



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Communication & Mission Promotion

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Families of Parishes Final Configuration Announcement

The Families of Parishes configuration is finalized and will be announced to the public on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021. Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr, of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, will promulgate the Families of Parishes at the 11 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021. The Families of Parishes configuration is part of the archdiocesan-wide pastoral planning initiative Beacons of Light.

This announcement is the result of more than two years of work. The project has included data collection from all entities of the archdiocese, assistance from a consulting group with direction and data analysis, several rounds of modeling of Families of Parishes configurations, and an open comment period.

"I am convinced that Beacons of Light, born in great hope, will enable us to form strong parishes, centered on the Eucharist, that radiate the love of Christ and joy of the Gospel," said Archbishop Schnurr.

In Oct. 2021, a draft Families of Parishes configuration was presented to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati for their review and feedback. The open comment period elicited nearly 8,000 comments and has resulted in numerous changes to the configuration. Collectively the changes from the draft to the final parish groupings have resulted in a stronger arrangement of Families of Parishes, that will allow for optimal growth of the archdiocese in the decades to come.

The final Families of Parishes configuration that will be announced on Dec. 5 will include the Families of Parishes map available at BeaconsAOC.org. The map will be available on the website at 12 p.m. following the Mass.

RADIATE CHRIST

The next milestone in Beacons of Light will be the announcement of priest assignments in the spring of 2022. The implementation of Families of Parishes will not formally begin until July 1, 2022.

The announcement of the Families of Parishes configuration is the conclusion of the strategic planning phase of Beacons of Light. With a strategic plan finalized, the work going forward is in the hands of the faithful. The pastoral planning phase of Beacons of Light will include months of leadership training and orientation to Beacons of Light for all priests, deacons, lay staff and parish leaders. In addition, once Families of Parishes are implemented, a guidebook called, *The Pathway*, will aid Families of Parishes in their pastoral planning efforts.

More information about Beacons of Light, including frequently asked questions and downloadable resources are available at BeaconsAOC.org.

A review of information from the Oct. 1 press release sent to media regarding Beacons of Light:

Why is Beacons of Light happening?

- The status quo is no longer an option. At this point a comprehensive pastoral planning process is a necessity in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to garner stability and position the diocese for growth.
- Our resources are largely consumed by efforts to maintain the status quo and are spread too thin to be truly effective. In particular, our priests are stretched to the limit, and we will have fewer priests who can serve as pastors over the coming years. The number of archdiocesan priests available for assignment is projected to decline by approximately 20% over the next five years.
- Religious practice has been declining in both the United States and in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. From 2010 to 2019, sacramental practice (including baptisms, first communions, confirmations and weddings) in the archdiocese declined by 23%.
- Our current infrastructure and schedules were built for a different era. In many cases, our church buildings are grossly underutilized. In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the average Sunday Mass is about one-third full.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati is the 44th largest Catholic diocese in the country, with more than 440,000 Catholics, and has the fifth largest Catholic school system in terms of enrollment with more than 40,000 students. The 19-county territory includes 208 parishes and 112 Catholic primary and secondary schools.