

Demographics. Priests. Finances.

To summarize Beacons of Light, the planning process for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, given everything that could be said about the need to honestly and critically look at how the local church of Cincinnati defines itself, these are three primary areas that every area of our church's life is concerned about right now.

As I have written before, the parish is what we typically think about when we consider religious practice. "Parish" is still important, and always will be. For our planning process, it is going to be much more helpful to first consider "church," and then parish. In other words, whatever form or place our parishes take in the future, the church will always provide the Sacraments, will always be the place where we are most visibly the Body of Christ, the place where our significant life-changing events are recognized and celebrated in God's grace. Whatever changes take place, we will always have this life as the People of God.



It is important to understand that at our so-called high point in our history as an archdiocese in 1971, we had 417 active diocesan priests and 400+ active religious priests assigned to various ministries. Today, we are approaching 125 active diocesan priests and far, far fewer religious priests who are available for ministry in our 210 parishes. Over the two-hundred-year history of our archdiocese we have established 306 parishes in the nineteen counties of southwestern Ohio that comprise the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

With 210 remaining, one can easily calculate that we have, for many different reasons, already closed 96 parishes. Mostly, this has happened due to shifting populations. Catholics move from the farm to the city, they move from the urban areas to the suburban areas, they move to where the jobs are, and they move to where the weather is warmer just like everyone else, and they leave their parishes behind. At the end of this month, all the priests will be gathering to learn of the proposed Families of Parishes — those groups of parishes that are joining together to become one parish in the next few years.

These groupings will go into effect in July 2022. In the spring, we will learn which pastors and parochial vicars will be assigned to the new Families of Parishes. During the month of October, parishioners will have the opportunity for input to the archdiocese... more on that in a couple of weeks.

***No matter what changes take place we will always have the sacraments.
Being connected with Christ through each other and by means of the
sacraments, we experience our primary identity.***