



Beacons of Light | Guiding Principles with Vision Points

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.

1. Eucharist: 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.

Vision Points:

- The Sunday Eucharist is the essential gathering of the parish community each week and is the “paradigm for other Eucharistic celebrations”; therefore life-giving, beautiful, and transformative celebration of Sunday Mass is critical.
- Sacramental celebrations and other parish and school liturgies are true encounters with Jesus Christ present in Word and under sacramental signs.
- Every Family of Parishes offers liturgical and sacramental formation “with zeal and patience”, deepening an appreciation of the sacred mysteries
- Attention to *ars celebrandi* is important: fidelity to texts and rubrics as well as a prayerful understanding of liturgical texts, feasts, and seasons kindles full, conscious, and active participation among the faithful.
- Priests, deacons, and lay liturgical ministers are well-trained and formed for leadership of communities at prayer and are “imbued with the spirit of the liturgy.”
- Churches, chapels, and other sacred buildings should be “truly worthy and beautiful, signs and symbols of heavenly realities”, the house of the Church and the house of God, “suitable for carrying out the sacred action and for ensuring the active participation of the faithful.” (GIRM, 288)
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is readily available within the Family of Parishes, with proper catechesis for all
- The cultural traditions of the members of the Family of Parishes are honored and celebrated, particularly on special feasts

2. 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.

Vision Points:

- The Archdiocese is organized in Families of Parishes which are gathered into deaneries.
- In communion with the pope, the bishop exercises leadership in the local Church.
- Deaneries enhance regional subsidiarity; explore cooperative ministries between Families of Parishes.
- As they become one Family, the culture and history of the parishes are acknowledged and honored, working together to create a new and vibrant culture for the Family of Parishes.
- A strong communications process is cultivated in and between the Family of Parishes.
- People come to understand the nature of the parish as the people within a given territory. With this, they will grow in understanding themselves as members of Christ's Body, the Church, more fully appreciating her mission and teaching. We are what we believe.

3. 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.

Vision Points:

- The Family of Parishes is led by a single pastor who is appointed by the archbishop.
- The Family moves toward becoming one parish led by one pastor.
- Deacons are part of the diocesan clergy and are appointed by the archbishop.
- All members of the Family of Parishes support and foster the health and well-being of all leaders; in doing so, we ensure the well-being of the Church.
- There is clarity of roles and processes in decision-making within the Family of Parishes.
- Laity are valued and respected for the viewpoints they bring to the Family and are used effectively for the growth of the Family of Parishes.
- Pastors actively cultivate skill in leadership and draw others into leadership with them.
- Clergy and laity are offered and participate in on-going opportunities for leadership development and support.

4. 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.

Vision Points:

- The parish is a community that warmly welcomes newcomers and offers hospitality to everyone.
- Stewardship is fostered as a spiritual way of life.
- The Family of Parishes actively engages people as contributing members of the community; parishioners are encouraged to take leadership roles as appropriate and are offered formation to equip them as leaders.
- The parish forms people to hear and respond to God's call in their lives – from the individual moments of each day to their overall purpose of living out their vocation.
- Parishioners are formed as disciples who grow in gratitude and become willing to share their time, talents, faith, and resources within the parish and beyond it.
- The parish actively engages people of all ages and stages of life and faith to contribute in ministry, service, and giving.
- The Family of Parishes engages a broad and representative group in the parish to participate in the ongoing process of ministry development and the shaping of parish life.

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

Vision Points:

- The parish has a simple and clear discipleship process that evangelizes, establishes disciples, and equips the laity for personal apostolate and vocation.
- The pastor with his leaders prioritizes prayer, formation, and discernment in order to allow the Holy Spirit to inspire missionary activity.
- The Family of Parishes invests time and resources in the evangelization of young people and their families.
- Catholic schools are an essential ministry of the parish by being an “effective vehicle of total Christian formation” for young people and their families.
- Catholic schools are models of Catholic teaching, doctrine, and mission.
- Parishes and schools form people to respond to the call to holiness; in answering this call, the people have a passion for vocational discernment.

6. 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.

Vision Points:

- The Families of Parishes seek ways to recognize the human dignity of each person, especially the unborn; the stranger; persons who are elderly, sick, poor, imprisoned, and marginalized; persons with disabilities; and persons of all races and cultures.
- The Families of Parishes actively facilitate the affirmation, inclusion, and meaningful participation of all Catholics in the community of faith.
- Families of Parishes understand that ministries of charity and justice flow necessarily from our sacramental life, for as Pope Benedict XVI said, “For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being.” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no.25a)
- Families of Parishes educate and form parishioners – utilizing the rich history of Catholic Social Teaching and Scripture – on what it means to BE a community of salt and light in today’s world, a people who model mercy, grace, and forgiveness.