



October 17, 2015

Dear Friend in Christ,

I am pleased to share with you a draft of the pastoral plan for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, which proposes the reorganization of our parishes into what we are calling “pastorates.” The design of the pastorates is a critical first step in our effort to undertake evangelization-based parish planning, since it will set the context within which, over the next several years, pastoral planning will take place. These were developed after several consultations with the priests, religious, and lay leadership throughout the Archdiocese. They are subject to change and your input in advance of the upcoming consultations to be held regionally in November is very important to this process.

I invite you to spend some time reviewing this draft and participating in conversations within your parish about its contents. If you are unfamiliar with the Be Missionary Disciples planning effort, please take some time to explore our website – www.BeMissionaryDisciples.org – where you can read my pastoral letter from last summer and the recent update to it, and find information and resources that support evangelization-based parish planning.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and may God bless you and all God’s people of the Archdiocese.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ William E. Lori".

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore



Be Missionary Disciples

ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN



ARCHBALT.ORG

BEMISSIONARYDISCIPLES.ORG

PRINCIPLES FOR GUIDING CHANGE

The “Why” – Current Reality

Our Call

- The formation of disciples who are making disciples must be at the heart of the work of the Body of Christ.
- The creation and continuance of vibrant and sustainable centers of evangelization requires the wise allocation of resources throughout the Archdiocese.

Demographic Trends

- Demographic and cultural changes continue, including a shift of Catholic households to the suburbs, growing numbers of Hispanic, African and Asian Catholics, and increasing numbers of those who have no religious affiliation.
- Few changes in parish structure or ministry have occurred in response to the demographic and cultural changes of the last several decades.

Vocations and Leadership Outlook

- The Archdiocese relies on 150 religious priests and externs (priests from other dioceses) to serve the Archdiocese in many ways.
- The number of pastors is expected to reduce from 115 today to 85 by 2022.
- Religious vocations are influenced by positive environments that support healthy, happy and holy lives.

Pastoral Challenges

- The Archdiocese has experienced a 15 percent decrease in Sunday liturgy attendance over the past 10 years.
- There is a need to focus on forming the next generation of Catholics, especially by supporting families as the primary evangelizers.
- There is an increasing need for parishes to be portals to a network

of Catholic outreach services.

Resource Challenges

- Only one-third of our parishes and half of our Catholic schools are financially strong.
- High levels of deferred maintenance and life safety issues in parishes and schools have not been addressed.
- Parish and school planning need to be interconnected and demand stability and predictability to succeed.

The “What” – Anticipated Outcomes

Vibrant, Sustainable and Evangelizing Pastorates and Schools

- Pastorates will be centers of worship and prayer that promote life-long conversion and reverence for the Catholic faith.
- Pastorates will recognize that their vibrancy and sustainability are integrally connected to their capacity to welcome and to evangelize themselves and others.
- Pastorates will recognize and respond to the pastoral needs of a diverse Archdiocese.
- Pastorates will function as portals to a network of Catholic social services that respond to the unique needs of those residing in the area.
- Pastorates will plan for the future by maintaining and regularly updating active three-year pastorate plans.

Strong Archdiocesan Vision and Support for Pastorates and Schools

- A design for the creation of pastorates across the Archdiocese will result in a stable and sound structure of parishes.
- The design of pastorates will support the creation of a stable and sound network of Catholic schools.

- The design of pastorates will allow for the designation of mission parishes that are part of a pastorate and/or are made sustainable by Archdiocesan and/or benefactor funding annually.
- Formation and training will be provided to enable and empower pastors and pastoral life directors to lead for mission.
- Pastoral life directors will be considered when appropriate to allow for flexibility in pastorate leadership where financial and other conditions can support this model.
- The structure of Central Services will be aligned to support the above through the provision of data, outstanding customer service and a commitment to ongoing formation as disciples.

The “Not How” – Unacceptable Means

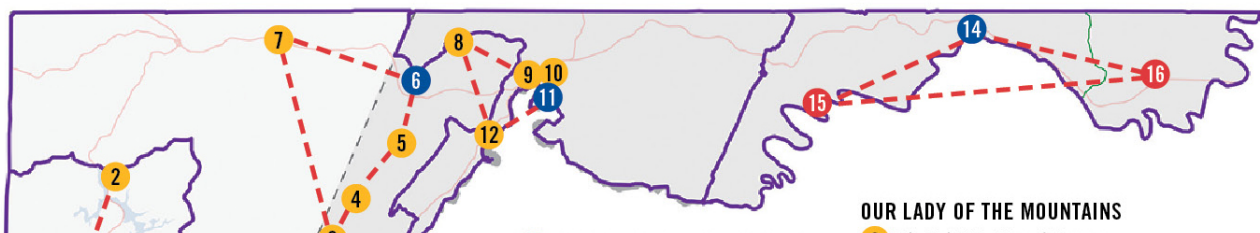
- We will not violate canon law, civil law or Archdiocesan policy.
- We will not design for more than three Sunday Masses (including Saturday vigils) per priest per weekend.
- We will not organize parish structures around an individual or special interest.
- We will not organize parish structures to maintain the status quo.
- We will not organize parish structures around past disagreements or hurts.
- We will not organize parish structures without a reasonable plan for maintenance and life safety integrated into an eight-year or more financial and operational model.
- We will not eliminate or discount shrines or otherwise culturally critical parishes such as the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Baltimore. ●

1

WESTERN REGIONS Garrett County and Allegany County

MAP KEY

- PARISH
- WORSHIP SITE
- MISSION
- NON-TERRITORIAL
- PROPOSED PASTORATES
- PARISH BOUNDARY
- CONNECTION





- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 St. Peter the Apostle, <i>Oakland</i> | 8 St. Patrick, <i>Mount Savage</i> |
| 2 St. Peter at the Lake | 9 SS. Peter and Paul, <i>Cumberland</i> |
| DIVINE MERCY | |
| 3 St. Peter, <i>Westernport</i> | 10 St. Patrick, <i>Cumberland</i> |
| 4 St. Gabriel, <i>Barton</i> | 11 St. Mary, <i>Cumberland</i> |
| 5 St. Joseph, <i>Midland</i> | 12 St. Ambrose, <i>Cresaptown</i> |
| 6 St. Michael, <i>Frostburg</i> | 14 St. Peter, <i>Hancock</i> |
| 7 St. Ann, <i>Grantsville</i> | 15 St. Patrick, <i>Little Orleans</i> |
| | 16 St. Michael, <i>Clear Spring</i> |

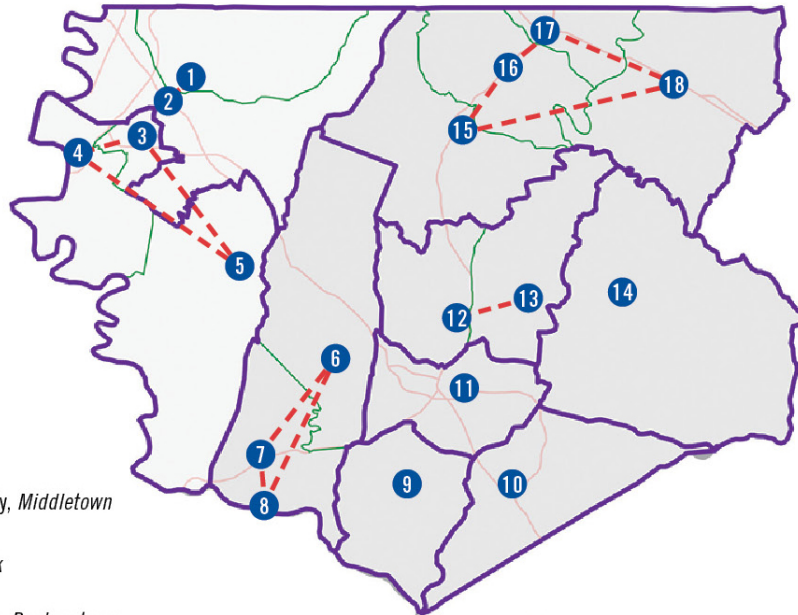
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2

CENTRAL REGIONS

Washington County and Frederick County



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 St. Ann, <i>Hagerstown</i> | | |
| 2 St. Mary, <i>Hagerstown</i> | | |
| 3 St. Joseph, <i>Hagerstown</i> | | |
| 4 St. Augustine, <i>Williamsport</i> | | |
| 5 St. James, <i>Boonsboro</i> | | |
| 6 Holy Family Catholic Community, <i>Middletown</i> | | |
| 7 St. Mary, <i>Petersville</i> | | |
| 8 St. Francis of Assisi, <i>Brunswick</i> | | |
| 9 St. Joseph-On-Carrollton Manor, <i>Buckeystown</i> | | |
| 10 St. Ignatius of Loyola, <i>Ijamsville</i> | 12 St. Katharine Drexel, <i>Frederick</i> | 15 Our Lady of Mount Carmel, <i>Thurmont</i> * |
| 11 St. John the Evangelist, <i>Frederick</i> | 13 St. Timothy, <i>Walkersville</i> | 16 St. Anthony Shrine, <i>Emmitsburg</i> * |
| | 14 St. Peter the Apostle, <i>Libertytown</i> * | 17 St. Joseph, <i>Emmitsburg</i> * |
| | | 18 St. Joseph, <i>Taneytown</i> * |

0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES

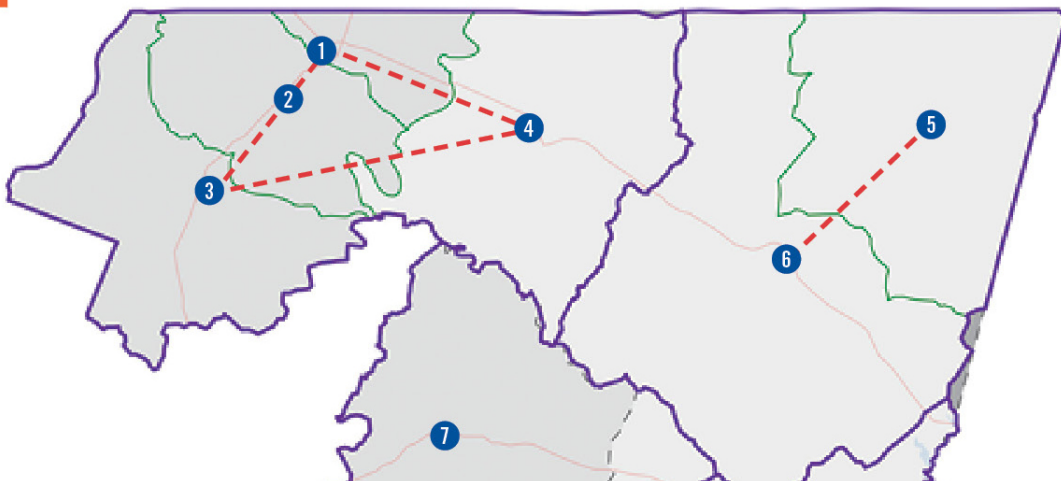


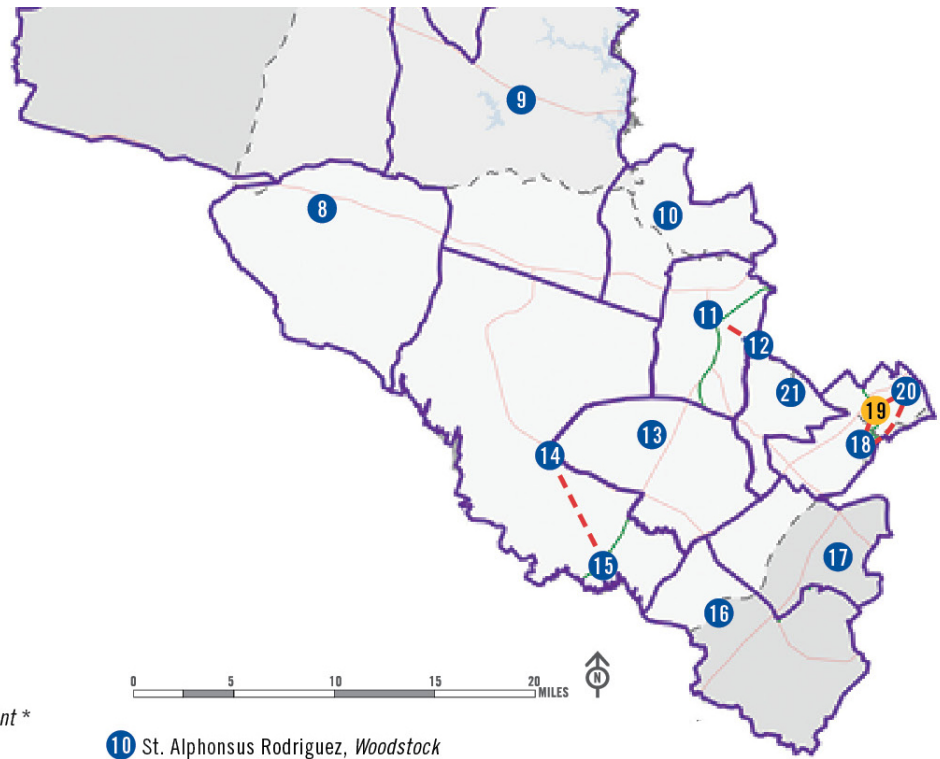
* Some parishes are depicted on more than one map, due to their location near county borders.

3

SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONS

Carroll County and Howard County





- 1 St. Joseph, *Emmitsburg **
- 2 St. Anthony Shrine, *Emmitsburg **
- 3 Our Lady of Mount Carmel, *Thurmont **
- 4 St. Joseph, *Taneytown **
- 5 St. Bartholomew, *Manchester*
- 6 St. John, *Westminster*
- 7 St. Peter the Apostle, *Libertytown **
- 8 St. Michael, *Poplar Springs*
- 9 St. Joseph, *Sykesville*

- 10 St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, *Woodstock*
- 11 Church of the Resurrection, *Ellicott City*
- 12 St. Paul, *Ellicott City*
- 13 St. John the Evangelist, *Columbia*
- 14 St. Louis, *Clarksville*
- 15 St. Francis of Assisi, *Fulton*
- 16 Resurrection of Our Lord, *Laurel **

- 17 St. Lawrence Martyr, *Jessup **
- 18 St. Augustine, *Elkridge **
- 19 Catholic Community at Relay *
- 20 Church of the Ascension, *Halethorpe **
- 21 Our Lady of Perpetual Help, *Ellicott City*

* Some parishes are depicted on more than one map, due to their location near county borders.

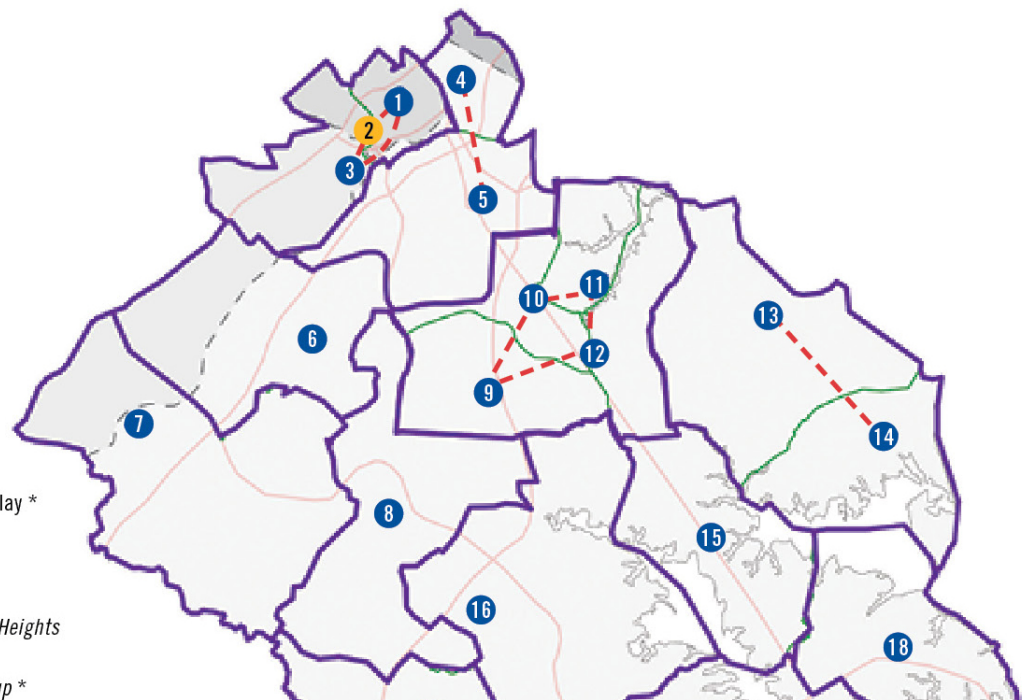
4

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Anne Arundel County

MAP KEY

- PARISH
- WORSHIP SITE
- MISSION
- NON-TERRITORIAL
- PROPOSED PASTORATES
- PARISH BOUNDARY
- - CONNECTION



- 1 Church of the Ascension, *Halethorpe **
- 2 Catholic Community at Relay *
- 3 St. Augustine, *Elkridge **
- 4 St. Clement I, *Lansdowne*
- 5 St. Philip Neri, *Linthicum Heights*
- 6 St. Lawrence Martyr, *Jessup **

7 Resurrection of Our Lord, *Laurel* *

8 St. Joseph, *Odenton*

9 St. Bernadette, *Severn*

CATHOLIC CHURCH OF GLEN BURNIE

10 Holy Trinity Catholic Church, *Glen Bernie*

11 Church of the Good Shepherd, *Glen Bernie*

12 Church of the Crucifixion, *Glen Burnie*

13 St. Jane Frances de Chantal, *Pasadena*

14 Our Lady of the Chesapeake, *Lake Shore*

15 St. John the Evangelist, *Severna Park*

16 Our Lady of the Fields, *Millersville*

17 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, *Crofton*

18 St. Andrew by the Bay, *Annapolis*

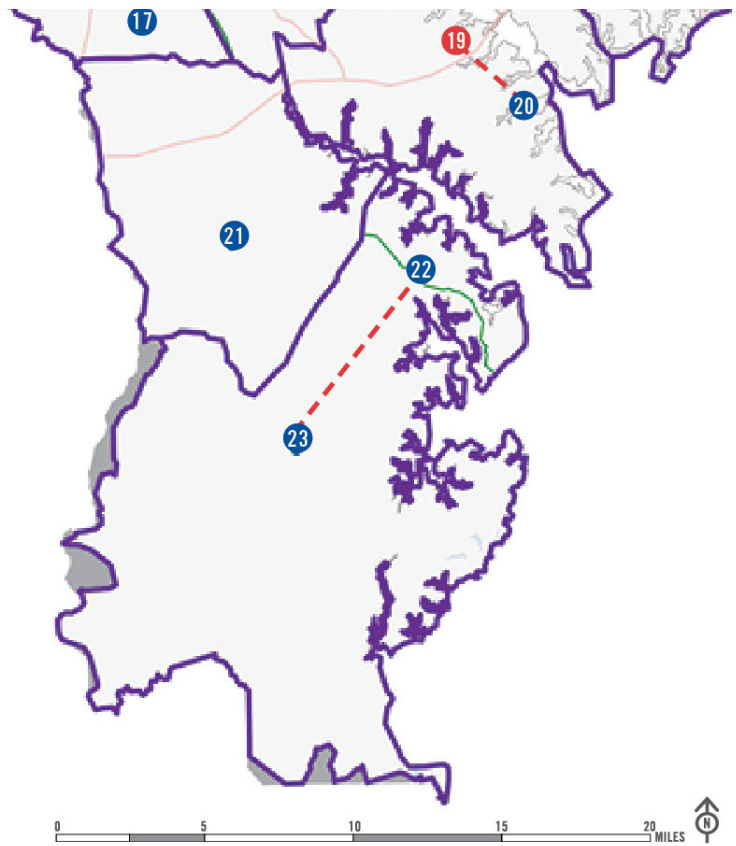
19 St. John Neumann, *Annapolis*

20 St. Mary, *Annapolis*

21 Holy Family, *Davidsonville*

22 Our Lady of Perpetual Help, *Edgewater*

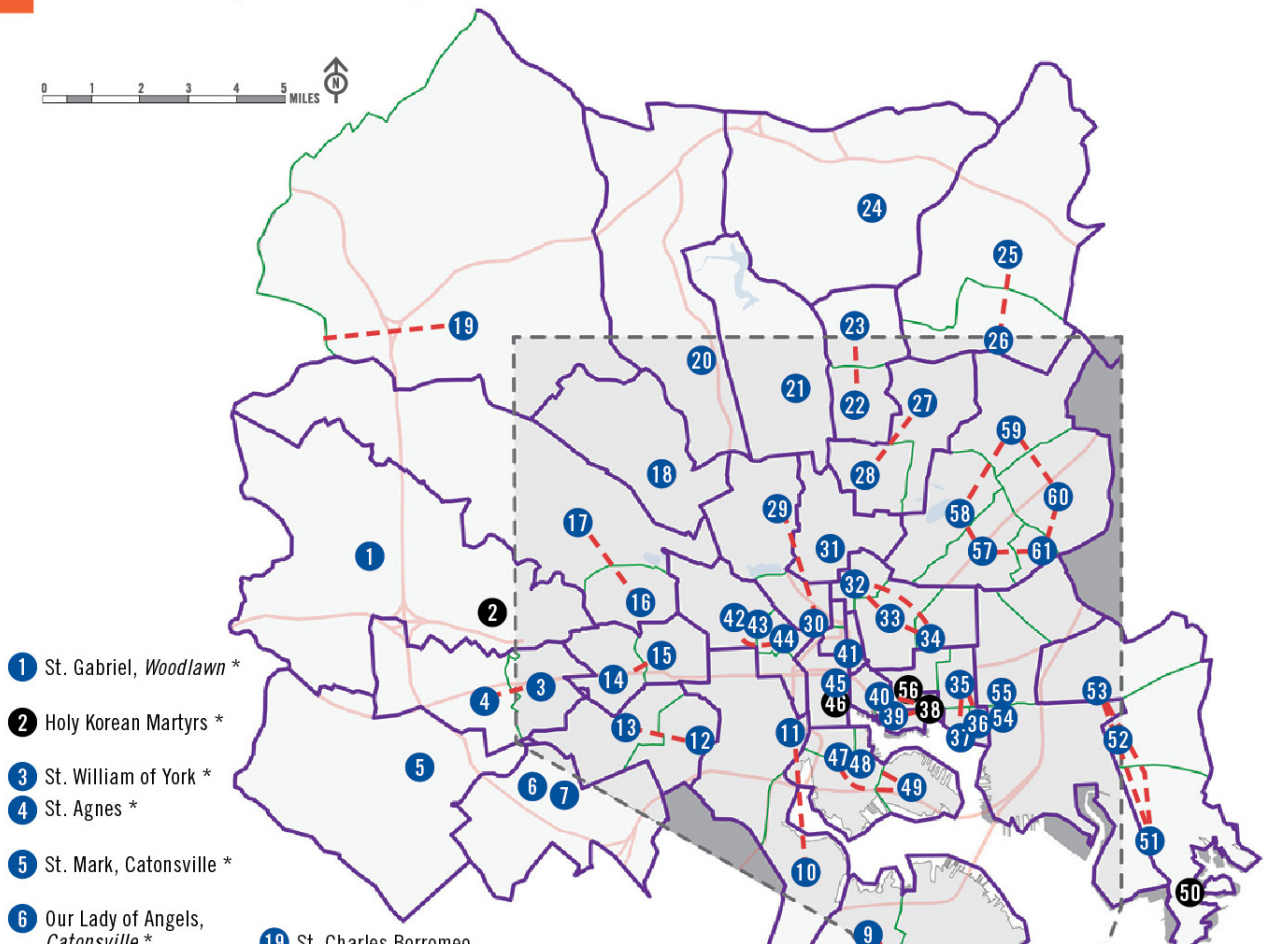
23 Our Lady of Sorrows, *West River*



5

CITY AND WEST BALTIMORE REGIONS

Baltimore City and Beltway Suburbs



- Catonsville*
- 7 Our Lady of Victory, *Arbutus* *
 - 8 St. Athanasius
 - 9 St. Rose of Lima
 - 10 St. Veronica
 - 11 Transfiguration Roman Catholic Congregation
 - 12 St. Benedict
 - 13 St. Joseph's Passionist Monastery
 - 14 St. Bernardine
 - 15 St. Edward
 - 16 St. Cecilia *
 - 17 New All Saints *
 - 18 St. Ambrose

- 19 St. Charles Borromeo, *Pikesville* *
- 20 Shrine of the Sacred Heart *
- 21 Cathedral of Mary Our Queen (paired with Basilica #45) *
- 22 St. Mary of the Assumption, *Govans* *
- 23 St. Pius X *
- 24 Church of the Immaculate Conception, *Towson* *
- 25 Immaculate Heart of Mary, *Baynesville* *
- 26 St. Thomas More *
- 27 St. Matthew
- 28 Church of the Blessed Sacrament

- 29 St. Thomas Aquinas
- 30 Corpus Christi
- 31 SS. Philip and James
- 32 St. Ann
- 33 St. Francis Xavier
- 34 St. Wenceslaus
- 35 St. Elizabeth of Hungary
- 36 St. Brigid
- 37 St. Casimir
- 38 Holy Rosary
- 39 St. Leo the Great
- 40 St. Vincent de Paul
- 41 St. Ignatius



- 42 St. Gregory the Great
 - 43 St. Peter Claver/ St. Pius V
 - 44 Church of the Immaculate Conception
 - 45 Basilica of the Assumption (paired with Cathedral #21)
 - 46 St. Alphonsus Liguori
- CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF SOUTH BALTIMORE**
- 47 Holy Cross
 - 48 St. Mary Star of the Sea
 - 49 Our Lady of Good Counsel
 - 50 Our Lady of LaVang *

- 51 St. Rita, *Dundalk* *
- 52 Sacred Heart of Mary, *Graceland Park* *
- 53 Our Lady of Fatima *
- 54 Sacred Heart of Jesus/ Sagrado Corazon de Jesus *
- 55 Our Lady of Pompei *
- 56 St. Patrick (Broadway)
- 57 Shrine of the Little Flower
- 58 St. Francis of Assisi
- 59 St. Dominic
- 60 St. Anthony of Padua
- 61 Most Precious Blood

* Some parishes are depicted on more than one map, due to their location near county borders.

6

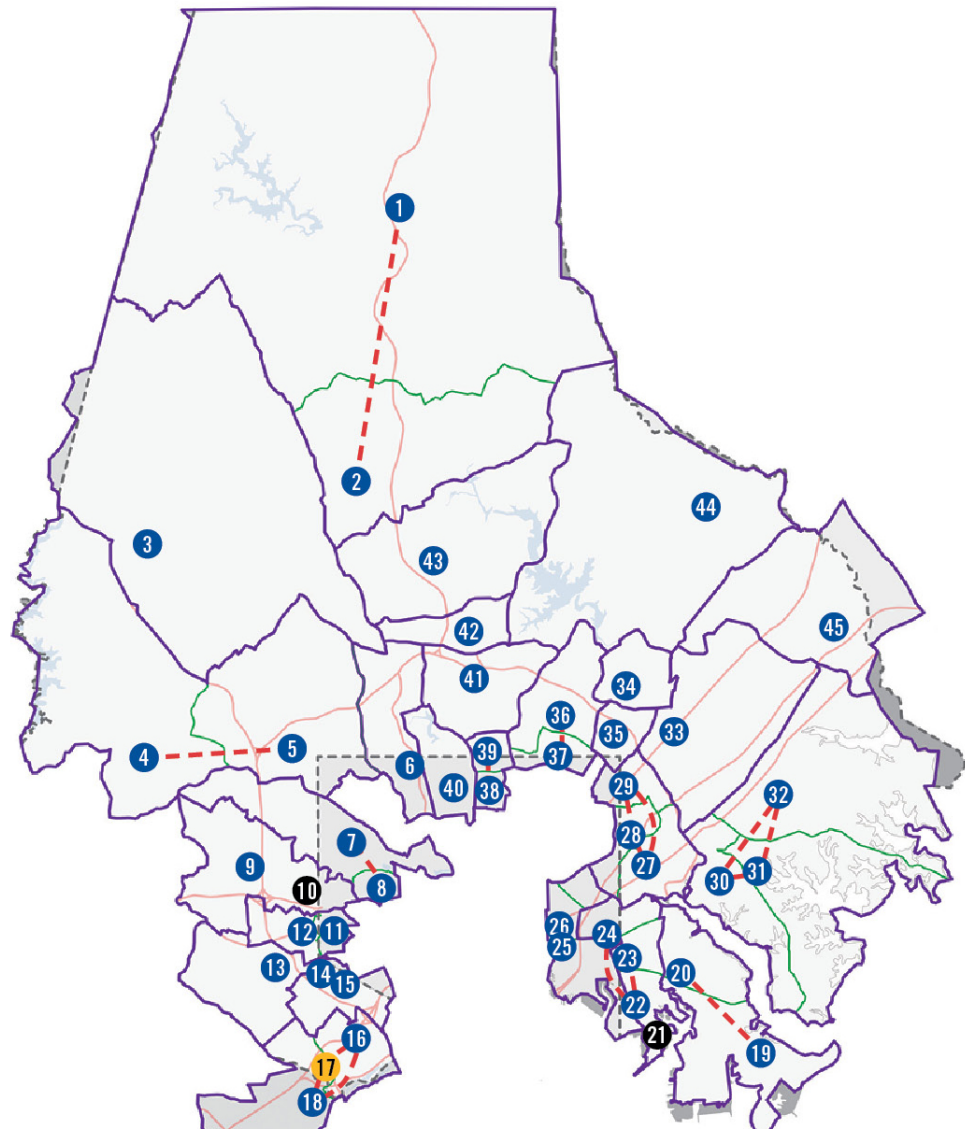
BALTIMORE COUNTY REGIONS

Baltimore County

MAP KEY

- PARISH
- WORSHIP SITE
- MISSION
- NON-TERRITORIAL
- PROPOSED PASTORATES
- PARISH BOUNDARY
- - - CONNECTION

- 1 Our Lady of Grace, *Parkton*
- 2 Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier, *Hunt Valley*
- 3 Sacred Heart, *Glyndon*
- 4 Holy Family, *Randallstown*
- 5 St. Charles Borromeo, *Pikesville* *
- 6 Shrine of the Sacred Heart *
- 7 New All Saints *
- 8 St. Cecilia *
- 9 St. Gabriel, *Woodlawn* *
- 10 Holy Korean Martyrs *
- 11 St. William of York *
- 12 St. Agnes *
- 13 St. Mark, *Catonsville* *
- 14 Our Lady of Angels, *Catonsville* *
- 15 Our Lady of Victory, *Arbutus* *
- 16 Church of the Ascension, *Halethorpe* *
- 17 Catholic Community at Relay *
- 18 St. Augustine, *Elkridge* *



19 St. Luke, *Edgemere*

20 Our Lady of Hope,
Dundalk

21 Our Lady of LaVang *

22 St. Rita, *Dundalk* *

23 Sacred Heart of Mary,
Graceland Park *

24 Our Lady of Fatima *

25 Sacred Heart of Jesus/
Sagrado Corazon
de Jesus *

26 Our Lady of Pompei *

27 St. Clement Mary
Hofbauer, *Rosedale*

28 Church of the
Annunciation, *Rosedale*

29 St. Michael the
Archangel, *Overlea*

30 St. Clare, *Essex*

31 Our Lady of Mount
Carmel, *Middle River*

32 Our Lady, Queen of
Peace, *Middle River*

33 St. Joseph, *Fullerton*

34 St. Isaac Jogues

35 St. Ursula

36 Immaculate Heart
of Mary, *Baynesville* *

37 St. Thomas More *

38 St. Mary the
Assumption, *Govans* *

39 St. Pius X *

40 Cathedral of Mary Our
Queen (paired with
Basilica – see page 6) *

41 Church of the
Immaculate
Conception, *Towson* *

42 Church of the Nativity

43 St. Joseph,
Cockeysville

44 St. John the Evangelist,
Long Green Valley

45 St. Stephen, *Bradshaw* *



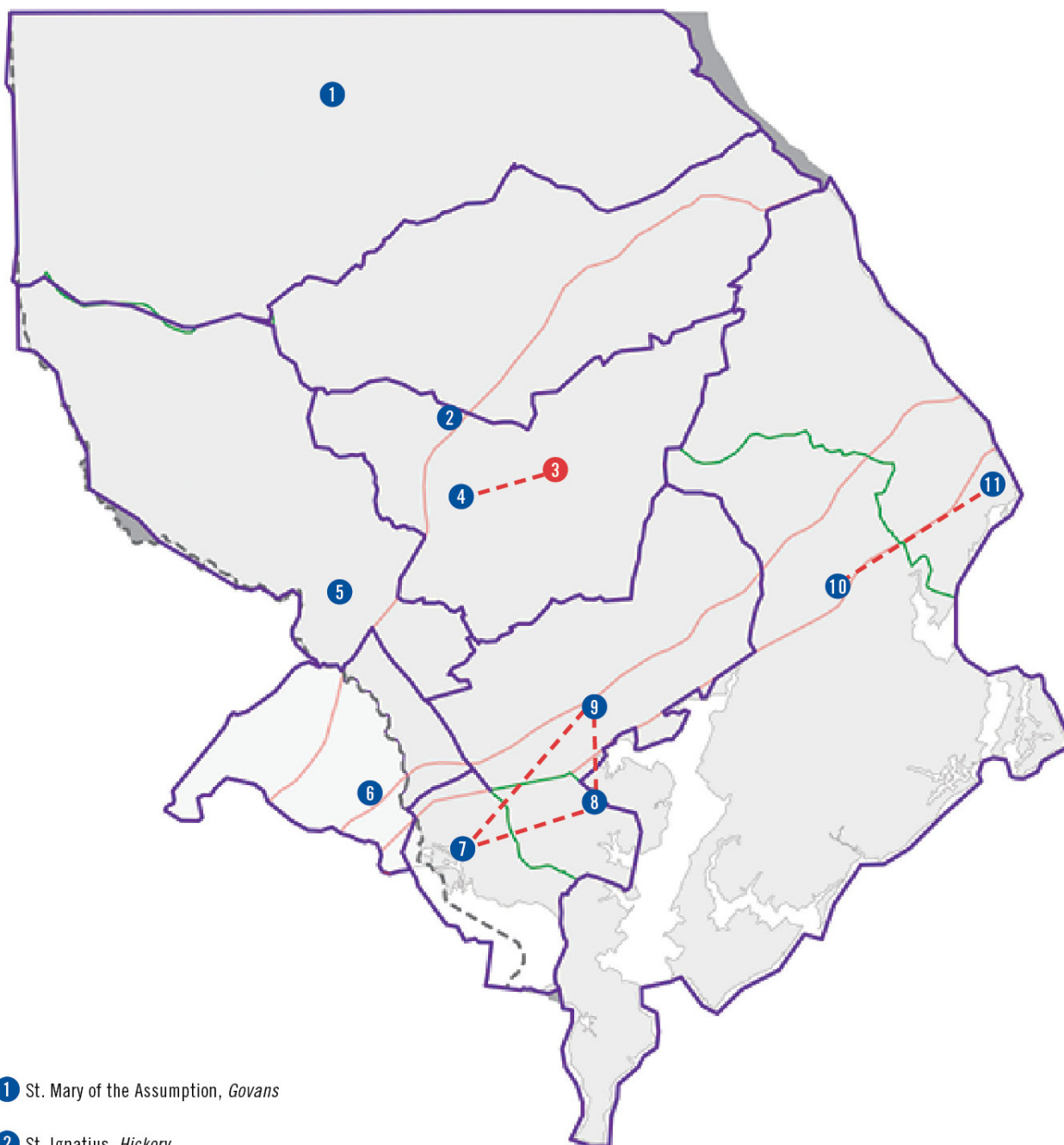
7

HARFORD REGION

Harford County

MAP KEY

- PARISH
- WORSHIP SITE
- MISSION
- NON-TERRITORIAL
- PROPOSED PASTORATES
- PARISH BOUNDARY
- CONNECTION



1 St. Mary of the Assumption, *Govans*

2 St. Ignatius, *Hickory*

3 St. Mary Magdalen
4 St. Margaret, *Bel Air*

5 St. Mark, *Fallston*

6 St. Stephen, *Bradshaw **

7 Church of the Holy Spirit, *Joppa*

8 Prince of Peace, *Edgewood*

9 St. Francis de Sales, *Abingdon*

10 St. Joan of Arc, *Aberdeen*

11 St. Patrick, *Havre de Grace*



TIMELINE OF PLANNING PROCESS

January 2015

- Archbishop Lori issues “Be Missionary Disciples” vision for pastoral planning.

April – May 2015

- Five regional meetings held throughout the Archdiocese. Archbishop Lori presents the vision expressed in “Be Missionary Disciples” and outlines a two-phase Archdiocesan-wide planning process.

Summer 2015

- Archbishop Lori issues “A Light Brightly Visible: Lighting the Path to Missionary Discipleship,” a pastoral letter on his vision for pastoral planning in the Archdiocese.
- Office of Pastoral Planning prepares parish-level data and a tool for parish review of mission focus and activity.

Fall 2015 – Winter 2016

- Website BeMissionaryDisciples.org launches as main platform for evangelization-based planning tools and resources.
- Phase I begins as parishes promote reading of Archbishop Lori’s pastoral letter and participation in the parish survey.

Spring 2016

- Parishes receive survey results along with guidance for reflection on them and preparation of a Parish Mission Readiness Statement.
- Weekly blog series begins, providing additional guidance for reflecting on survey results through the lens of evangelization.

- Office of Pastoral Planning staff members attend regional meetings across the Archdiocese to provide more guidance on the reflection process and answer questions.
- Archbishop Lori hosts five meetings with priests across the Archdiocese to continue the conversation on his vision for evangelization-based planning and get feedback on how it is unfolding.

Summer 2016

- Guiding Change Document is developed to describe why planning needs to occur, the desired outcomes of the process and the limitations within which it should take place.
- Work group composed of pastors and Archdiocesan staff is convened by the Archbishop to develop the first draft of a model for pastorates.
- A Guidebook is developed that lays out the planning process that will follow the creation of the pastorate configurations (Phase II).
- Archbishop Lori issues an update on the progress made in the year since “A Light Brightly Visible” was released.
- Parishes continue to work on Parish Mission Readiness Statements.

Fall 2016

- Parish Mission Readiness Statements are sent to the Office of Pastoral Planning by Sept. 30.
- Pastorate model continues to be refined through a series of consultation meetings.

Winter 2016–17

- Pastorate model is finalized and approved by Archbishop.
- Phase II pastorate planning begins. ●

Rationale for Forming Pastorates

The model of pastorates was created using both data and input. Some of the data that might contribute to the design of pastorates includes:

- Location of current registered families;
- Number of Masses, sacraments and pastoral workload at each parish;
- Mass attendance and the utilization of church capacity;
- Generalized financial status, condition of facilities and size/complexity of parishes;
- Demographic data and trends;
- Preliminary recommendations of the School Facilities Master Plan.

Other things that could influence which parishes might work well in a pastorate include similar target populations for evangelization, good opportunities to share resources or staff, existing collaborative relationships among parishes or natural paths of travel in an area.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Each parish is being asked to gather feedback from parishioners on the proposed pastorates. This feedback should be gathered between now and early November. Be on the lookout for ways you can provide input to your pastor and parish leadership.

For more information on Be Missionary Disciples, visit the website at BeMissionaryDisciples.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the purpose of the Be Missionary Disciples planning effort?

The purpose of Be Missionary Disciples is to organize our parishes so we have a critical mass of people and resources to do the mission of the Church effectively, and to intentionally plan for how that mission will be carried out. (For more, see the Guiding Change Document, page 2.)

PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

What would an evangelizing parish mean for my children?

My children are being inspired in their faith and growing to know and follow Jesus, and I am being formed and receiving support to model the domestic church for them in our home.

LONGTIME PARISHIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

What would an evangelizing parish mean for the church I know and love?

My parish is growing and welcoming new faces, which can mean change but also means I can be assured it will be healthy, vibrant and sustainable as I grow older.

YOUNG PERSON'S PERSPECTIVE

What would an evangelizing parish mean for me and my identity as a Catholic?

I feel accepted, valued and welcomed in this community, and have a connection with people my own age who also are being energized in their faith. I feel like I am part of something exciting and meaningful.

How will parishes be organized?

Parishes are being organized into "pastorates," one or more parishes with a single pastor and leadership team. The pastorate defines which parishes will be planning together for how to carry out the mission of the Church in their boundaries. The proposed model of pastorates is included in this publication.

Who put together the model of pastorates?

The model of pastorates is a work in progress that already has been through several rounds of revisions. A small group of pastors and Archdiocesan staff were convened by the Archbishop to develop the first model of pastorates from our existing parishes. That model was shared with the priests who serve on the Presbyteral Council, as well as the Vicars Forane for all the different regions in the Archdiocese.

Using their feedback, the model was revised and subsequently shared with all the priests and pastoral life directors in the Archdiocese for their consultation. The model shown in this publication reflects changes made based on that consultation. Further changes are expected after November consultations with parish leadership and ongoing consultations with the religious orders serving in our parishes.

Are pastorates replacing parishes?

No, parishes will continue to be the primary expression of the local church. Pastorates are simply a way of helping them work together better through shared leadership and vision.

What kinds of planning will each pastorate be asked to undertake?

The pastorate will be planning to renew and strengthen the faith of those already in our parishes, welcoming back those who have become dis-

engaged from their faith and reach out to the unchurched to share the Gospel with them. In short, it should be building toward the good fruits of missionary discipleship (see box, page 11). It also will need to address how this can best be done in a way that will be sustainable for many years to come, which will include examining how the buildings and finances of the pastorate collectively can best serve the mission, and how our people can be brought together to do this as well.

Does this mean that parishes in a pastorate are going to have to merge? Is my church going to close?

The model does *not* assume that multiple parishes in a pastorate will merge. That is a decision that will have to be reached as the pastorate, once formed, goes through a thoughtful planning process that is mission-focused. The same goes for whether a church should remain open or not.

Will I still be able to go to the same Mass?

That will depend on the plan for the pastorate developed by the parishioners. The plan should identify a Mass schedule for the pastorate that responds to the needs of both longtime parishioners *and* newcomers or the unchurched, and which supports celebration of the Mass in sanctuaries that are comfortably full. For this reason, one of the parameters of the planning process is to limit to three per weekend the number of Masses each priest can celebrate.

Why are we using three Masses per weekend as a parameter?

Three weekend Masses effectively equals six key sacramental obligations for most pastors on a weekend. Confessions, a wedding and a funeral are typical. In addition, pastors who

have responsibility for more than one parish need time for travel and, more importantly, time with parishioners after liturgies.

One of the goals of Be Missionary Disciples is to increase Sunday Mass attendance. This will include making

change as pastors retire or are called to different ministries. In some cases, the gifts of a pastor may be needed elsewhere in the Archdiocese, which could result in a change of pastor. In other cases, the current pastor may be the best one to continue leading the pas-

Although the design (configuration) of the pastorates will be finalized by the Archbishop in February 2017, the implementation of the design will happen in phases over the next several years. In other words, by February we will know which parishes eventually

sure the Masses we celebrate are done with care and proper planning, including great homilies, inspiring music and other important liturgical elements that make people want to come to Mass. By limiting the number of Masses, it allows the priest to prepare for and celebrate those Masses with energy. Limiting the number of Masses to three also will help facilitate the sharing of resources and create more opportunities in those places that are currently too small to have liturgical ministers, music or other essential liturgical elements.

Will my pastor change?

Possibly, but not necessarily. There will always be a natural progression of

torate. Those decisions will be reached in the coming months and years and in consultation with the priests.

What happens to the staff in a multi-parish pastorate?

The pastor, guided by the pastorate plan and his assessment of the needs within the pastorate, will determine how he wants to organize his staff. This is no different than how current pastors with multi-parish assignments have approached the same subject. In many cases, they have brought the staff together for efficiency, though some staffs remain separate.

When are the pastorates going to be implemented?

will be working together on a plan for the pastorate, but this may not occur for some time. The exact phasing plan is still being developed at this time.

What are the next steps?

The next steps will be for parishes to have a conversation about the proposed model of pastorates and how it does or does not support the mission of the Church in their area. This feedback will be brought to regional meetings in November by the pastor and key parish leaders, who will provide their consultation on the model. The final design of pastorates will reflect this input and will be ratified by the Archbishop in February 2017. •

Highlights of the Vision

WHAT MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP LOOKS LIKE IN A PASTORATE

WHEN THIS HAPPENS ... IT PRODUCES THESE GOOD FRUITS

Vibrant Liturgy

- The Good News is proclaimed and understood
- Music is inspiring and participatory
- Homilies are a source of conversion, renewal and growth
- Parishioners are more fully engaged disciples

Belonging

- Outsiders are prioritized
- Disenfranchised and strangers are sought out and welcomed
- All feel they belong and value community life through groups, activities and events

Spiritual Growth

- Growing number of adults active in faith formation, engaged in service
- Ongoing conversion is experienced
- The domestic church is sustained and enriched
- Young people remain engaged in the parish

Conversion

- New people are visible in community
- Sharing of faith is common and encouraged

Disciple Making

- Spiritual friendships are formed
- Priestly vocations are promoted
- Families are equipped and empowered as missionary disciples
- The vulnerable, grieving and neglected receive care
- The poor are prioritized and served

Mission Support

- Financial support for the mission is predictable and stable
- Support for the mission occurs at many levels
- Priests and their staff are healthy, happy and holy
- Mission-ready facilities are safe, welcoming, attractive, accessible and right-sized

ARCHBISHOP CALLS FOR MISSION FOCUS

BY CHRISTOPHER GUNTY

editor@CatholicReview.org

When he made his first holy Communion in the 1950s, about 75 percent of Catholics attended Sunday Mass, Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore told the priests of the archdiocese Sept. 29.

These days, that has flipped, and about 25 percent or less of Catholics

throughout his talk that the heart of the planning process is what Pope Francis calls 'missionary conversion'."

Focus on mission

Archbishop Lori told the priests gathered at St. Mary's Seminary in Roland Park that when he was installed as the 16th archbishop of Baltimore, he sought the advice of priests and others in the archdiocese.

Hard realities indicate the church cannot keep doing what it has been doing, and that planning needs to be focused on the church's mission, which begins with personal conversion.

"Without conversion, there is no mission," he said. "Conversion is the overturning of our very existence as the result of a living encounter with Christ – an encounter that makes us much more than adherents to Christi-

attend Mass on weekends.

That trend is one of the major factors driving the archdiocesan planning process, which includes the introduction of “pastorates” as a way of organizing parishes. Each parish will be part of a pastorate that will have a single pastoral leader and leadership team. Pastorates will consist of a single parish or a group of parishes.

The planning process has been formally underway since the release of the archbishop’s pastoral letter, “A Light Brightly Visible,” in July 2015.

The most compelling case for change is the loss of so many Catholics to the active practice of the faith, the archbishop told the priests. He noted some people say the church shouldn’t be so concerned with numbers.

“Let me say a word about numbers,” the archbishop said. “Numbers represent people, people created in God’s image and called to friendship with him, now and eternally, people called to be the Body of Christ.”

The archbishop noted that after the Apostles preached on the first Pentecost, Scripture notes that 3,000 people were added to the faith that day. “I firmly believe that Jesus would not have told us to go out and baptize all the nations if he didn’t want us to gather into his assembly, to his community, to his church, as many people as we can. ... I hope you and I can experience the restlessness of true missionaries.”

The archbishop made it clear

“I decided not to take the advice either of those who said I should quickly come in and close a lot of parishes and I also decided not to take the advice of those who said to me, ‘You’ve got to hang on to everything you’ve got no matter what,’” he said.

He decided to focus on the mission of the church, with the understanding that the mission will be expressed differently in various parts of the archdiocese.

“I hope that all communities will devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are. ‘Mere administration’ can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be ‘permanently in a state of mission.’”

– POPE FRANCIS, “THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL” (NO. 25)

anity as a mere system of ideas. Instead it makes us disciples, followers, active members of the body of Christ.”

He noted Pope Francis is calling for a personal conversion to Christ before we can transform the ministries and the people we serve.

“Our parishes need to be hubs of missionary activity where there is at least a critical mass of missionary disciples who are ready, willing and able – and equipped to go out – to visit, to help people find their way back to the church, accompany them back to the church, and to make sure that once they get back, it’s not just a handshake at the door, but an embrace and a protracted effort to really integrate them into the worshipping community,” the archbishop said.

Implementation of pastorates will vary from place to place and from one cultural community to another, he said. The issue is how to configure the archdiocese and its parishes to do this and how to marshal the church’s resources to accomplish the mission.

Process sought feedback

The daylong meeting with priests followed a number of elements in the planning process, including regional meetings with priests in early 2015, release of the archbishop’s pastoral letter in July 2015, and a survey in November 2015 that compiled feedback from nearly 30,000 parishioners throughout the archdiocese.

This year, the planning process was advanced by looking at data from all the parishes, and working with a “design team” made up of pastors and key staff members at the Catholic Center. The design team proposed a model of a new way to organize pastorates.

The model was presented to a joint meeting of the Presbyteral Council (an advisory committee of priests to the archbishop), the College of Consultors and vicars forane in early September. Feedback from that meeting shaped the proposed pastorate model presented to all priests and parish life directors at the meeting at the seminary.

Daphne Daly, director of the archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Planning, told the group that implementation of the final pastorate model will unfold over a couple of years – “not tomorrow,

said the focus needs to be on mission and what’s best for the archdiocese as a whole, with evangelization and pastoral service at the forefront.

“That really is a guiding principle,” he said. “As you look at the pastorates, each should be of a size that’s manageable and realistic.”

He said it is important to provide adequate staffing for each pastorate and a manageable scope of work for priests, lay ecclesial ministers and deacons. While each pastorate will have one pastor, additional associate pastors or senior associates may be assigned to assist with sacramental and other needs. Under the guiding principles, no priest should celebrate more than three Sunday Masses each weekend, including the Saturday vigil Mass.



not next month, probably not even six months from now.”

In the late September meeting, pastors met in small groups by region to see which parishes in their area would be grouped together in proposed pastorates, and provide feedback on whether the model supports the creation of vibrant, sustainable and evangelizing pastorates, and how those pastorates could support missionary conversion and evangelization. The pastors and pastoral life directors also gave feedback on suggested modifications to the proposed pastorate model.

The design team considered feedback from the Sept. 29 meeting to present a revised model to Archbishop Lori and his senior leadership team. The revised model is being presented publicly to pastors, parish staff and parishioners in early October. Each pastor and four representatives of his parish leadership will have an opportunity to comment on the revised model in regional meetings in early November.

‘Manageable and realistic’

Monsignor Jay O’Connor, pastor of Our Lady of the Fields in Millersville, is a member of the design team that has been studying the proposed model. He

vibrant worship

Daly, of the planning office, said the three-Mass limit supports the overall health of priests and encourages a vibrant liturgical and worship experience.

She also said the proposed plan expects that if the pastor has “a great staff and great lay leadership and a lot of confidence in this team of people who are supporting him, he’s able to care not only for the pastorate but to take care of himself,” by taking time to meet with his priestly prayer and support group and refreshing himself spiritually in other ways.

Daly said the tendency in adopting the pastorate model will be simply to find ways to pastor two or more parishes more efficiently and effectively, but that misses the points Archbishop Lori made about moving from maintenance of parish structures to the mission of the church.

She said pastorates must find ways to reach young adults and support the domestic church – the family in the home.

“How can our events be ever-more mission driven?” Daly asked. “It’s not just going to happen by doing an administrative realignment. We have

to be thinking about how we are radically reaching out to people and inviting them into our communities in a loving and merciful way.”

She noted there are many ways to make disciples and effect a change toward missionary conversion.

Monsignor O’Connor’s parish will become a single-parish pastorate – one parish now and one pastorate in the new model. “My sense is that while the structure of the pastorate won’t change, there will be a need for recommitment to mission and vision,” he said.

Just because a parish stands by itself doesn’t mean business as usual, Monsignor O’Connor noted.

“One of the first things we would need to do – and I suspect every parish – we need to create a new way of understanding the parish,” he said. “It’s not a service center where people just come to get their needs met. It’s a mission center where they come to be empowered to go forth to spread the word of Christ.”

Father Edward Hendricks has been through this process before. As pas-

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tor of Divine Mercy Parish in western Maryland, he knows the process can work. “It was our decision to merge four parishes into one,” he said. “We are stronger spiritually, stronger financially. ... The hard work this is calling for has been fruitful,” he told his brother priests during the feedback portion of the meeting.

In an interview with the Catholic Review the following day, he acknowledged that the process for his parish was much longer than the new parish planning process envisions. Planning in the two westernmost counties of the archdiocese, Allegany and Garrett, began in 1992. The area has seen four planning commissions and it was obvious in the 1990s that due to resources and other concerns there would be fewer parishes in the county.

After Our Lady of the Mountains Parish in Cumberland was formed by the merger of five parishes, the parishes that now make up Divine Mercy began their effort in earnest.

and questions.”

He emphasized there is no single way to bring parishes together. The process used in Frostburg, Grantsville, Midland and Westernport won’t necessarily work in other areas.

Father Hendricks, who is also a member of the archdiocesan design team, said it’s not the intent of the process to force pastors and parishes to merge their parishes. “It’s up to the pastors to determine what process to follow. If a pastor chooses closures (of buildings), that’s one thing. But we’re not coming at this with that,” he said.

Establishing trust

Father T. Austin Murphy Jr. is pastor of Our Lady of Hope Parish in Dundalk and St. Luke Parish in Edgemere. In the feedback session, he told his brother priests that it is possible to be pastor of more than one parish at a time. After the session, he said a good working relationship does not happen immediately.

“This isn’t impossible,” he said. The process takes time – but there is time to do this. “It starts as a challenge, because there’s suspicion” from people

his parishes remain open, and Mass schedules in Dundalk-area parishes had been consolidated and coordinated before he arrived there.

From his perspective, “I look at it as I have one very big parish made up of two parishes.” He responds to a phone call from either parish the same way, but he notes, “There’s only one of me. ... You begin to share that pastoral ministry with appropriate pastoral ministers and trusting each other to do a good job goes a long way.”

He said it helps that his parishes have an associate pastor, a deacon and talented lay ministers who can share the pastoral work, including funerals and other ministries where a priest traditionally has been present.

In his comments after the small group discussions on proposed pastorates, Archbishop Lori reminded the group that priests are bridge-builders. “We have to build bridges if we’re going to achieve this,” he said, noting that many parishes already are working together in formal and informal ways.

“The comment period did not close 15 minutes ago,” the archbishop added, inviting the priests to reflect on what



"I believe you have to make sure you're very transparent with what you're doing. I began with the (parish) corporators. When they were on board, they took it to the pastoral council and finance council," he said.

"The important thing is to work together with people of the parish, staff, lay leadership, through every step of the process. Be open to meetings

because there's suspicion from people who wonder if their parish is closing or the Mass they prefer will be canceled. "There's that initial establishing trust with them and letting them know that you love them, you care about them and you want to learn from them."

It doesn't necessarily mean that one of the parishes is closing. "They're individuals," Father Murphy said, noting that while the parishes maintain their own identities, the pastor still serves as the spiritual father.

He said for his own well-being as a pastor of two locations, he established one finance committee, one pastoral council and one maintenance committee. "You can manage multiple campuses, multiple spaces with one team," he said. "We're now at the point where we're starting to merge staff."

He said the experience of the person in the pew doesn't necessarily change much, at least not initially, because

inviting the priests to reflect on what they had heard.

"We recognize changes (to the proposed pastorate model) will come from this meeting and changes will come from the November meetings," he said.

Pastorate model emerges

After the November regional meetings, the design team will look again at the proposed pastorate model. A final version will be presented to the archbishop, who will ratify a new model for the whole archdiocese in early 2017.

It's expected that the process of creating pastorates will take a couple of years, taking into account retirement of current pastors and the opportunity to reassign clergy. As that occurs, parishes assigned together in pastorates will begin to work together on how best to achieve the goals of sustaining a vibrant community that spreads the mission of the church. •

KEY DEFINITIONS

Consultation

The act and process of the ordained and faithful providing feedback, assessment and ideas to the Archbishop.

Core Mission Priorities

The foundational areas of focus toward which evangelizing parishes and pastorates direct the majority of their efforts. They emphasize the formation of disciples who are mission ready and actively engaged in personal and pastoral missionary conversion. The core mission priorities are: Liturgy, Welcome, Encounter, Accompaniment, Sending and Mission Support.

Design of Pastorates

The Archdiocesan-wide configuration of parishes into pastorates.

Guiding Change Document

Statements detailing the Why, the What, and the Not How of the Pastoral Planning Process.

Mission of the Church

Love God, love your neighbor and make disciples. The mission is lived out through the Core Mission Priorities.

Pastorate Structures

The types of pastorate configurations included in the Design of Pastorates.

– Single-Parish Pastorate:

A single canonical parish with one pastor, one Finance Council and one Pastoral Council; in most cases, it also will have only one worship site, unless it is a parish that exists as a result of previous parish mergers and retains more than one worship site.

– Multi-Parish Pastorate:

Two or more canonical parishes with one pastor and two or more worship sites, one Finance Council and one Pastoral Council.

Pastoral Planning

The act and process of discernment of what God desires for, or of, a parish and/or Archdiocese, described in documents, structures and plans. It is distinguished from strategic planning, which is what you or I desire for, and of, a parish and/or Archdiocese.

Prayer

Merciful Father, pour out
your Spirit of wisdom
and love

To guide us in this pastoral
planning process to
Be Missionary Disciples
Of your son, Jesus Christ.

Transform us through the
Eucharist we share,
That it may become the
source and summit of our
lives.

Make us truly welcoming to
all of your people,
That our hearts may open to
your grace and mercy.

Walk with us as we
accompany one another
Along the path of spiritual
growth and discipleship.
And send us forth to
proclaim the joy of the
Gospel
Through faith, service,
justice and love of others,
most especially the poor.

Pastorate

One or more parishes with a single assigned leader (pastor, administrator or pastoral life director) and a single leadership team who, together, are responsible for parish life and structure in the parish(es) that comprise the pastorate.

Pastorate Pastoral Plan

A three-year plan of parish structure, goals and initiatives that describes how the parish intends to implement the Be Missionary Disciples vision at the local level.

Vision Element

The aspirational measures and targets that, through the formulation of strategies and action items in the Pastorate Pastoral Plan and incremental progress over time, will lead to vibrant, sustainable and evangelizing parishes focused on living out the core mission priorities. ●

May we never lose sight of
our sacred mission
To “go and make disciples of
all nations”
So that in this Archdiocese
of Baltimore
The light of Christ would
always be
A Light Brightly Visible.

Amen.



Be Missionary Disciples

ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN

CREATED BY



The Catholic Review

