



# OCTOBER COUNT

## 2022 RESULTS

*“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.”*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2022 October Counts for Sunday Masses in the churches, chapels, and oratories of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati saw an encouraging uptick after the dramatic impact of Covid, **up 6% from 2021**. Sadly, we are still down over 25,000 people at Mass each weekend (-19%) from our 2019 pre-Covid numbers.

Multiple October Count statistics have shown favorable correlations with **population density** characteristics as key factors for improving utilization and resilience of our church communities to negative changes. Interestingly, those churches that were closer to 2 Masses a weekend tended to have the higher utilization and small number of Mass count reductions. Population density should not be directly associated with large churches or Mass attendance. Rather the

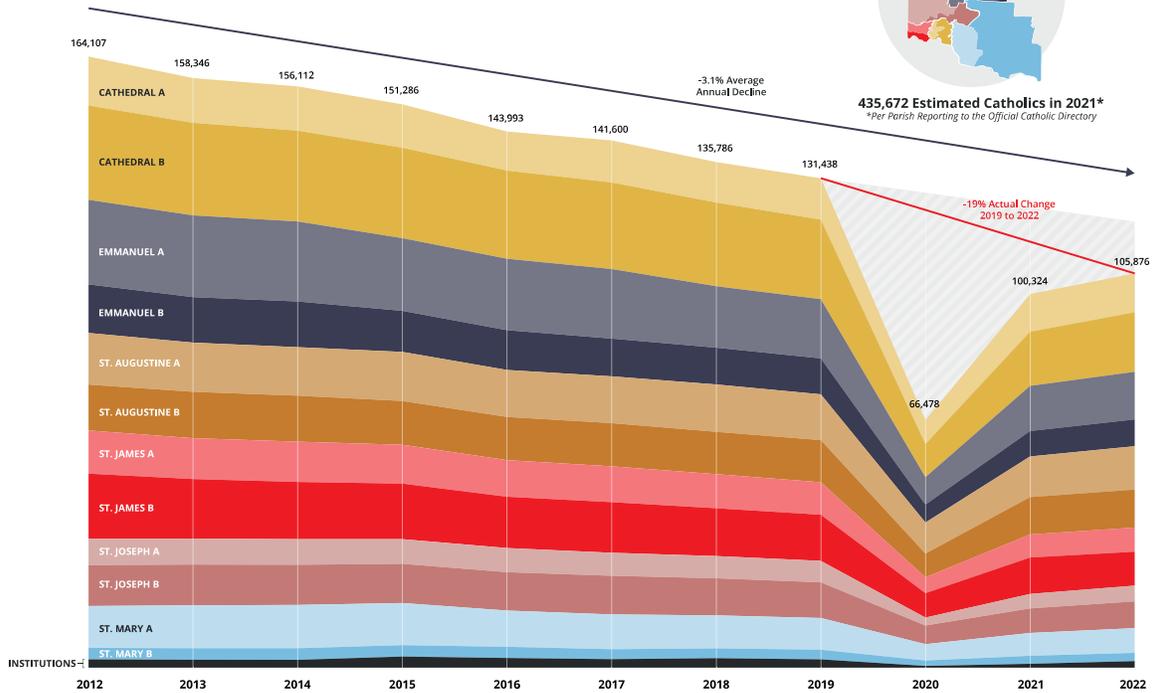
size of the church or total number of parishioners doesn't seem as important to resilience and higher utilization as the density within a space and reduction of opportunities for separation between the Mass time communities.

Ideas that arise from considering population density could fall both in the number of Masses a church has and the relationship to when the Masses are held so there are opportunities for Mass time community interaction. Modifications in both areas are likely required but the presence of multiple churches within a Family will continue to create challenges and pressure against these solutions. Within this situation the creation of new ways (or resurrecting old ways) to regularly gather and be present to each other should be encouraged.

### ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI OCTOBER COUNTS

	Number of Churches	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Annual Change	Percent Change	
● CATHEDRAL A SOUTH A	26	13,134	12,030	11,891	11,663	10,489	11,288	10,879	11,116	6,450	10,127	10,428	301	3%	
● CATHEDRAL B SOUTH B	25	25,324	24,857	24,402	24,280	23,689	23,262	22,457	21,365	8,884	14,520	15,991	1,471	10%	
● EMMANUEL A NORTHEAST A	25	22,704	21,935	21,469	19,525	19,166	18,661	16,504	15,908	7,330	12,115	12,784	669	6%	
● EMMANUEL B NORTHEAST B	24	13,055	12,232	12,280	11,016	10,687	10,145	9,881	9,643	4,837	6,847	7,197	350	5%	
● ST. AUGUSTINE A NORTHWEST A	25	13,864	13,200	13,034	13,172	12,634	12,572	12,722	12,305	8,344	10,902	11,657	755	7%	
● ST. AUGUSTINE B NORTHWEST B	20	12,330	12,473	12,346	11,765	11,578	11,596	11,370	11,293	6,366	10,016	10,198	182	2%	
● ST. JAMES A SOUTHWEST A	10	11,592	10,953	10,824	10,425	9,846	9,631	9,148	8,728	4,245	6,216	6,477	261	4%	
● ST. JAMES B SOUTHWEST B	17	17,511	16,001	15,346	14,931	13,785	13,596	12,842	12,408	6,589	9,774	9,122	-652	-7%	
● ST. JOSEPH A CENTRAL A	12	7,069	6,977	6,876	6,598	6,489	6,164	5,974	5,766	2,124	3,896	4,228	332	9%	
● ST. JOSEPH B CENTRAL B	6	10,960	10,941	10,792	10,546	10,284	10,391	9,962	9,561	4,988	6,587	7,171	584	9%	
● ST. MARY A SOUTHEAST A	13	11,246	11,535	11,616	11,301	9,746	9,337	8,845	8,505	4,386	6,137	6,640	503	8%	
● ST. MARY B SOUTHEAST B	11	3,066	3,076	3,124	3,068	3,002	2,667	2,663	2,612	1,460	2,140	2,217	77	4%	
● INSTITUTIONS		2,252	2,136	2,112	2,996	2,598	2,290	2,539	2,228	475	1,047	1,766	719	69%	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>164,107</b>	<b>158,346</b>	<b>156,112</b>	<b>151,286</b>	<b>143,993</b>	<b>141,600</b>	<b>135,786</b>	<b>131,438</b>	<b>66,478</b>	<b>100,324</b>	<b>105,876</b>	<b>5,552</b>	<b>6%</b>		
Rolling Percent Change:		-3.5%	-1.4%	-3.1%	-4.8%	-1.7%	-4.1%	-3.2%	-49.4%	50.9%	5.5%				
													<b>Compared to 2019:</b>	<b>-25,562</b>	<b>-19%</b>

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI  
OCTOBER COUNTS



“The regular Mass schedule for a Family of Parishes may not assume more than two Masses per day per priest.”

PARAMETER

4

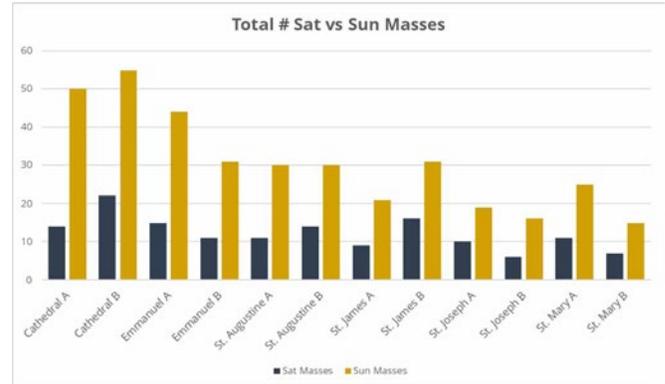
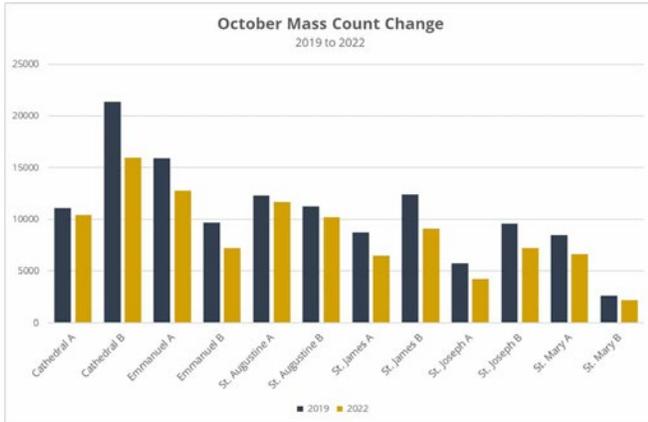
✦ DETAILS

Mass Counts

- Parish October counts (excluding institutions) increased from 99,277 to 104,110. (4,833 increase in 2022). Comparing 2019 pre-Covid numbers (129,210) to 2022 (104,110) we have lost 25,100 which is a 19% decline in Mass counts.
- 55 Masses (567 down to 512) were reduced between 2021 to 2022. (Notably 26 weekend Masses were eliminated between 2019 and 2021, likely due to Covid.) Of the current 512 Masses 146 or 29% are Saturday evening anticipatory Masses. Thus, we have a third of our parishioners regularly meeting on a separate day without the opportunity to interact with those coming on Sunday (not even in a greeting area, donut Sunday, or parking lot)
- Reduction in Masses had widely varying effects. Reduction or increase in Mass counts shouldn't be assumed. It is also important to recognize that more attention should be applied to appropriately managing Mass schedule reductions in smaller to mid-size churches. This may be because it is more directly impacting community social cohesion.
- 31 parishes who removed one or more Masses also saw a decline in Mass count (an average of 79 less parishioners). within this group **small to mid-size churches** saw the largest decreases because of Mass changes
- 24 parishes who removed one or more Masses saw an increase in Mass count (an average of 76 more parishioners). **Mid-size to large churches** where more often found in this group.
- Utilizations of less than 50% appear to be a key in determining the extent of any decline in Mass count. *This may minimize the effect of the number of Masses itself though*

the data seems to point to a sweet spot of 1-2 Masses in those churches that are the most stable in their counts. There appears to be a relationship between fewer Mass-

es and higher utilization both in number and those above 40% utilization. The solution of providing more Masses because we have more people is not showing success.



## Seating/Capacity Changes

- We had 43 churches report seating changes based on the request to review seating using a 27" measurement.
  - 37 churches reported a reduction, some significant, and 6 reported a small very small increase.
  - A significant impact to church utilization because of these changes was not seen. Reductions also didn't regularly lead to healthier utilization numbers. 60%

of those who updated their seating were below 50% utilization. Reduction in reported seating is not a factor in increasing population density since it is not directly adding more parishioners to a worship space.

- Parish leaders: if you haven't already clarified your accurate seating capacity using the 27" measurement, please do so and send in your updated capacity.

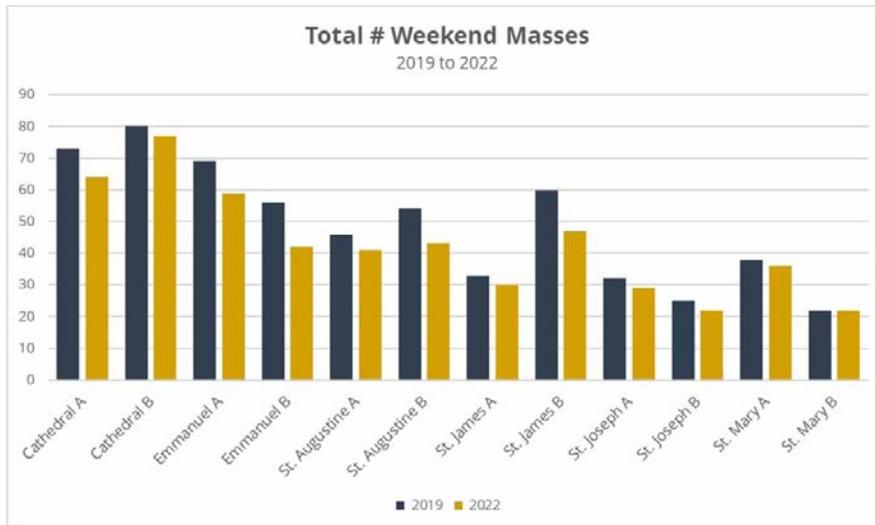
### PARAMETER

5

“A regularly scheduled Mass for the Sunday precept must have annual average attendance of at least 50% of the church capacity.”

## Utilization

- 152 of our 207 churches have a utilization percentage (Wknd Mass Count/Sum (#Masses \* Seating Capacity)) less than 50% even after reducing 55 Masses and reducing seating numbers of 43 churches. 82 of these 152 were below 30% utilization.
- When we look at our Families and average utilization across their parishes 49 Families or 86% of them are below 50% utilization. Our Northwest Families are the exception and generally see a 60% or better utilization of their church buildings. The community size and the number of Masses of these churches may provide insight to achieving the stabilizing effects of population density.
- We are seeing in smaller churches with a seating capacity of 100-250 a higher average utilization percentage of 62%. These churches also have a corresponding lower number of weekend Masses. Conversely, larger churches with high seating capacities have utilizations in the 20s or 30s. Oddly they also have more Masses at an average of 3-4. Small groups that have less opportunity to miss seeing each other and sit closer are succeeding more frequently. More room, more options, and more separation of groups has a correlation with lower utilizations.



**PARAMETER**

**6**

“The regular Mass schedule must provide the opportunity for priests to spiritually prepare for and be present to the community after Mass.”

**Church Size**

- 82 of our churches saw a reduction in average Mass count while only 29 saw an increase of 100 parishioners or more.
  - 44 who saw a decrease were small to medium churches with a 120-499 seating capacity
  - 38 who saw a decrease were medium to large churches with a 500+ seating capacity
- Those 29 seeing a 100+ increase did not have weekend Mass reductions and averaged 700 seats well within the mid-size category.
- No regular relationship can be seen in Mass count changes simply because of church size. Size should not be used as an indicator of future stability or growth.

With questions or concerns, or for assistance in further understanding the data from your own Family of Parishes, parish leaders should contact Rob Brock, Director of Strategic Planning, in the Center for Parish Vitality.