



# Guiding Principles and Parameters for Pastoral Planning



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## Guiding Principles & Parameters

*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.

As Families of Parishes are formed, parish staff, the pastoral council, and other leaders will prayerfully discern and create a plan through which the parishes will come together as one faith community. Each plan will be unique to the Family of Parishes, celebrating the history, culture, and strengths of each of the parishes in the Family. Principles, vision points, and parameters will guide the development of the plans for all the Families of Parishes, building on the common vision of the parish as a beacon of light.

### Principles

Archbishop Schnurr has approved six **principles** that will be the foundation for the plans each Family of Parishes will develop.

### Parameters

Archbishop Schnurr has approved **parameters** to guide the pastoral planning process, establishing common expectations for each Family of Parishes. These parameters will address things that all Families must or must not do as they come together.

Parameters are only the topline, essential norms to be observed in each area. Below each set of parameters will be other categories such as suggestions, best practices, strategic imperatives, planning checklists. The Pathway will also include prayer resources, meeting outlines, magisterial sources, and more. Also found in each section of the Pathway will be relevant canons, universal and particular Church law, other archdiocesan policies, all to be observed at all times.

## Pathway

**The Pastoral Planning Pathway**, including the principles and parameters, will guide the process through which Families of Parishes will shape vital, mission-focused communities of faith.

Values supporting the **Pathway**:

- Conformity to canon law & the Vatican instruction on parishes "The pastoral conversion of the parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church." (2020)
- Grounded in prayerful discernment.
- A theology of Families of Parishes grounded in Church teaching, including *Evangelii Gaudium*.
- Pastoral planning within the Family of Parishes supports vocational discernment and supports family life as lived in the "domestic church" (the household).
- Co-responsibility among ordained and lay ministers, led by the pastor.
- Coordination among Families within the deanery, led by the dean.
- A Planning Team in each Family of Parishes (led by the pastor) to oversee the planning process.
- Support from the Pastoral Center for each Family in the planning process.



## General parameters

**#1. Families of Parishes must follow canon law, civil law, all universal and particular Church law, and archdiocesan policies.**

**#2. Families of Parishes must develop a pastoral plan for parish vitality, submitted at least annually, reviewed by the dean, to be approved by the archbishop in conformity with the parameters of the Pastoral Planning Pathway according to the published timeline.**

**#3. By September 1, 2022, every Family of Parishes must form a Planning Team, led by the pastor, to coordinate pastoral planning geared toward the unification of the Family by June 30, 2027.**



## **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.

### **Parameters**

**#4. The regular Mass schedule for a Family of parishes may not assume more than two Masses per day per priest.**

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

**#6. The regular Mass schedule must provide the opportunity for priests to spiritually prepare for and be present to the community after Mass.**

**#7. There must be a sufficient number of trained and formed liturgical ministers to serve as readers, servers, EMsHC, music ministers, et al. for liturgical celebrations.**

**#8. Sacramental formation must be provided.**



## **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.

### **Parameters**

**#9. Every Family of Parishes will adhere to the spirit and norms of the Vatican Instruction "The pastoral conversion of the parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church." (2020) in pastoral planning and parish life.**

**#10. Families collaborate with other Families within the deanery to provide coordinated pastoral ministry (e.g. hospitals, care facilities, young adult evangelization, high schools, jails, etc.)**



## **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.

### **Parameters**

**#11. Every Family of Parishes has a unified Pastoral Council, with other relevant and necessary consultative groups for specific areas of parish life.**

**#12. The Finance Councils of each parish within the Family work together to appropriately plan for and monitor the finances of the Family of Parishes.**

**#13. Competent and qualified staff is necessary to serve the Family of Parishes, especially in the areas of worship, evangelization (including love in action), and administration. As is possible, staff is unified to serve the entire Family.**

**#14. Priests must have a regularly scheduled day off and must be able to take all annual vacation and retreat.**

**#15. Priests, deacons, staff and other lay leaders participate in ongoing spiritual formation and training for leadership.**



## **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.

### **Parameters**

**#16. Every Family of Parishes forms people to embrace stewardship as a way of life.**

**#17. Every Family of Parishes will actively promote vocational discernment.**



## **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.

### **Parameters**

**#18. Every Family of Parishes will create and implement a plan that ministers to all persons in every season of life and every stage in the process of evangelization.**

**#19. Every Family of Parishes will have an Evangelization Team, overseen by the pastor and led by competent and qualified staff.**



## **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.

### **Parameters**

**#20. Every Family of Parishes must offer support to their communities through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and promote a culture of life, charity, and justice.**

**#21. Every Family of Parishes will incorporate principles of Catholic Social Teaching into faith formation efforts for youth and adults.**

**#22. Every Family of Parishes will promote intercultural competence and facilitate the participation of all people in the life of the Church.**

## **Administration**

*The six guiding principles address areas largely related to teaching and sanctifying. The parameters below are focused on the governance of Families of Parishes.*

### **Parameters**

**#23. The Parish/school financial ID # cannot be changed unless a new parish is formed or a parish formally changes its name.**

**#24. Each parish must maintain their own financial and sacramental records until parish territories are merged.**

**#25. Families of Parishes must be fiscally accountable.**

**#26. Parishes within each Family must work together to have an agreed upon and signed shared expense agreement annually when planning the yearly fiscal budget.**

**#27. Each parish/school must follow all policies within the Temporal Affairs Handbook.**

**#28. Every Family of Parishes must follow relevant civil law and archdiocesan policies for information (record) retention and location.**

**#29. Every Family of Parishes must work with the Pastoral Center Department of Human Resources to review staffing models.**

**#30. Each school must follow the approved School Change Process when making structural changes or closure decisions.**

## **Communications**

*Effective communications is necessary to share the Good News within the Family of Parishes and throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.*

### **Parameters**

**#31. Every Family of Parishes shall utilize the archdiocese-provided census database for managing parishioner contact information and sacramental records.**

# Pastoral Planning Pathway Parameters

## History of Development

The parameters of the Beacons of Light pastoral planning process are the topline requirements for each Family of Parishes. They describe what each Family of Parishes **must** and **must not** do in the creation of their pastoral plans. While there are many lower-level suggestions, best practices, etc. as part of the Pathway, the parameters represent the fundamental requirements of a viable pastoral plan.

They have been reviewed and refined many times throughout 2021, including consultation with priests and lay leaders of all parishes, leading up to final approval by Archbishop Schnurr and publication as part of the Pathway.

**Winter 2021:** Draft parameters were developed by Dept of Pastoral Vitality then refined by the Oversight Group.

**May 2021:** Draft parameters were given to each priest for their feedback. Pastors were also asked to review the draft parameters with their staff and pastoral council and to submit feedback online to the Dept for Pastoral Vitality. Input was received from 97 parishes/regions, which included the input of hundreds of lay parish leaders. In addition to responses from 85 pastors, input was received from 5 priests with non-parochial assignments, 7 parochial vicars, and 7 retired priests.

**June 4, 2021:** A summary of feedback, including percentage of pastors and parish leaders who affirm each draft parameter, was provided to all priests as part of the materials for their meeting on the current reality of the planning process.

**July 2021:** Based on the feedback gathered from priests and parish leaders, Dept of Pastoral Vitality refined parameters and eliminated those with inadequate support. Pathway Design teams reviewed the parameters again, consulting with priests, deacons, parish staff, and lay faithful with expertise in the subject area.

**Aug 2021:** Final draft parameters were presented to the Oversight Group for their final review and any needed adjustments.

**Sept 14, 2021:** Final draft parameters were presented by Fr. Jan Schmidt to Archbishop Schnurr for his review and edits. Archbishop Schnurr approved final parameters.

**Sept 29, 2021:** Parameters are published, given to priests at their day-long meeting on modeling of Families of Parishes, to be included in the Pastoral Planning Pathway.

