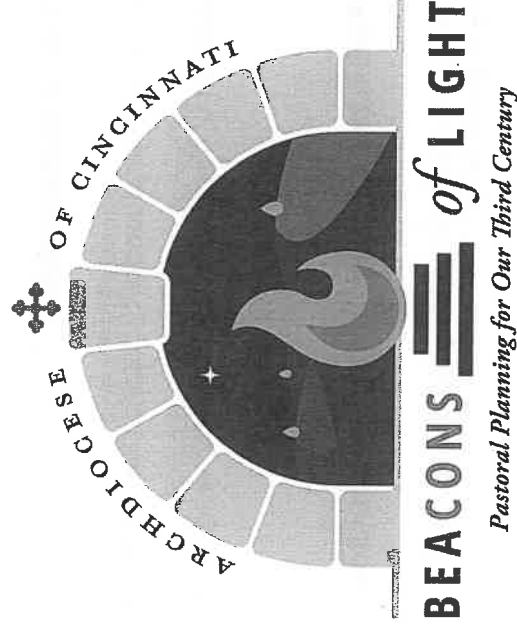
That's certainly not the case now, and it likely won't be in the future.

Can Archbishop Schnurr or any of his staff members tell you today if your parish will close, or your school will be consolidated, or your Mass times or locations will change? No, because they don't know, and they won't be the ones making those decisions.

You can be a part of the *Beacons of Light* process in your own parish.

By signing up for the free monthly Beacons Update, you can stay in the know throughout every step of Beacons of Light. By using Beacons Update to ask questions and give feedback, you can help influence how this initiative develops. By presenting yourself as a positive and proactive supporter to your pastor, you can get involved as the process unfolds in your parish. And, through prayer, you can place your trust (and your worries) in Jesus, who tells us in Matthew 6:34a, "Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself."

Dominick Albano



STUDY GUIDE

Journeying Together:

Theological Foundations of

BEACONS of LIGHT

Father Earl Fernandes

Discussion/Reflection Questions

Use these questions for personal reflection on the document and articles
OR use them for small group discussion and faith sharing.

Full Document

1. Of the many images used to describe the Church, which speaks to you most powerfully? Which presents the most challenge? Why?
2. What do you love most about your own family? What do you love most about your parish and why?
3. From the six characteristics of an evangelizing community, which does your parish do well? Which ones are weak spots? Why?
4. Describe a time when you really felt someone was listening to you. How did that make you feel?
5. What keeps our parish from focusing on the mission of evangelization and discovering what God has prepared for us? How can we be more *synodal*/in our parish life?
6. How have you experienced co-responsibility in parish life? What keeps this from being a reality?

Article: Discernment & Co-Responsibility

1. How have you experienced co-responsibility in parish life? What keeps this from being a reality?
2. Which is the hardest part of discernment for you: recognizing, interpreting, or choosing? Why?

Article: Families of Parishes as Evangelizing Communities

1. From the six characteristics of an evangelizing community, which does your parish do well? Which ones are weak spots? Why?

Article: Journeying Together

1. Describe a time when you really felt someone was listening to you. How did that make you feel?

Article: Synodality

1. Describe a time when you truly “walked together” with someone (literally or figuratively). How did that experience reveal God’s presence to you?

Article: Synodality in the Church and of the Church

1. What keeps our parish from focusing on the mission of evangelization and discovering what God has prepared for us? How can we be more *synodal* in our parish life?

Article: The Church as the Family of God

1. What do you love most about your own family? What do you love most about your parish and why?

Our Lady of Grace + Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday April 5, 2022

Members Present: Ed Wilson, Donna O'Neill, Joan Means, Pat Finch (Zoom), Bill Danzig, Pat Gill, Leona Marmolejo, Cindy Currell, Flora Igah, Wanda Hollinger (staff), Tink Siwecki (staff)
Excused: Fr. Benoit, Consuela Wilson

Opening Prayer: Synod Prayer

Minutes: Correct *Leona Marmolejo* to Leona Marmolejo
Correct *Flora Ingram* to Flora Igah

Bill Danzig made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected, Joan Means seconded the motion, motion passed.

Pastor's Comments (via Wanda):

- Fr. Benoit wanted to point out that we, as a parish, give money to Food for the Journey Project. Fr. Benoit approached our finance committee at the beginning of Covid and asked for funds.
- As a parish we are financially okay. We are not in debt.
- Fr. Benoit would like to give a presentation at Our Lady of Mercy Founder's Hall (larger space) at the May Coffee Klatch (May 15, 2022). Information about the Beacons of Light would be presented by Fr. Benoit and a rep from Our Lady of Grace Parish Council would continue.
- Staff will advertise the presentation at least three weeks ahead of the meeting via: One Call Now, Bulletin, Pulpit announcements, OLOG web page, Facebook, Twitter.
- Members thought having a video might be a good idea. It could be put up on our parish web page so those unable to attend could receive the same information.

President's Comments:

- Donna stated that we should reflect on our strengths and weaknesses.
- People in our parish may be afraid of what their abilities are and if they can do the job.
- We need to encourage them to do what they can do.
- They may say that they have "been there, done that."
- They may be afraid of the commitment (time, ability).
- They may be able to do some of the "small" jobs around our parish.

Bereavement:

- Two talks were given at each church by Ed Wilson and Pat Gill.
- Two people at Corpus Christi expressed interest.
- Two people at Our Lady of Mercy expressed interest.
- A sign up list was put out at each church.
- Wanda will do a follow up in the bulletin asking for volunteers.
- A meeting for volunteers will take place after Easter.
- We are also looking to sign up volunteers for other ministries.

Refugees:

- Flora Igah has a source of information for area refugees.
- Materials and info are free as well as other services.
- *Ebenezer Health Care* is a nonprofit community group.
- They give public talks.
- Members suggested we may be able to include this group in our Speaker Series.
- **Fr. Benoit would need to approve any materials or speaking event before scheduling anything or promoting any materials.**
- Members discussed partnering with this group or other non-profit groups to help refugees in our area.
- This may be a future project for after we come together with our Family of Parishes.

Strengths and Weaknesses:

- We have good people in our parish.
- Children's Liturgy (no children at this time).
- Respite Bags @ both coffee klatches. Carl really started a very nice project for our parish.

Beacons of Light: Next Steps

- Beacons video was played during the meeting/Bishop Fernandez.
- Discernment focus; we need to be realistic.
- Three keys: Recognize-What is going on, what do we do next.
Interpret-How to make better.
Make a judgment.
- **See Beacons Binder insert/pastoral vitality website.**
- The information we have been receiving on various AOC websites and emails aren't consistent.
- A planning team will be put together in the future.
- Staff and members of the Parish Council and the Finance committee were asked to sign up for the next Beacons meeting at UD May 9th (all day).
- Please let Tink know if you are able to attend, she will sign everyone up.

Going Forward...

- What can we do during this process?
- How do we market our parish?
- How can we attract people to our parish?
- What is our "draw?"
- Keep all this in mind and pray.

Beacons of Light prayer

Meeting ended: 7:18 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Natinka Siwecki

Our Lady of Grace + Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday May 10, 2022

Members Present: Bill Danzig, Pat finch, Pat Gill, flora Igah, Fr. Benoit, Donna O'Neill, Kateri Dillon (guest) Wanda Hollinger (staff), Tink Siwecki (staff)
Not in attendance: Joan Means, Cindy Currell, and Ed Wilson, Consuela Wilson, Leona Marmolejo

Prayer: Synod prayer

Minutes:

Pat Gill made a motion to accept the minutes, Bill Danzig seconded the motion, motion passed.

Marianist Presence/Corpus Christi:

Kateri- part of the Marianist Family (lay Marianist) reported;

- There is a strong Marianist presence in the Five Oaks neighborhood.
- Volunteers live in the neighborhood.
- Fr. Ted does Masses etc..
- In 2018 there were prayer groups.
- Covid disrupted many plans.
- FJP volunteers suggested having a Sunday Brunch event and asked if they could host one at Corpus Christi, in the courtyard area and use our tables, with Marianist volunteers on June 26, 2022 (setup at 9:30 am done by 2:00pm). It is called "Sunday Best Brunch."

Bereavement:

- The talks given by Ed and Pat at the Masses brought in 8 people who expressed interest in Bereavement.
- Pat and Ed will talk about all aspects of Bereavement: music, liturgical ministers, meeting with the families, etc.

St. Vincent de Paul Conferences:

- St. Augustine has a St. Vincent de Paul conference in Germantown, OLOG has two St. Vincent de Paul conferences
- QM has one St. Vincent de Paul conference.
- They all would like to continue their separate conferences since they are in different areas. The presidents of all the conferences would meet maybe every other month to let each other know what's going on and maybe suggest things they could do together.
- The first meeting will be in June and maybe each president could be coordinator of the meetings for a year.

- Pat Gill says they receive 10-15 calls per day on average.
- *Care Source* offers rides for trips to food pantries, etc.
- *Urban Outreach Center* takes care of 45417 Service. St. Benedict has no St. Vincent de Paul conference.

Beacons of Light Parish Update Meeting:

- Fr. Benoit will present the 3 principles of Beacons of Light. There are 3 elements: pastoral-development of life of parish (mission), structure, and personal. We will concentrate on pastoral development.
- We must answer “why” before what and where i.e. structure, Mass schedules etc....
- **Parish** definition-some people are not clear on definition and difference between parish and church.
- **Next step:** getting to know each other, informal meetings. This takes a long time to get people to get to know each other and form a communion. After that – meetings can happen.
- **July 1st:** The first thing that happens is leadership, i.e. change of pastors. Form unified parish council → 2-3 models will be presented and you choose which one is beneficial.
- Should we present the idea to keep the July and August parish council meetings? Fr. Benoit thinks Fr. Francis will probably call a meeting of councils in July. Canonically the council ceases with the pastor.
- We will wait to see what Fr. Francis wants to do.
- We will live in a state of uncertainty during the process.
- Prayer and patience and the Holy Spirit will help us through.
- Donna asks all members to take a look at the Beacon videos and see if they would be valuable during the meeting. Donna will send a link.
- Wanda will put together a handout for the meeting.

Graduates:

- Jeanine is graduating and Donna wants to send her a card and will take monetary donations for a gift.
- There is a bulletin announcement calling for graduates to call the office.

Refugee speaker:

- There is a tentative plan for a speaker from the Ebenezer group to come to the September 18th Coffee Klatch at OLOM.

Prayer: Beacons prayer

Joint Parish Council Meeting Minutes
Friday, July 15, 2022
Presented by Lois Woods- St. Benedict the Moor

The Joint Parish Council Meeting began with prayer led by Fr. Benoit

Before the meeting began Parish Council members had refreshments and fellowshiped with one another. We had an opportunity to hear the history of Queen of Martyr.

Fr. Benoit spoke of Beacons of Light and gave a detailed explanation.

- Decline of membership among the 5 Parishes.
- Decline in Priests
- Decline of Ministries and Parish Activities
- Fr. Benoit also spoke of Evangelization

Fr. Francis explained how the Beacon's of Light will be implemented

- There will be 5 phases for planning. Phase 1 began July 1, 2022
- Fr. Francis would like the 5 Parish Councils to meet on a regular basis to discuss Beacon's of Light Planning.
- During the 2nd quarter the Parish Councils will be restructured.
- Fr. Francis stated that he will check every quarter how the new changes are progressing. He stated that the 1st phase will be a slow process, as this is new for everyone.
- The 5 Parishes did a breakout session to discuss questions that Fr. Francis and Fr. Benoit had asked the group to review. (See below for the answers from St. Benedict).
- The 5 Parish Councils were told that if there is a need to hold an individual Parish Council meeting, one could be held.

Comment was made by Sandi Prikkel from QM – That all Parishes can have a great impact on the Dayton Community because of the location of the Parishes.

Notes from questions

1. What is the biggest challenge with family of parishes?
 - a. Members are resistant to change
 - b. Fear of the unknown
 - c. Uncertainty of change/fear of change
 - d. Not fully understanding of what Beacons of Light mean
 - i. Is it bigger than shortage of priests?
 - ii. Aging membership
 - iii. Financial issues
 - iv. It was mentioned that if on is observant, then one would see that changes are needed.
 - v. Traveling to another parish may be inconvenient/convenient
 - vi. A perception of some parishes not wanting to be diverse
2. What is the greatest opportunity as a Parish Leader to contribute to Parish vitality.....Phase 1?
 - a. Help to smooth over the fear or resistance to change.
 - b. Feeling that this new change is being done for a specific reason. How do we overcome this feeling?
3. Loose one's identity
4. What are things in our individual Parish that can be shared with others
 - a. Bible Study on Wednesday
 - b. Ministries – Men's, Women's Youth, Worship

Family of Parishes NE #8 Parishes Council Meeting
Our Lady of Grace, Dayton
Friday August 26, 2022
6PM

Agenda

- ❖ **Prayer over the food (5:50pm)**
- ❖ **Story/History Our Lady of Grace**
- ❖ **Insights Beacons of Light**
- ❖ **Break into table Discussions**
- ❖ **Report Back**
- ❖ **Break into Parishes**
- ❖ **AOB**
- ❖ **Next Meeting (September 23, 2022)**
- ❖ **Closing Prayer**

NE-8 Family of Parishes Joint Parish Council Meeting

Our Lady of Mercy Church-Founder's Hall

6:00 PM Friday August 26, 2022

Parish Council Members in attendance:

- Our Lady of Grace (Corpus Christi Church + Our Lady of Mercy Church)
- Queen of Martyrs - Dayton
- St. Augustine - Germantown
- St. Benedict - Dayton
- See sign-in sheet for individual members

Prayer over the food

Dinner

Opening Prayer

History of Our Lady of Grace Parish: Leona Marmolejo & Donna O'Neill
Corpus Christi + Our Lady of Mercy + Assumption + St. Agnes

Insights: Beacons of Light:

Fr. Francis gave an overview explanation using the current Beacons of Light videos.

- Seating capacity of each church
- Maps/distance from each of our churches
- Logistics

Small Group Breakout:

Five Groups responded to two questions then came together and reported back to the large group:

1. *Based on what you know now and the suggestions you made if you are to have two Christmas Eve Masses, where in your opinion would it be? Why?*
2. *Within the next three weeks Parishes within our NE-8 family will be having their picnics as individual Parishes, do you think we should continue this way as we are discerning our future as a family? Do you prefer one festival together as a family reunion soon?*

Group #1:

1. Recommends having the Christmas Eve Masses at Queen of Martyrs and St. Benedict, because the parking lots are convenient.
2. Recommends having two separate picnics at two neutral locations.

Group #2:

1. Recommends St Benedict and Queen of Martyrs – Capacity.
2. Recommends having a joint picnic next year.

Group #3:

1. Recommends St. Benedict-capacity and Our Lady of Mercy then Queen of Martyrs.
2. Have separate picnics at each parish for 2 years inviting all parishes to attend.

Group #4:

1. Recommends having the Christmas Eve Mass at one central site next year.
2. Recommends having each parish have their own picnic this year and sharing one next year.

Group #5:

1. Recommends having the Christmas Eve Masses at Our Lady of Mercy and Queen of Martyrs churches.
2. Recommends keeping the picnic shared by St. Augustine and St. Benedict.

Individual Church Parish Council Meetings:

Our Lady of Grace Parish Council:

Members present: Ed Wilson, Leona Marmolejo, Pat Finch, Pat Gill, Joan Means, Bill Danzig, Donna O'Neill, Florah Egah, Tink Siwecki

1. We would like details on what Fr. Francis expects the **Joint Parish Council** to look like
2. How will the JPC get the information to each individual parish/parishioners?
3. What will the size of the JPC be?
4. Who will be in charge of sacraments, RCIC, evangelization, etc.
5. A new set of Beacons Round Table zoom meetings will begin in the fall.
6. We need to better explain the Beacons of Light to our parishioners.
7. Get more people in the pews.
8. Evangelization within our own parishes.

Queen of Martyrs Parish Council:

1. They discussed a cleanup event.
2. They hosted the first joint parish council meeting and Fr. Francis' installation as the pastor of NE-8.
3. QM parish picnic is on Sunday September 18th and they have concerns about the size of tent needed this year.
4. They now have a renter for their daycare building Three Hearts Daycare. The building will be recertified next month.
5. They discussed Beacons of Light and the Synod, Evangelization and AOC Vitality Program.
6. Sandy Prikkel who attended the Beacons Communications Workshop at St. John the Baptist in Tipp City gave their parish council a report.

St. Augustine Parish Council:

1. Ken reported that their Mary Garden was recently installed and finished. They had 20-30 volunteers who worked on this project.
2. New carpet will be installed to replace the 40 year old carpet currently in place.
3. The front of St. Augustine will receive a fresh coat of paint soon.

St. Benedict Parish Council:

1. Deacon Osagie Victor Obasuyi reported that the parish picnic shared by St. Benedict and St. Augustine will be Sunday August 28th at Possum Creek Reserve. The day will begin with a 10:00 AM Mass at the park followed by lots of food and games for the children. All are invited from the NE-8 Family.

Pastors Comments:

1. Fr. Francis reported that at the meeting of parish leadership he gave a general outline of what we are to expect.
2. Not every parish will go at the same pace during the Beacons process.
3. We as Regions 1 & 2 in the past have already done a lot of what is required of us now.
4. The goal now is to get NE-8 to start talking with each other and get to know the parishes.
5. We are building towards our future.

Our next JPC meeting will Monday September 19, 2022 at 6:00PM at:

St. Augustine 6939 Weaver Rd.

Germanatown, OH 45327

Phone: 937-855-2289

Email: csaintaugustine@woh.rr.com

Closing prayer

Meeting adjourned

Beacons of Light what it is

- Beacons of Light, a comprehensive process of pastoral planning, to study every aspect of the archdiocese and parishes to determine how to best array our resources – human, physical and financial – to spread the Gospel far and wide.
- Beacons of Light is a multi-year process of pastoral planning for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Groupings of parishes will come together as one faith community. These new “Families of Parishes” will be stronger, with the resources to focus more on mission than on maintenance. Pastors and parish leaders will then plan for the future of their Family of Parishes.

Timeline 2020-2022

- **Fall 2020:** *Beacons of Light* project launch announced. Data gathering from parishes and schools begins.
- **Winter 2020/21:** Six principles of *Beacons of Light* are established. Design of parish planning process (including vision points and parameters) begins.
- **Spring 2021:** Parish and school data is analyzed. Current reality is assessed.
- **Summer 2021:** Families of Parishes modeling begins. Draft of parish planning process is completed.
- **Fall 2021:** Draft models of Families of Parishes are published for comment. Parish planning process (including vision points and parameters) is finalized.
- **Winter 2021/22:** Families of Parishes are finalized and announced.
- **Spring 2022:** Pastors and parish leaders begin preparing for the parish planning process.
- **Summer 2022:** Families of Parishes implementation begins. Each Family starts its parish planning process.

Why?

- To build a vibrant Parish Communities. Everyone wants to belong to a vibrant parish.
- Full, Joyful, and Centered on the Eucharist
- Nurturing ever closer Relationship with Jesus
- Spreading the love of Jesus through Charitable Outreach
- 33% - Religious practice is declining nationwide.
- The average Sunday Mass in our archdiocese is only one-third full.
- Fewer Catholics are involved in parish life. The number of registered Catholic households in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has declined at a rate of 2.72 per day for the past decade.
- Our priests are stretched to the limit.
- The number of available priests will decrease by approximately 20% by 2026.

Phase Zero

- Priest Formation & Training:
- Lay Parish Leaders Formation & Training:
- Journeying Together Study Guide and Videos: These resources will help parish teams understand and reflect on the theological foundations of Beacons of Light.

PHASE ONE MANDATE (JULY 2022 – JUNE 2027)
Family of parishes becoming one Canonical Parish

- Adjust Mass Schedules
- Combine Councils
- Merge Staff
- Build Community
- Decern use of Buildings, resources

Staff

- Staffing Arrangements are ongoing
- Need in immediate future
- Have no youth/young adult and evangelization coordinator
- Outreach and Social action coordinator
- Worship & Faith Formation Coordinator

Communications

- Bulletin 5 years SB/SA & OLOG/CC/QM till March as 2023 Meanwhile change the cover of our two bulletins to reflect the Family & exchange some vital contents.
- Web Page (as soon as we get a name)
- Phones to connect the offices – in progress
- OLG Newsletters be available for all families. will start negotiation soon

Clergy Functions

Deacon Skip Retired

- Will Continue his responsibility in helping his Region
Fr. Benoit Mukamba, C.S.Sp.
- Mission Evangelizations and Vocations Coordinator
Deacon Osagie Victor Obasuyi
- Outreach and Social Action Coordinator
Deacon Ken Stewart
- Worship & Faith Formation Coordinator
Fr. Francis Tandoh, C.S.Sp.
- Administration, Finance, Personnel & Oversight of all Pastoral Ministries

Future Timeline

- **September 19, 2022**, Combined Family of Parishes meeting, Leadership Inventory discussions, at SA
- **September/October** – First Parish Communities Meetings for Update on Beacons of Light
- **September 25, 2022** – St Augustine Parish, Germantown, After 8:30am Mass
- **October 1, 2022** – St. Benedict the Moor Church, 10am

Beacons of Light First update to Parishes' Council & Parish Communities

- **October 1, 2022** – Our Lady of Grace (Corpus & Mercy) After 4:30pm mass at Mercy location
- **October 2, 2022** – Queen of Martyrs – After 11:00 Mass
- **October 5, 2022**, All Parishes Staff meeting
- **October 10, 2022**, Combined Worship Meeting, (Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas Celebrations) OLOG
- **October 18, 2022**, Combined Parish Councils' Meeting Inventory Continues (process of appointing Members)
- There will be Combined Family of Parishes council meeting every Second Tuesday of Each Month.
- There will be Combined Family of Parishes NE#8 Worship meeting every third Tuesday of the month.
- **November 2, 2022**, Combined Finance Council meeting/Socials 6pm Venue, TBD
- **December 17, 2022**, Socials for Combined Worship Committee, Finance & Parish Councils, SB
- **January 21, 2022**, Day of Reflection and Formation, newly appointed FP#8 Council members
- **February 21, 2022**, First meeting, newly appointed Council FP#8.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Beacons of Light Family of Parishes Northeast #8

Timeline for phase One

All Old Council members of Parishes within the Family of Parishes NE#8 Stays. All Parish Councils of Parishes will have one meeting every month in one location the same time & day, on parish-to-parish rotational bases.

July 5, 2022, All staff Socials, and informational Meeting, OLOG

July 15, 2022, 6pm First Combined Parish Councils Social and Information Meeting, QM

- Finance Councils will be meeting on individual Parishes' bases

July 13, 2022, 11am Our Lady of Grace Finance

July 13, 2022, 5pm Queen of Martyrs

July 19, 2022, First Combined worship Committee Socials and Information meeting, SA

August 10, 2022, First meeting with Chairs of Finance and Parish Council, FP NE#8

August 16, 2022, Combined worship Committee Meeting Begin processing the inventory, SB

August 26, 2022, Combined Family of Parishes Council Meeting, reviewing the inventory, OLOG
September 13, 2022, Clergy Meeting, SB

September 15, 2022, Combined Worship Committee Meeting, Inventory Eucharist, Liturgy, QM

September 19, 2022, Combined Family of Parishes meeting, Leadership Inventory discussions, at SA

September/October – First Parish Communities Meetings for Update on Beacons of Light

September 25, 2022 – St Augustine Parish, Germantown, After 8:30am Mass

October 1, 2022 – St. Benedict the Moor Church, 10am

October 1, 2022 – Our Lady of Grace (Corpus & Mercy) After 4:30pm mass at Mercy location

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OLOG

October 18, 2022, Combined Parish Councils' Meeting Inventory Continues (process of appointing Members)

- There will be Combined Family of Parishes council meeting every Second Tuesday of Each Month.
- There will be Combined Family of Parishes NE#8 Worship meeting every third Tuesday of the month.

November 2, 2022, Combined Finance Council meeting/Socials 6pm Venue, TBD

December 17, 2022, Socials for Combined Worship Committee, Finance & Parish Councils, SB

January 21, 2022, Day of Reflection and Formation, newly appointed FP#8 Council members

February 21, 2022, First meeting, newly appointed Council FP#8.

FUNCTION AREAS OF PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

REGION ONE DAYTON DEANARY

BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT REPRESENTATIVES

- Shall Coordinate with the men's group on grounds improvement/ Facilities coordinator person
- Shall Coordinate with Facilities Manager to see to the proper functioning of all our units (the HVAC & AIR)
- Shall Coordinate with the Parish Office that Supplies be available.
- Shall together with a Committee see to the proper use and Maintenance of all our buildings.
- Shall oversee any present and future project regarding grounds and facilities

Please Consult with the/Facilities Persons

Beacons' Principle Stewardship/Administration Deacon Osagie Victor Obasuyi,

Fran Delgado, Janice Kwofie

MISSION, EVANGELIZATION & VOCATION REPRESENTATIVES

- Shall work together with ushers in welcoming new parishioners and visitors.
- Shall work to bring old members back into the church
- Shall, with the worship commission, coordinate programs that will uplift the spiritual growth of parishioners, Retreats etc.
- Shall, together with the Education Commission, promote Vocations and missions' spirit in the parish.
- Shall work with the following:

Beacons': Evangelization – Fr. Benoit Mukamba C.S.Sp.

CRE, RCIA, Divine Worship Commission)

First Communion, Sunday School, Confirmation

Bible Study, Adult Faith Formation, Youth Apostolate

SOCIAL ACTION, JPIC & OUTREACH MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES

- Shall coordinate the ministries related to human needs for the wider community beyond our parish and sponsor activities services by members of the parish to that ministry.
- Shall communicate to foster active interaction with other parishes.
- Shall coordinate efforts directed towards social justice and awareness.
- Shall promote programs that emphasize respect for life.

West Dayton Caravan of Churches (WDCC) and similar advocacy groups.

St. Benedict Charities

Social Action Commission, Weavers of Justice

Beacons': Love in Action Deacon Osagie Victor Obasuyi

Mode of Selection of Family of Parishes Council Members

1. Selection will come from Current various Parish's Council Members.
2. Consultation will go on within the current membership for selections
3. Three members from each parish and one representative from the finance council members. (12 members)
4. Ex-Officio Members are Prochiral Vicar, 3 deacons, 4 representatives from staff presumably one each from each Parish within the Family Constituting a membership of 20 persons in number.
5. Appointment of the Council will be staggering terms of 2 and 3 years
6. From among the twelve one of them will be appointed as the chairperson and another to assist.
7. Hopefully, we will be able to draw membership from the current Parish Council members to serve on various Committee where needed.
8. Recognizing the numbers of parishioners in some areas the committees will be made up of a minimum of three persons and not more than six.
9. Parishioners within the Family will be directed to pass their suggestions and concerns through these committees.

Mode of operation of the Family of parishes Council.

Each member will be assigned to serve on one or two of the committees below.

MISSION & EVANGELIZATION REPRESENTATIVES
SOCIAL ACTION, JPIC & OUTREACH MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVE
FAITH FORMATION & WORSHIP
COMMUNICATION & PARISH LIFE REPRESENTATIVES
SPECIAL EVENTS, STEWARSHIP & LOVE IN ACTION
BUILDING AND ENVIRONMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Each of these committees are assigned a role in the Principles of the Family of Parishes.
(See the attached.

Council members will work closely with the Staff persons designate to these principles.

Meeting agenda will generically be based on reports from these committees.

Guiding Rules drawn from *Called to be Church: A Guide for Parish Pastoral Councils* the 1998 Archdiocesan guide.

This guide will be helping us as Family of Parishes Council to support the Parishes within the Family.

COMMUNICATION & PARISH LIFE REPRESENTATIVES

- Shall coordinate with Parish Office staff in updating our web page making it current with the proper materials and information.
- Shall coordinate with the Parish life liaison and other societies in the Parish to enter events and information about them.
- Shall advise the office staff about the media in view of promoting the parish and the ministries thereby attracting people to worship with us.
- Designing programs to bring people around to communicate the authentic information about Beacons of Light within the Family NE#8 Parishes.
- Shall promote ongoing communication between organizations in the parish
- Shall promote the parish in and outside the parish.
- Shall deepen among the parishioners of all ages and interest in groups, the sense of Christian community.
- Shall familiarize themselves with the organizations in the parish and their activities.
- Shall work with the office personnel to update the calendar of events.
- Shall form and coordinate with the transportation commission for the efficient transport of parishioners who need transportation for mass/services.

Beacons' Communication

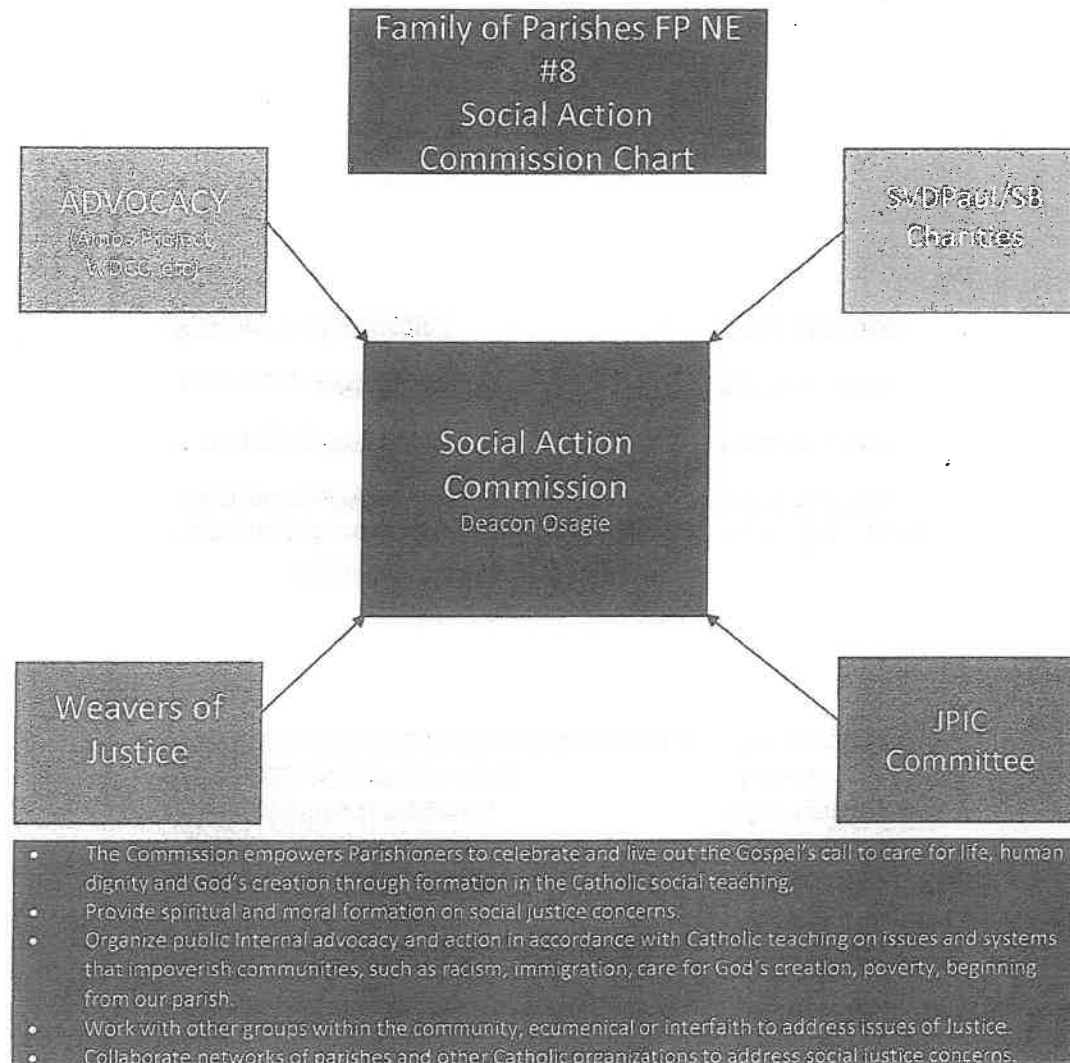
Faith Formation & Worship

- Shall, with the evangelization commission, coordinate programs that will uplift the spiritual growth of parishioners
- Shall work with Missions & worship in welcoming new members and involve in recruiting.
- Shall work together with the commission in promoting our liturgy and making our liturgies more welcoming.
- Shall promote education both secular and Religion in the parish and school
- Shall coordinate with the coordinators about all Religious Education and Evangelization programs.
- Shall correspond with parish Elementary School, Education Commission Chairperson Principal, ensuring Catholic presence in our school.
- Shall correspond and give feedback from and to all groups in charge of formation of the faithful at all levels. Namely: First Communion, Confirmation class, Sunday School, Adult Faith Formation class, Bible Study Group and RCIA classes.
- Shall organize mission awareness programs and shall together with the evangelization representative promote vocations in the parish.

Beacons' Principal Roles: Liturgy & Eucharist - Staff Contact Deacon Ken Stewart

SPECIAL EVENTS, STEWARSHIP & LOVE IN ACTION

- Shall Coordinate with the Planners of Fish Fry/Rummage sales
- Shall coordinate with the Women and Men's group and be more creative in initiating fundraising and social events which will bring people together.
- Shall work hand in hand with the Parish Life persons. *Beacons of Light Principle Role: Stewardship & Love in Action. Staff Contact Deacon Osagie Victor Obasuyi.*



Staff Principle Leadership Contacts FP#8

Natinka A. Siwecki

nsiwecki@ourladyofgracedayton.org Communication (Access Person)

Fr. Benoit Mukamba, C.S.Sp.,

benoit92@ourladyofgracedayton.org

Evangelization

Deacon Osagie Victor Obasuyi

vobasuyi@yahoo.com

Stewardship & Love in Action

Deacon Ken Stewart

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Eucharist & Church

Janice Kwofie/

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Administration

Fran Delgado

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Administration

Martha Philips

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Church

Wanda Hollinger

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Communications

MISSION & VISION TEAM

Wanda Hollinger

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BEACONS of LIGHT

PASTORAL PLANNING PATHWAY

pathway.catholicaoc.org

MILESTONES

PRINCIPLE

PHASE 1 LEADERSHIP

PHASE 2 VISION

PHASE 3 CULTURE

PHASE 4 PLANNING

PHASE 5 MISSION



EUCCHARIST

Hire or promote from within a Director of Worship who will be appointed to the Family Leadership Team.

Create a vision for a Eucharist-centered parish, form a Family Worship Commission and Family Worship Dept of staff.

Celebrate the liturgical culture of each parish and begin establishing a Family liturgical culture.

Plan resources needed to fulfill vision of a Eucharist-centered Family of Parishes.

Implement the plan to become a Eucharist-centered parish.



CHURCH

Begin building a faith community through common prayer, social time among parishioners, and gatherings of leaders.

Increase Family prayer and discernment opportunities focused on a shared future.

Form Family culture by reverencing the history and heritage of each parish while establishing a renewed faith community.

Provide opportunities for parishioners to participate in the pastoral planning process.

Celebrate milestones and mark significant moments as the Family comes together as a faith community.



LEADERSHIP

Form a unified Family Pastoral Council, Family Leadership Team, and staff, each rooted in prayer, and supported by healthy teamwork.

Leaders discern and create the vision for the Family.

Leaders evaluate and align ministries and practices with the Family vision.

Create a plan for becoming a canonical parish that is unified in vision and mission.

Implement the plan to foster parish vitality.



STEWARDSHIP

The pastor and staff participate in stewardship formation. Identify a staff "point person" and form a parishioner-based Stewardship Core Team.

Offer opportunities for stewardship formation for parish leaders and create a Family vision statement for stewardship.

Focus on welcoming, hospitality, and parishioner engagement.

Create an annual stewardship renewal process; focus on showing gratitude for parishioner involvement; produce an annual stewardship report.

Assess progress toward stewardship as a way of life within the Family; evaluate, adjust, implement...repeat.



EVANGELIZATION

Hire or promote from within a Director of Evangelization who will be appointed to the Family Leadership Team.

Form an Evangelization Team; establish personal and team prayer and formation commitments and practice healthy teamwork.

The Evangelization Team participates in missionary discipleship formation to assist in future planning.

The Evangelization Team will create an evangelization plan and will discern, form, and equip parish lay evangelists for every area of evangelization.

Implement the Evangelization plan, mentor leaders, evaluate and discern the fruits of evangelization efforts, and plan for continued growth.



LOVE IN ACTION

Build a parishioner-based Love In Action Transitional Team; get to know each other; and understand what activities are already being done.

Solidify leadership for the Love in Action Parish Family Core Team and create a local vision.

Define campus locations for ministries — both individual ministries and combined ministries — and celebrate the diverse backgrounds of all parishioners.

Create a plan around the U.S. bishops' strategy for organizing respect life and social action ministries; and involve parishioners from diverse backgrounds in parish life.

Implement the Love in Action plan. Integrate Catholic Social Teaching into faith formation; and include people of all backgrounds in parish life.

NE-8 Family of Parishes Joint Parish Council Meeting
St. Augustine Church Hall
6:00 PM Monday September 19, 2022

Parish Council Members in attendance from:

Our Lady of Grace – Dayton (Corpus Christi Church + Our Lady of Mercy Church)
Queen of Martyrs - Dayton
St. Augustine - Germantown
St. Benedict – Dayton

Members Present: Fran Delegato, Sylvia Hess, Theresa Wells, Doris Schwieterman, Martha Wolfe, Bernice Parker, Shirley Brewer, Marvin Ingram, Judith Baker, Charlotte Minneli, Randall Klotz, Marie Klotz, Cindy Currell, Donna O'Neill, Joan Means, Sandi Prikkel, Donald Hoog, Joe DeVillez, Pat Finch, Ed Wilson, Tink Siwecki, Robin Cameron, Ken Brewer, Ken Stewart, Pat Gill, Osagie Victor Obasuyi

Meeting opened with a prayer and a meal

History of St. Augustine Church Germantown, Ohio was presented by several St. Augustine members.

Beacons of Light Update: *(please see the handout-attached)*

Fr. Francis led us in the Beacons of Light prayer with a few minutes of silence and reflection on the Gospel of Mark reading.

- The AOC is helping point us in the direction of faith to help our sick parishes.
- At this point in time many parishes are just “maintaining.”
- Beacons of Light timeline has been set by the AOC (*see highlighted sections of handout*).
- Each parish will share their resources with the NE-8 family.
- We have a small number of staff for the NE-8 parishes. Staff is important because they are paid to do their jobs. Volunteers are great but they can come and go as they want.
- After December the staff for NE-8 will be finalized.
- Number of parishioners is shrinking.
- Phase Zero has been completed and Phase One is ongoing.
- We will eventually go to one bulletin/bulletin company after the bulletin contracts at a couple of our parishes have been met.
- We will go to one web page after Fr. Francis chooses a name for our family.
- The newsletter will include input from all parishes and will be shared with all parishioners of NE-8 and may or may not receive a new name.
- The phone system for all parishes of NE-8 will be updated and connect all offices.
- We have up to 5 years to complete the Beacons of Light process. That doesn't mean that all the parishes in the AOC will go at the same pace.

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- See page 7 of the attached handout.

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- We will need multiple information outlets to let as many people as possible know what is going on in the parish.
- A sign-up sheet was passed around for members to sign up on the committees in their parish only.

Meeting ended with prayer

NE-8 Family of Parishes Committee Sign-up

Marvin Ingram (SB):

- Social Action Committee
- Special Events & Stewardship Committee
- Building & Environment

Judith Baker (SB):

- Special Events & Stewardship
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Theresa Wells (QM): Stewardship & Love in Action

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Natinka Siwecki (OLOG): Building, Environment, Worship, Liturgy, Bereavement, Server/Lector/Eucharistic minister scheduling, RCIA, etc.

NE-8 Family of Parishes Joint Parish Council Meeting
St. Augustine Church Hall
6:00 PM Monday September 19, 2022

Parish Council Members in attendance from:

Our Lady of Grace – Dayton (Corpus Christi Church + Our Lady of Mercy Church)
Queen of Martyrs - Dayton
St. Augustine - Germantown
St. Benedict – Dayton

Members Present: Fran Delegato, Sylvia Hess, Theresa Wells, Doris Schwieterman, Martha Wolfe, Bernice Parker, Shirley Brewer, Marvin Ingram, Judith Baker, Charlotte Minneli, Randall Klotz, Marie Klotz, Cindy Currell, Donna O’Neill, Joan Means, Sandi Prikkel, Donald Hoog, Joe DeVillez, Pat Finch, Ed Wilson, Tink Siwecki, Robin Cameron, Ken Brewer, Ken Stewart, Pat Gill, Osagie Victor Obasuyi

Meeting opened with a prayer and a meal

History of St. Augustine Church Germantown, Ohio was presented by several St. Augustine members.

Beacons of Light Update: *(please see the handout-attached)*

Fr. Francis led us in the Beacons of Light prayer with a few minutes of silence and reflection on the Gospel of Mark reading.

- The AOC is helping point us in the direction of faith to help our sick parishes.
- At this point in time many parishes are just “maintaining.”
- Beacons of Light timeline for FP NE #8 *(see highlighted sections of handout)*.
- Each parish will share their resources with the rest of the parishes in NE-8 family.
- We have a small number of staff for the NE-8 parishes. Staffing arrangements is ongoing.
- Number of parishioners is shrinking. Need to work on getting folks on the pews
- Phase Zero has been completed and Phase One is ongoing.
- We will eventually go to one bulletin/bulletin company after the bulletin contracts at a couple of our parishes have been met.
- We will go to one web page after choosing a name. This is up in the air and when we are ready. Some parishes have chosen a name.
- The newsletter will include input from all parishes and will be shared with all parishioners of NE-8 and may or may not receive a new name.
- The phone system for all parishes of NE-8 will be updated and connect all offices.
- We have up to 5 years to complete the Beacons of Light process. That doesn’t mean that all the parishes in the AOC will go at the same pace, It will depend on each place.

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NE-8 Joint Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday October 18, 2022

St. Benedict the Moor

Members Present: Fr. Francis Tandoh, Ed Wilson, Pat Finch, Bill Danzig, Fran Delegato, Tink Siwecki, Judie Baker, Bernice Parker, Sandy Prikkel, Leona Marmolejo, Pat Gill, Ronald McDonald, Joan Means, Donna O'Neill, Cindy Currell, Janice Kwofie, Doris Schwieterman, Martha Wolfe, Roland Winburn, Mary Phillips Marvin Ingram, Joe DeVillez, Robin Cameron

Dinner

Opening Prayer:

Opening Reflections:

- Fr. Francis explained the process for the Committee Sign up.
- Six Committees each at: Our Lady of Grace, Queen of Martyrs, St. Augustine and St. Benedict.
- The reports for these committees will be given at the parish council meetings
- The 16 reports will eventually go to only 4 reports.
- The numbers of representatives will be reduced and eventually all in our family will know who our representatives are.
- We will go to them to have matters taken to the main group.
- The individual groups will give information to the 4 reps.
- The information and reports will go to Fr. Francis for his decision.
- Around January 2023 this will take effect.

Minutes from previous meeting: 2022 change to 2023 Meeting days reversed.

Phase One: Six Principles and Parameters:

- Fr. Francis gave an overview of the *Beacons of Light Leadership* and the steps we need to take as leaders of our parish family.
- Everyone is now able to log into the Beacons Leadership area.

Church Overview of the Pathway:

We have formed a Parish Life and Communications team

Individual Parish Council Committee Discussions:

- Each person should consider who they would like on the final parish Council.

Our Lady of Grace Parish Council Report:

Bill Danzig, Joan Means, Ed Wilson, Leona Marmolejo, Donna O'Neill, Pat Finch, Pat Gill, Cindy Currell, Tink Siwecki

Our Lady of Mercy Property:

- Future of Our Lady of Mercy property discussed
- Fr. Francis at the meeting added option 6 "Do nothing."
- Another parish wide meeting will be held to have a vote.
- Finance started the process then took it to Parish Council then to the people.
- The next meeting is TBD by Fr. Francis.
- OLOG Parish Council recommended we have a closed ballot/paper and not consensus.
- All options should be on the ballot for vote.
- We want a firm vote with a closed ballot.
- A parish mailing should be sent out to reach all our parish families so they have all the pertinent information regarding the suggested plans for the Our Lady of Mercy property.
- Fr. Tandoth will set a date for the next meeting.
- Fr. Francis feels that the people will choose to sell everything but keep the church and we need to convince people to come to church.

Worship Christmas concert has been cancelled.

Queen of Martyrs Parish Council Report:

Jingle Bell's Bazaar November 5, 2022. Cabbage rolls will be served.
40 Hours Adoration: November 12 and 13th

- Prayers
 - Singing
 - Quiet time
 - Time slot sign up
- Eucharistic adoration
- November 7th
 - First Monday of every month 9:00 a.m. till noon
- Patriotic Rosary

Thanksgiving Dinner

- After 10:00 a.m. Mass on Thanksgiving Day.
- Bread given out for every family
- Each parish should let QM know how many familys for the bread order.

St. Augustine Parish Council Report:

The past couple of years there had been significant financial projects updating the facilities.

- Parking lot
- Canopy project
- Exterior painted
- Carpet for the church
- Attendance and donations have been lower which makes paying for the updates a stretch.
- Older parishioners no youth.
- Only a small group of people who volunteer in key roles.
- The same few people help out week after week; it's a challenge.
- People are very busy.
- They are just trying to figure out how to advance through the process of beacons.

Saint Benedict the Moor Parish Council Report:

- Mission Sunday October 23, 2022 at 3:00 PM
- Autumn Dance Nov 19, 2022
- Nov 30, 2022 coffee and donuts after Mass.
- St. Benedict School has accepted Modular Space additions.

Fr. Francis handed out ballots to everyone to write names of those we would like to recommend as a member (only recommend people who are currently on the parish councils) of the new Family Parish Council.

History of St. Benedict video

No meeting will be held in November.

December: A will be held for all commissions.

- Date: TBD
- Saint Benedict the Moor will plan the food.
- Leaders of each current parish council will give ideas on how to spend the evening together.
- Contact Roland Winburn via email with your ideas and suggestions.

The first **Evangelization Meeting** will be led by Fr. Benoit with a speaker from the AOC on Wednesday October 19, 2022 at 6:30 pm at Queen of Martyrs.

Meeting ended with prayer

NS

NE-8 Family of Parishes Joint Worship Commission Meeting

St. Augustine

6:00 PM Thursday November 8, 2022

Members Present: Fran Delegato, Rita Ellicott, Annette Young, Teresa Huntly, Randall Klotz, Marie Klotz, Mary Hickie, Susie Stewart, Ken Stewart, Fr. Francis, Tink

Meeting opened with Prayer

Food was shared

Minutes accepted as presented

Pastor's Comments: Fr. Francis asked that reminders be sent out for any future meetings. He stated that the joint worship meetings have gone very well and that he appreciates the wonderful job and commitment of each of the members. We shouldn't let distance be a factor of attending meetings. We should visit each site to shape our mind and outlook. Our community should visit back and forth between churches. Fr. Francis and the other deacons will meet with Deacon Ken to plan the Advent Day of Reflection for the NE-8 Family of Parishes on December 3rs. A flyer will be put into the bulletins for the Advent reflection day.

Upcoming Mass and Activity Dates:

- Evangelization Meeting Thursday **November 17, 2022** Our Lady of Mercy Founder's Hall 6:30PM.
- Saturday **December 3, 2022** Advent Day of Reflection
- Thursday **December 8, 2022** Immaculate Conception Schedule: 8:30 AM Queen of Martyrs, School Mass 9:30 AM St. Benedict and 7:00 PM St. Augustine
- Dinner for joint committee members (finance, worship, parish council) at St. Benedicts on Saturday **December 17, 2022**, 6:00-9:00 encourage people to attend Mass at 4:30 SB.
- Concert Saturday **December 18, 2022** at Queen of Martyrs at 4:00 PM.

Leadership Team: How will we work together, in the future, for a smooth transition? Fr. Francis has already earmarked certain people for his leadership/transition team. He will announce their names later. Fr. Francis explained that some churches in the northern part of the Diocese and in Cincinnati have already begun to close church sites. Some have already assembled their staff and office sites have been determined. Things are going to change but they will change for the better. We will give and take from each parish (share) and work towards the end goal of the Beacons of Light.

Joint Finance: They recently met and had a devotion/Benediction with only a few business points being discussed-future expenses of our five churches. They had dinner together.

We will decide in January 2023 what to do for **Lent** (Ash Wednesday February 22, 2023 First Sunday of Lent February 26, 2023).

Queen of Martyrs and St. Benedict are the only sites that have an active **RCIA** at this time

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Northeast 8 Family of Parishes

Christmas Eve Saturday, Dec. 24, 2022

St. Augustine 4:00 p.m.

Corpus Christi 4:30 p.m.

St. Benedict 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Day Sunday, Dec. 25, 2022

Our Lady of Mercy 9:00 a.m.

St. Benedict 10:30 a.m.

Queen of Martyrs 11:00 a.m.

Next year we will work towards having Christmas Mass at only one of our church sites. Fr. Francis says we need to break away from "Regions" and move towards being "One" church.

Meeting ended with prayer.