Factors to consider:
• Participation in the Catholic Faith
• Priest Demographics
• Collaborative Models
• Moving from Parish Life “Viability” to “Vitality”
• Evidence of Engagement: Discipleship, Evangelization and Stewardship
• Vision 20/20
• Need for Vocations
Question:

- Does the shortage of priests drive the overall decline in participation in the Catholic faith?

- Or is it the other way around?
Vocations

- Vocations are in decline not only for priestly life, but also to the diaconate, religious life and to the laity.
- Many cultural factors explain the downturn in discipleship, decreased Mass attendance, sacramental participation, etc.
- This is the reason for Vision 20/20: To strengthen discipleship, families and parishes – make them more vibrant and alive.
- This naturally will lead to more vocations and more priests.

- In summary: We need to adjust the number of parishes, not only because of the shortage of priests, but because of the shortage of practicing Catholics.
The way out of this...

- Take our faith more seriously.
- Become more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Work to make your parish stronger and holier.
- Pray and work for vocations
  - Invite young people to consider the vocation that God is calling them to.
• Of 55 active diocesan priests, 12 will be 70 years or older by next year (July 1, 2021).
• Of the other 43 active priests, 21 (almost half) will turn 70 years or older in the next ten years (2030).
• Therefore, 33 of our 55 currently active priests will be 70 years or older by 2030.
Therefore, within ten years (2030), only 22 of our current 55 active priests (40%) will be under the age of 70.

By 2030, if we ordain one priest per year, we would ordain 10 new priests.

• This adds up to only 32 active priests to serve 76 parishes in 22 counties.
• Of those 32 priests:
  • Three might be serving in non-parish ministries.
  • Three might be considered “newly ordained”.
  • That would add up to 26 priests to work in 76 parishes – about 3 parishes per pastor – if we keep that same number of parishes.
• Of those 26 priests, not all would be willing and able to serve as a pastor.
• Imagine if we had 22 pastors for 22 counties.
• Consider that today, we now have:
  • 12 parishes in Scott County/ with 9 pastors.
  • 9 parishes in Johnson County/ 7 pastors.
  • 8 parishes in Clinton County/ 4 pastors.
Assuming these changes, and if we have about 22 pastors for 22 counties in 2030...

• **A Likely Scenario:**
  
  - Each year, the Diocese will **cluster** or **merge** parishes in 2-3 places per year.
  
  - This does **not** automatically mean closing church buildings.

At this pace...
Clustering or Merging parishes

• **Cluster** = Sharing a pastor, staff, and other resources, among 2 or more parishes.

• **Merger** = Bringing 2 or more parishes into one entity, with one parish council, one finance council and one budget.
Vocations to priestly life, the diaconate, religious life and to the laity are inspired by:

– More engagement on a person-to-person level.
– More personal invitations - by all the baptized.
– Creating a parish culture based in family engagement.
– Creating Christian community rooted in Christ and in family relationship.
Bishop Zinkula’s Perspective: Grow the Church!

Focus on discipleship, evangelization and stewardship, which will foster the mission of the Church - Vision 20/20 -

- The question becomes: How can parish restructuring help to grow the church?
  - What are some of the advantages of parish clustering and merging?
Team Models of Ministry:
What a Single Parish or Cluster Might Look Like in 2030

Pastor + a “parochial vicar” or “senior priest”
Bustling church community with useful buildings
Deacon(s) + business manager + full parish staff
focus on discipleship, evangelization and stewardship
One parish council, One finance council

“As you get bigger, figure out ways to get smaller”
Emmaus Initiative

• One way to build these personal relationships.

• And deepen your relationship to Christ.

In this time of distance, would you take a closer walk with Jesus? Reach out. Form a small group. Invest in your faith and a friendship.

SMALL GROUPS FORMING NOW
How we usually measure “Growth”: Quantitative “Measures” of Parish Life

- Mass Attendance
- Sacramental Records
- Finances
- Parish Self-Assessments
- Capacity and Maintenance of Buildings
Another Measure of Growth:
Areas of Ministry

- Six / Nine Areas:
  - Liturgy
  - Faith Formation
  - Social Action
  - Finance
  - Church Life
  - Evangelization
  - Stewardship
  - Vocations
  - Family Life
Qualitative Measures of Parish Life:

Missionary Discipleship:
The purpose of all parish activity

RCIA Paragraph 75
The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

1. Catechesis
2. Community engagement
3. Prayer and liturgy
4. Participation in the Mission of the Church
   • Evangelization
   • Social action
Outward Signs of Missionary Discipleship

Liveliness

- Joyful celebration of the Eucharist
- Newer, younger, diverse members of the community
- Authentic hospitality
- Lay engagement
- Shared leadership
- Grateful stewardship
- Hearts for social justice
- **Stories of Outreach:**
  - Evangelization
  - Social action
If missionary discipleship is the goal, how do we structure parishes to enhance discipleship?

- **In-Reach**
  - Lay involvement
  - Faith Sharing Groups
  - Lay Staff
  - Business Managers
  - PLCs / Deacons

- **Outreach**
  - The poor
  - The lonely
  - The secular culture
Go, and Make Disciples

Pray and Invite for Vocations
Thank YOU!

Ebener@davenportdiocese.org