

Diocese of St. Cloud

Final Guiding Change Document – September 24, 2024



<u>The Why</u> (Our current reality)	<u>The Not How</u> (unacceptable means)	<u>The What</u> (The results that we seek)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The world is evolving. This creates new challenges and opportunities for the Church. We must adapt to changing demographics and other realities to proclaim Jesus effectively in the world today. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we will build on the successes and dedication of past generations for the benefit of future generations. Examples of changing realities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The overall population in our diocese has increased 7% since 2010 while the number of registered Catholic parishioners has decreased from 22.4% to 16.6% of the total population. ➤ Ages 25-42 make up 22.9% of the population and ages 7-24 make up 22.8% ➤ 25% of the population is ages 0-18 2. Reduced Mass attendance and participation in the sacraments, formation offerings, and volunteer opportunities point to decreased engagement. Of particular concern for our future is the significant decline in youth and young family engagement. Since 2010: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mass attendance has declined 33.1% ➤ Weddings have declined 45.9% ➤ Baptisms are down 44.7% ➤ First Communions have declined 37.8% ➤ Confirmations are down 35.5% ➤ Registered Catholic households declined 19% 3. We have an abundance of spiritual and material gifts in our clergy, laypeople, finances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The status quo is not an option ● Rely upon ourselves apart from God ● Knowingly or willingly violate canon or civil law or diocesan policy ● Make decisions solely using data or based on past hurts ● Add to the long-term existing burden ● Leave clergy, staff and lay leaders without resources or support ● Allow exceptions without a process for review and approval ● Ignore, discount or abandon people in grief and loss ● Let the perfect be the enemy of the good ● Let the church become all about the buildings ● Undermine the bishop and his plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will renew our commitment to Jesus Christ, truly present in the Eucharist, as the Source and Summit of our Catholic faith. The Eucharist is a sacrament that sustains us and sends us on mission to build up the Body of Christ by the witness of our words and actions. 2. We will increase the full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful in the sacramental life of the Church. 3. We will listen with charity to the members of the Body of Christ and discern the voice of the Holy Spirit to best respond to the spiritual needs of all people in our diocese. 4. Pastoral planning in each ACC will include common parameters to ensure consistency across the diocese while allowing flexibility to meet unique, local needs. 5. We will exercise prudent stewardship of the human, structural, and financial gifts of diocesan, parish, and school resources. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To best use our human resources, we will improve how we discern and use the gifts of clergy and lay faithful, improve formation for the mission of evangelization, and increase efforts to foster vocations to priestly and religious life. We will establish sustainable workloads for our priests, including no more than three regularly scheduled weekend Masses, and limit time and distance to travel to

and organizations. As stewards of God's gifts we must use them more effectively to fulfill our mission in the coming years.

- Our average percent of church utilization for weekend Masses is 39%
- There is a struggle to find and retain qualified and faithful lay employees because of increasing pressures, burnout, and limited compensation.

4. Clergy, staff, and laity are experiencing stress in body, mind, and spirit in their ministries. Responsible for multiple parishes, our priests bear a heavier administrative burden than in the past, reducing their time for pastoral and liturgical matters.

- In 1999, the diocese had 97 priests serving 140 parishes; today there are 54 priests serving 131 parishes
- The average number of parishes per diocesan priest is 2.4 (U.S. average 1.0); while the median number of parishes per priest is 3.

5. Four out of five parishes are unable to meet ministry and operations budgets through annual giving (plate and envelope). Considering lower participation and reduced giving, this will lead to an unsustainable future without more collaboration and prudent allocation of time, talent, and treasure.

liturgies. Additionally, we will develop the capacity to hire, form, retain, and compensate qualified staff as respected co-workers in Christ's mission.

- b. To best use structural resources, we will reduce administrative and driving burdens for priests, increase utilization of facilities, reduce the number of Masses expected of each priest, implement effective standardized systems, and increase collaboration to reduce duplication of governance structures.
 - c. To best use financial resources, we will focus our budgets and decisions on areas that best advance the Church's mission. We will practice and educate about stewardship to reduce reliance on fundraisers, bequests, and other sources of income to maintain our ordinary operations; assure that we provide just compensation for employees; establish regional administration to reduce redundancies; and reduce expenditures on underutilized facilities.
- 6.** We will strengthen the vitality of our Catholic schools and lifelong faith formation offerings through worship, learning, and service.