



# BEACONS of LIGHT

*Pastoral Planning for Our Third Century*

“

*The parish is a beacon that radiates the light of the faith and thus responds to the deepest and truest desires of the human heart, giving meaning and hope to the lives of individuals and families.*

— POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT XVI, DECEMBER 10, 2006



ARCHDIOCESE OF  
CINCINNATI



*“Radiate Christ. These two words summarize God the Father’s hope for humanity on this earth. The words contain both a reality and a mission: the reality of the person of Jesus Christ as the Savior of all people and the mission of each Christian to participate in the Son’s redemption of the world.”*

— ARCHBISHOP DENNIS M. SCHNURR, *RADIATE CHRIST*

## BECOMING PEOPLE WHO RADIATE CHRIST

If each of us is called to radiate Christ, we must be rooted in a strong, vital parish that forms us as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ at every stage of life and faith.

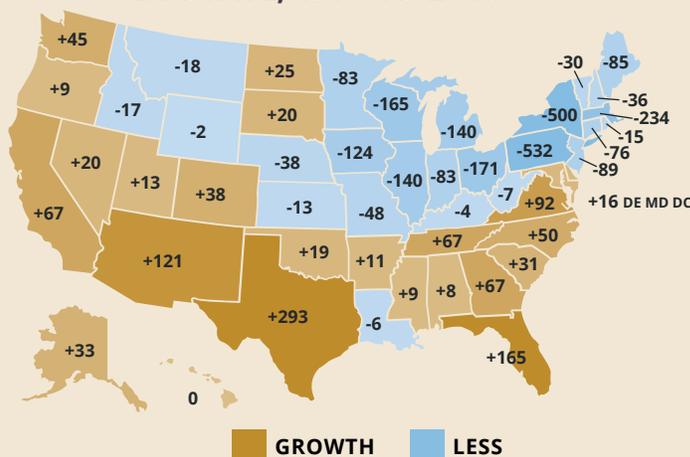
### THE CURRENT REALITY

There are many factors which, when taken together, diminish parish life.

- **Religious practice is declining nationwide.** Fewer people are actively engaged in their faith. In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the average Sunday Mass is about one-third full.
- **Demographics in the Midwest are changing.** Live births are declining and the population is moving south.
- **In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, our resources are spread too thin.** Our current infrastructure and schedules were built for a different era. Out of necessity, priests are appointed as pastors sooner than is optimal.

As a result, most of our church buildings are grossly underutilized, our priests are stretched to the limit, and many of our parishes are not the vibrant communities of faith Catholics need them to be.

### NET CHANGE IN CATHOLIC PARISHES BY STATE, 1971 TO 2018



Source: CARA, <https://nineteensixty-four.blogspot.com/2019/02/where-parish-doors-have-closed-and.html>

### DIOCESAN PRIESTS AVAILABLE FOR ASSIGNMENT



# ANNOUNCING BEACONS *of* LIGHT

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.

Through Beacons of Light, 50-60 parish groupings will become Families of Parishes throughout the cities and towns, suburbs and rural communities of the 19 counties in western and southwestern Ohio. Pastors and parish leaders will then plan for the future of their Family of Parishes.

## OUR VISION:

### PARISHES THAT ARE BEACONS *of* LIGHT

In Families of Parishes, we will grow closer to God, follow Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and radiate Christ throughout our lives. Rooted in prayer, each Family of Parishes will be guided by six principles:

*“The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.”*

— POPE FRANCIS,  
EVANGELII GAUDIUM



#### EUCHARIST

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. Accordingly, the Mass 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.



#### 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.



#### 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.



#### 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.



#### EVANGELIZATION

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



#### 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.

## TIMELINE

# KEY STEPS ON THE ROAD FROM MAINTENANCE TO MISSION

### 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.



## JUST IMAGINE ...

People united on a journey of missionary discipleship. Full churches. Joyous liturgies. Priests who have the time to be present and attend to the needs of their people.

*Parishes that are alive in faith, filled with vitality,  
ready to form people to radiate Christ.*



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