



# *Beacons of Light* prayer

Mary, Mother of the Church and our Mother,  
present our prayer of thanksgiving to your Son.

Beg from Him the graces we need to be faithful disciples  
who follow Him with enthusiasm and joy.

May our witness to the love of God bear fruit  
in our archdiocese, parishes, homes and hearts.

Teach us to be God's joyful witnesses,  
to radiate Christ in all we do,  
so that people might know, love and follow your Son  
through this life and into the next.

Amen.

# History





# What is *Beacons of Light*?

*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.



# What is a Family of Parishes?

A Family of Parishes is a grouping of parishes led by a common pastor and characterized by collaboration and shared resources. A parochial vicar (or multiple parochial vicars) or retired priest may also serve a Family of Parishes.



# Why is *Beacons of Light* happening now?

- Our parishes need to be vibrant communities of faith in order that we might fully grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Declining religious practice in the U.S. points to the need for strong parishes that lead people to living and growing their faith in Jesus.
- We need to better understand the impact of demographic changes in many areas within our archdiocese.
- We will have fewer priests who can serve as pastors in the future.



# How did the Archdiocese form Families of Parishes?

By gathering and analyzing demographic, sacramental, financial and school data, while also considering the pastoral situations that affect life in our communities, we will be forming Families of Parishes in the cities, towns, rural communities and suburbs throughout our 19 counties in Southwest Ohio.



# How is *Beacons of Light* different?

Each previous process has addressed the situations of parishes and the archdiocese at the time in which they took place. The goal of *Beacons of Light* is for the new Families of Parishes to truly become faith communities that live and work together in mission and ministry – not simply associate parishes with a common pastor.



# Will parishes close as a result?

As the Families of Parishes grow stronger together, we will prayerfully decide how to ensure vital pastoral life. Every Family of Parishes will initially discern Sunday Mass schedules and locations, bring parish staff and pastoral councils together and develop a plan for parish programs and activities with the long-term goal of becoming one parish led by a single pastor. The pace at which parishes join together within the families will be variable and determined by the readiness of the parishes to move forward.





# Archdiocese of Cincinnati

- § 212 Parishes & 12 Deaneries
- § ~160k Registered Catholic Households & ~400k Registered Individuals
- § 111 Catholic Schools Grades K-12
- § 24 Catholic High Schools
- § 87 K-8 Catholic Schools
  - 67 Parish Schools, 10 Consolidated Schools, 2 Archdiocesan Schools, 7 Privately Owned Schools, 1 Board Owned School



# Registered Catholic Households

- § Between 2010 & 2020 total registered Catholic households declined 6.0% from 168,654 to 158,726
- § Since 2010 the percentage of Catholics vs. overall population in the Archdiocese declined from 14.2% to 11.9%



# Historical and Current Mass attendance

## § Between 2010 & 2019

- Mass attendance declined 22.5% from 168,694 to 130,709
- Church Facility Utilization declined from 47.7% to 37.0%

## § Online Mass Attendance March–November 2020

- Parishes asked to report monthly online mass (where applicable) 'hits' between March and November 2020
- ~ 1/3 of parishes responded with data
- Online mass hits ranged from 28,779 to 96,162



# Historical Sacraments

- § Between 2010 & 2019 Sacraments declined -19.4% from 25,920 to 20,890
- Baptisms declined -19.0% from 5,922 to 4,795
  - First Communion declined -23.8% from 6,921 to 5,275
  - Confirmations declined -21.5% from 7,126 to 5,595
  - Weddings declined -27.9% from 1,954 to 1,409
  - Funerals declined -4.5% from 3,997 to 3,816



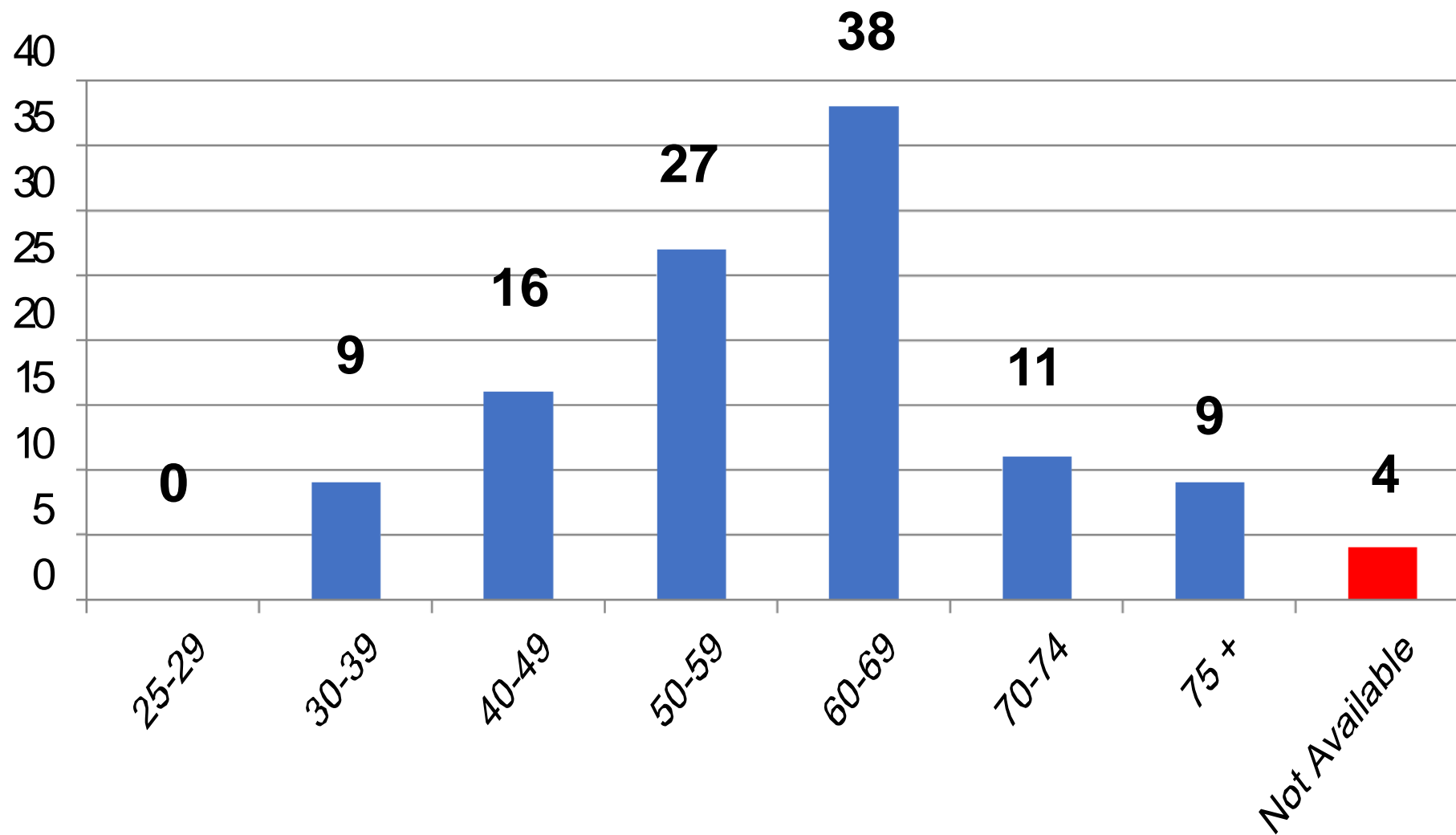
# Current priest statistics

- § There are 164 priests serving parishes in the Archdiocese:
  - 4 Externs/R-1 Visa Priests
  - 29 Religious Order Priests
  - 4 Non-active priests assigned to parishes
  - 127 Active Priests Archdiocesan Priests serving parishes
- § The age range of current priests is from 29 to 82 and the median age is 58
- § Currently 26 of 164 (15.9%) priests eligible to retire\*
- § Currently 10 of 164 (6.1%) priests mandatory to retire\*

\*Assume Age 70 eligible & Age 75 mandatory to retire



# Age ranges of current pastors serving parishes





# Historic Catholic School Enrollment trends

- § Since school-year 2010/2011:
  - K-12 enrollment declined -13.7% from 43,042 to 37,139
    - Grades K-5 enrollment declined -16.4% from 19,950 to 16,671
    - Grades 6-8 enrollment declined -16.8% from 10,353 to 8,609
    - Grades 9-12 enrollment declined -6.9% from 12,739 to 11,859
  
- § By school-year 2025/2026:
  - K-12 enrollment is projected to decline -5.1% from 37,179 to 35,228
    - Grades K-5 enrollment projected to decline -0.7% from 16,671 to 16,553
    - Grades 6-8 enrollment projected to decline -10.8% from 8,609 to 7,681
    - Grades 9-12 enrollment projected to decline -7.3% from 11,859 to 10,995







# The Why

- The number of available priests is increasingly declining due to aging and retirements.
- The number of priests cannot effectively serve the number of parishes (210) and pastoral regions now or in the future.
- The Archdiocese is dependent on priests over the age of 70 who are serving in full time parish ministry
- The needed change in design of parishes and schools is of major scale, not a minor adjustment or refinement.



# The Why (continued)

- The priests are calling for assessment and re-design of structure of parishes, schools and ministries.
- Many parishes are not adequately resourced to fully engage their parishioners in the sacramental, evangelization, and charitable mission of the gospel.
- The current Pastoral Plan sets out a Vision for what ought to be but does yet describe parish family/deanery structure and pastoral resources.



# The Why (continued)

- Most parishes appear to have financial stability and management of expenses.
- Deferred maintenance of parishes and schools is a concern but hard to quantify.
- Catholic school conditions and factors of sustainability vary greatly, with dependence on Ed Choice, size, location, and demographics of wealth and % Catholicity.



# The What

- Reorganize structure of parishes, deaneries, and Catholic school for sustainability and growth and approximately 50-60 parish families, resulting in a design that the Archdiocese will transition into as it builds anew.
- All Catholics will have access to sacraments, liturgy, and formation.
- Parishes are adequately resourced to fully engage their parishioners in the sacramental, evangelization, and charitable mission of the gospel.
- Maximize resources focused on mission and minimize resources focused on maintenance.



# The What (continued)

- Assume that not all priests will be pastors, and that newly ordained will have additional years as Associate Pastors.
- The role of the dean, as well as the assignment of priests to the Archdiocese and Seminary, will be reviewed and evaluated.
- In accordance with 2020 guidance from the Vatican, allow for a pastoral planning process and local decision-making for the changing of the status of existing parishes and churches.



# Next steps

- Give feedback at [www.beaconsaoc.org](http://www.beaconsaoc.org) before October 20
- Next draft of Families will be available by the end of November/early December
- Decisions regarding the future of our Family and the best use of our shared resources will be decided by the leaders of our Family: priests, Parish Councils, Finance Councils, staffs and other leaders