



January, 2016

Dear friends in Christ,

We owe an enormous debt to the Catholic clergy, religious and laypeople who established our local church 165 years ago, and to all those who succeeded them in faith and service. Often with few resources, the Church has grown over the years in a way that the native peoples and settlers of the territory could have scarcely imagined.

We now have 174 parishes and missions serving more than 600,000 Catholic people. With growth has come the need for planning: planning for parishes and missions where the Eucharist will continue to be celebrated, the faith will be passed on and the poor loved. Our planning must include the need for vocations to the priesthood, Catholic schools and pastoral ministries that will serve the diverse needs of our people now and in the future.

Populations shift, needs change and vocations must always be encouraged and nurtured. As a result, each succeeding generation of Catholics in Western Washington has engaged in some form of planning. All of us have benefited from their foresight, and especially from their trust in the Lord. We not only stand on their shoulders, we literally worship in the churches they built, learn in the schools they established, find healing in the hospitals they opened and on and on and on. Now it is our time to plan for the future of this archdiocese with the same faith, hope and trust in the Lord that marked our earliest years.


Like the good stewards about whom Jesus spoke in his parables, we are called now to look at the mission of the Church – our mission – and along with it, the current and projected population trends in Western Washington. As a result, we are undertaking a pastoral planning process and beginning to ask questions about the needs of our people and parishes: Where do our people live, and where will they live in the next 50 years? Do we have adequate parishes, missions and facilities to serve them and to give them a place to live their call as baptized Catholics? Considering the shortage of priests, how can we best ensure that Masses will be available to all without having to travel many miles?

In the days and months ahead, we will be asking Catholic parishioners to participate in pastoral planning. We will look at the current situation of our clergy, and how they would be best distributed. We also will look at ways we can join together as an archdiocese to create a spiritual culture where vocations are naturally and enthusiastically prayed for and encouraged – especially vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We also are strengthening our Deacon Formation Program and the way we form the laity for the important ministry they undertake.

Those who went before us planned well and handed on to us a Church that is strong and filled with faith and love. We also must exercise stewardship to bless future generations. As this process goes forward, I will keep you informed.

The most important thing to remember is that we will trust in the providence of God. God in his goodness will lead us precisely where he wants us to be, just as he has always done.

Sincerely in Christ,

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J. Peter Sartain

Pastoral Planning in the Archdiocese of Seattle

"The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers." Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel #28

Current Challenges

To live out the church's mission—our mission—we must effectively address some very real challenges. Our population is growing and there are a limited number of priests. The Archdiocese of Seattle currently has more parishes and fewer priests than it did 35 years ago.

- In 1980 there were 130 parishes and 35 missions in the Archdiocese served by 130 pastors and assisted by 74 parochial vicars (a total of 204 parish priests).
- In 2015 there are 146 parishes and 27 missions served by only 111 pastors assisted by 49 parochial vicars (a total of 160 parish priests).

North Seattle Deanery

1 Seattle: Assumption	10 Seattle: St. Anne
2 Seattle: Blessed Sacrament	11 Seattle: St. Benedict
3 Seattle: Christ the King	12 Seattle: St. Bridget
4 Seattle: North American Martyrs	13 Seattle: St. Catherine of Siena
5 Seattle: Our Lady of Fatima	14 Seattle: St. John the Evangelist
6 Seattle: Our Lady of the Lake	15 Seattle: St. Margaret of Scotland
7 Seattle: Sacred Heart of Jesus	16 Seattle: St. Matthew
8 Seattle: St. Alphonsus	17 Shoreline: St. Luke
9 Seattle: St. Andrew Kim	18 Shoreline: St. Mark

The Planning Process

The planning process must look at priests assigned to parishes, Mass schedules and the diverse needs for pastoral care. We must look beyond the one-pastor-one-parish model of leadership for our parish communities. In the coming months pastoral leaders will be looking at new models to better align priestly leadership with current realities. One concern that must be addressed is that many priests are currently stretched too thin. One opportunity is maximizing lay leadership in service to the Catholic faith community and our parishes. Another possible model would involve parishes working more closely together under one pastor or a pastoral team (priest and lay leaders) serving multiple parishes.

In coming weeks and months you will learn more and be invited to give your thoughts on ways to best serve all Catholics. With prayer and open hearts, with wisdom and thoughtful analysis, we will confront these challenges together and live out our call to be missionary disciples.

Archbishop Sartain's Vision and Principles for Planning

The Vision for the Planning Process:

- We trust in God's providence because this is the Lord's work and we will move joyfully and hopefully into the future.
- The Lord's work which the Archdiocese has been entrusted with is evangelization.
- The pastoral and spiritual care of the people of God is of the utmost importance.
- Fostering vocations to the priesthood will continue to be emphasized.
- Evangelization efforts (promoting the role of the baptized as missionary disciples) will be emphasized.
- The vocation of the laity to carry out the mission of the Church in the world will continue to be emphasized as well as lay roles in volunteer ministry and consultative leadership within the Church.
- It is expected there will be various models of pastoral leadership within deaneries and across the archdiocese.
- Changes in the model will be discerned and planned through consultation.
- After pastoral leadership is assigned within new models the standard will be toward stability of leadership.

Principles around Parishes:

- Quality pastoral care is the prime mover to decisions and for any plans that impact a parish
- Statistical research will be balanced with pastoral insight of current experience and discernment of path for the future
- Particular needs of ethnic communities will be considered
- Current status of parish/mission/station could change. Such changes could be reversed later.
- Number of masses in an parish or mission is a critical component to planning
 - Normative number of masses per weekend to celebrate for any priest is no more than 4
 - Healthy balance of workload for priests

Principles around Pastoral Leadership:

- Normative Pastoral Leader of the Parish is the one who celebrates the Eucharist. Normative standard remains a resident priest in each parish
- Consistently and well-formed deacons or lay leaders, with a common ecclesiology, can be named as pastoral leaders of a parish
- Where there is not a priest as Pastor a priest assigned to a parish to have a consistent presence with the people