

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



RENEW MY CHURCH

GROUPING SESSION #1





We are Loved

...I have loved you with an everlasting love and so I still maintain my faithful love for you.

I shall build you once more, yes, you will be rebuilt...

—Jeremiah 31:3-4

Reflect

Let us pray...

Holy Spirit, we ask that you come in power and renew every parish in the Archdiocese of Chicago with the fire of your love.

We ask your blessing upon our conversation today.

As we begin to understand your call to “Renew My Church,” draw us together as one and help us to develop the mind, heart and skills to do your will, share your good news and to lead others to do the same.



Conversation objectives

- Be grounded in the overall vision of Renew My Church and the process for community engagement and planning.
- Opportunity to pray together, build community among the grouping, and establish collaboration.
- Understand your role and the purpose of the subsequent conversations structured at the grouping and parish levels.
- Be equipped to discover the parishes and schools in your grouping

Ground rules for engagement

- Begin with and integrate prayer throughout our time together and our time apart.
- Model respect, collaboration, and openness to the Spirit speaking through all of us.
- Challenge yourself – extroverts hold back, introverts step up!
- Your conversation, your discernment – the facilitators are here to keep us on track and ensure everyone can participate
- Turn off/silence mobile devices
- Start and end on time



Why are we here? We are called.

Jesus' call for renewal is:

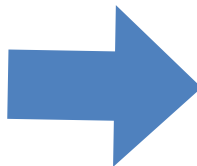
- Perpetual and inherent to our journey as Christians
- A part of being Catholic, part of the Universal Church.
- As in the paschal mystery, we are called to a continual dying and giving to new life.

How have you been called to renew aspects of your Catholic journey in the past?

Why the need for renewal?

Christendom

- Christian culture
- Open to faith
- Clear understanding of Christian imagination and language
- Foundational moral teaching



New Missionary Age

- Secular culture
- Oppose faith
- No understanding of Christian imagination and language
- Rejected moral teaching

Today's culture is ambivalent toward religion and in many quarters of our society God and Christian morality is pushed aside.



U.S. faith life in the Church today

- Mass attendance in our archdiocese has decreased by 27% over the past 20 years
- Across the U.S., 2 in 5 children baptized are not confirmed
- 85% of children confirmed stop practicing their faith by age 21

Who do you know...

...that does not know or accept the love of Jesus?

...who has left the Church and that you hold in hope will return?





Pope Francis



“I dream of a ‘missionary option,’ that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, **so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language**

and structures can be suitably channeled for the **evangelization of today’s world rather than her self-preservation**. The renewal of structures can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented...”

—The Joy of the Gospel #27

Important to remember...

Our Renew My Church journey is both:

- **Spiritual**: to re-counter Jesus Christ as disciples and parish communities

AND

- **Structural**: to ensure our parishes have adequate resources for vitality

Renew My Church is a call from Jesus Christ to all of us to renew our local Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago, together:

Making Disciples, Building Communities, Inspiring Witness



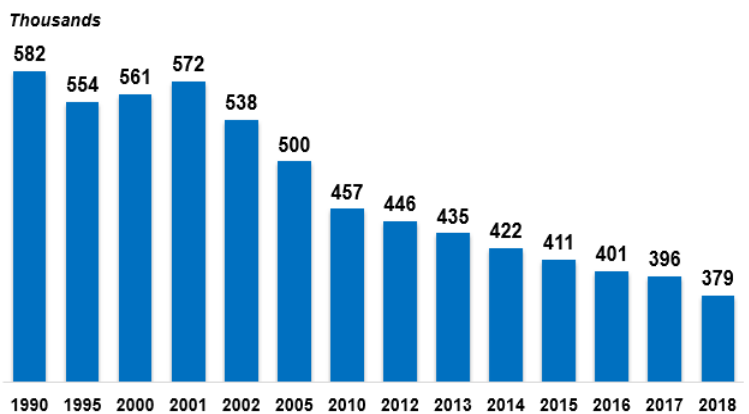
Why Structural Renewal?

Remember the shift from Christendom to the new apostolic age? Today's Culture is ambivalent toward religion and in many quarters of our society God and Christian morality is pushed aside.

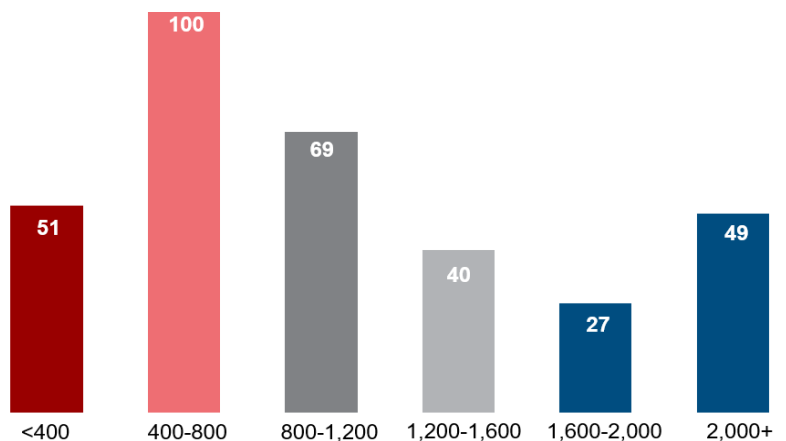
Our model of parish life was built for a different time. Maintaining the status quo is diverting time, energy and resources away from what we need to invest in the new methods we need to reach people today.

Population Shifts: The shift in demographics has been significant. There are so many populations shifts within the boundaries of our archdiocese. And in those areas where there are fewer people, there are fewer disciples, providing fewer resources ... and those that are left are simply maintaining. They're not growing.

October counts continue to decline: With many of the demographic shifts, we also see participation in our parishes on a decline. A telling measure is something called the October Count, which represents the average weekend Mass attendance, based on an annual count taken the first four weekends in October. The trend reaches back nearly 30 years.



A significant number of our parishes fall below the 800-count range, which is a marker for a parish to be able to sustain itself – this is why it is one of the factors – not the only one – but one of the factors that's part of the discernment and decision phase for determining the most sustainable parish configurations.



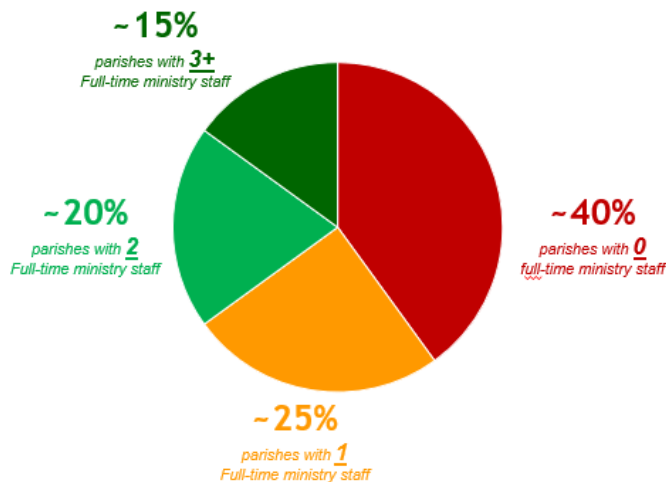
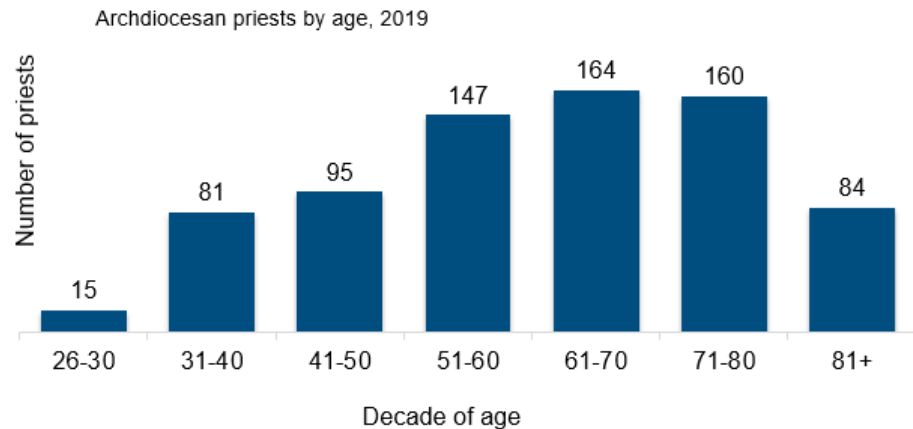


Reduced number of pastors available:

Additionally, the number of pastors we will have in the very near future. A parish needs a pastor, a shepherd for the community who can work with

lay leaders to enliven a culture that fosters evangelization, forms disciples in community, and sends them out to bring others in. With fewer pastors, we need to reassess our structures and parish models.

Average age of our priests in 62 ... retirement age is 70.



At the same time, with few pastors available and fewer resources available, most parishes fall short of being able to staff full time ministry needs

Why Spiritual Renewal?

If we merely change the structures and save money and divert that to programs is that the answer? Is that enough to renew our local Church?

The short answer is No.



Renew My Church video debrief

At your table:

What did you hear in the video that was clarifying?

What did you hear that was different than when you agreed to be a part of your parish team?

What were the most important messages you heard?



Archdiocesan mission priorities

To further the mission in the Church of Chicago in today's world, the Archdiocese has discerned:

- 3 mission imperatives
- 8 mission priorities





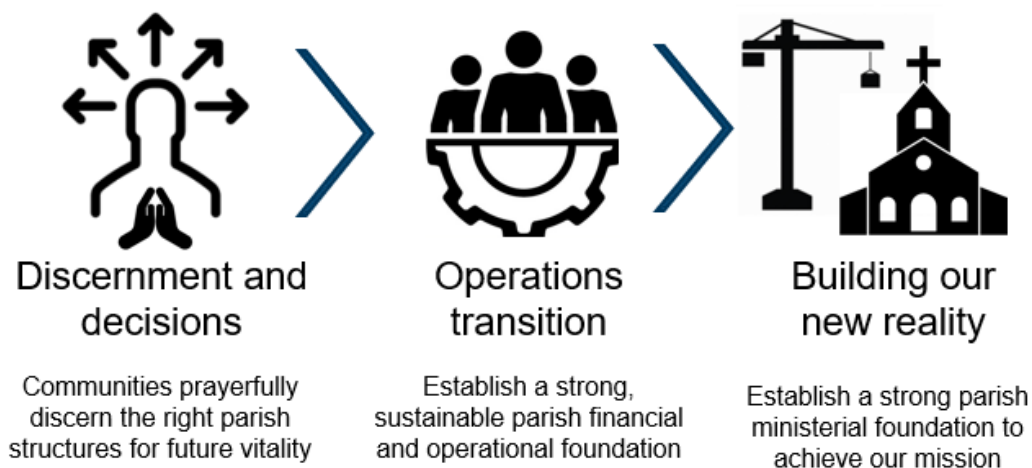
Parish Grouping Process

At the heart of our Renew My Church efforts is the parish grouping process. Your parish has been formed into a grouping based on geography and other commonalities.

The goal of the grouping process is to ensure that all parishes across the archdiocese have the vision, leadership, resources and operational foundation necessary to create an effective culture of evangelization that makes disciples, builds communities and inspires witness.

The parish grouping process has three main movements to it:

- **Discernment and Decisions:** Pastors, lay leaders, parishioners and school families prayerfully consider different configurations of parishes and schools, such as multi- site parishes and schools or merged parishes and schools; identifying opportunities for essential collaboration within the groupings, culminating in feedback given to the Archdiocese as vital input for the cardinal's decision on a new configuration.
- **Operations Transitions:** Supported by the Archdiocese, new configurations are implemented and launched with outlook, organization and vision for strong vitality.
- **Building the New Reality:** Parishes and schools develop new operations and pastoral plans for mission vitality for today's times.



There are ongoing efforts to support all parishes develop an evangelizing culture that deepens our own discipleship of Jesus Christ and equips us to bring others into an encounter with Our Lord.



Overall goal for groupings

Build a renewed, vital, and sustainable Catholic presence for the good of all people in the collective communities within the grouping.

- What do we need to change structurally, given resource realities?
- How can we be more effective through collaboration?

Objectives of this Discernment & Decision phase of the process

- **Connect to a larger RMC vision** and begin building toward a culture of evangelization
- **Build relationships** across communities within the grouping
- **Understand the current realities** in the local community
- **Evaluate potential structural options** for moving forward
- **Provide the RMC Commission with a feedback report** to help inform a recommendation for Cardinal Cupich

What does success look like?

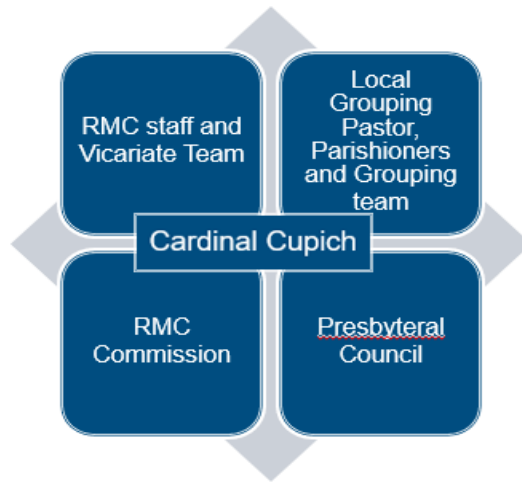
Through an open, honest, Spirit-led, collaborative discernment among committed GFDT members:

- Groupings are equipped and prepared to build mission vitality
- Parishes and schools are structurally viable for the long-term future
- GFDT member will grow in their discipleship and be leaders/examples for others as phases continue.

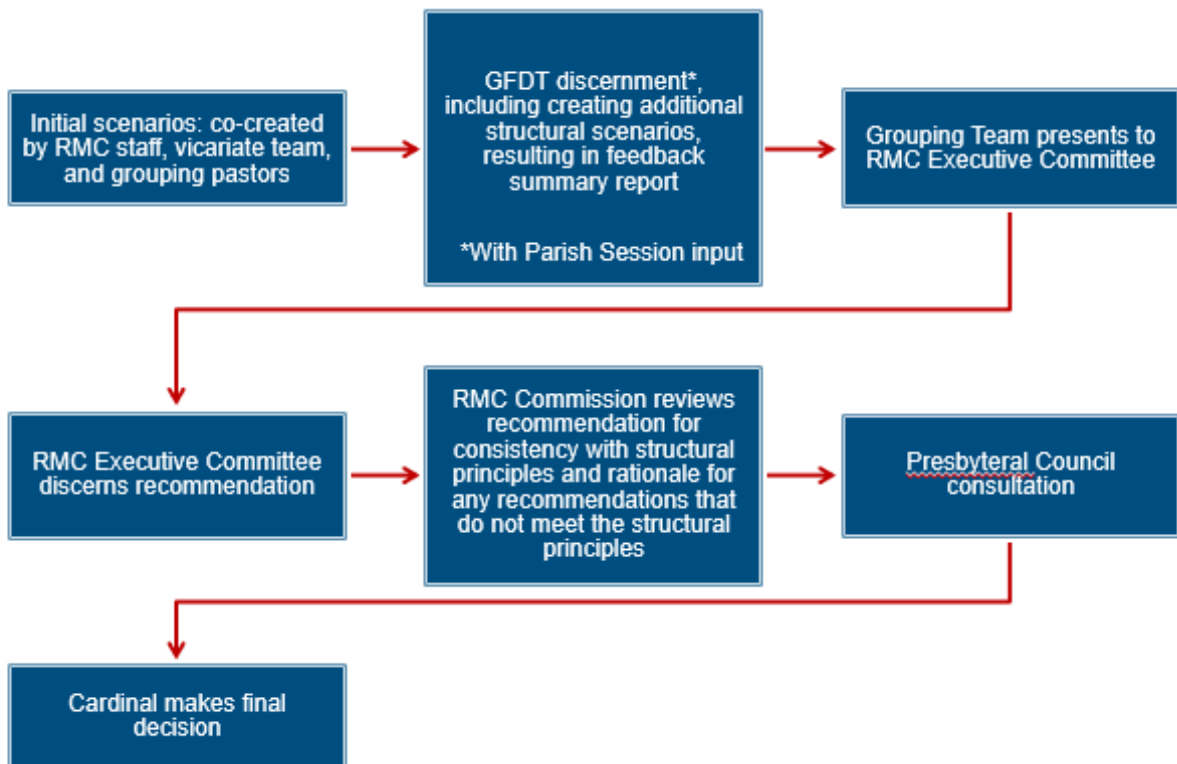


Grouping structural changes

Final decision on structural changes are made by **Cardinal Cupich** with local, vital input and Archdiocesan guidance. There are multiple sources of feedback to inform the decision:



Possible structural scenarios are presented to the grouping by the pastors and Archdiocesan team and then...





What are scenarios?

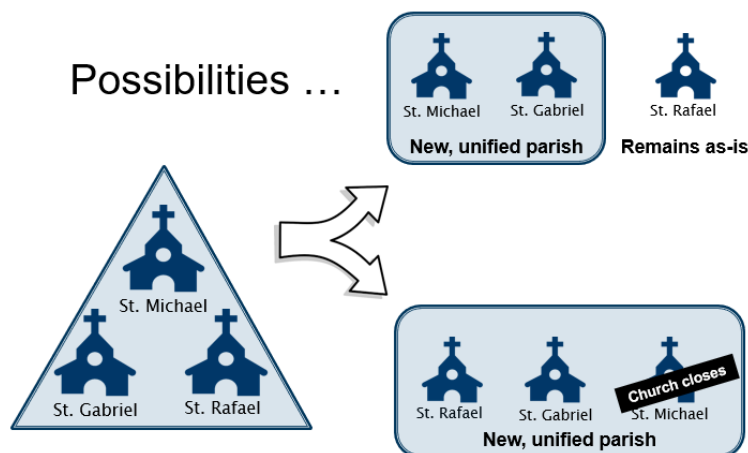
Scenarios are possibilities regarding new parish and school structures within the grouping that enable spiritual renewal among those communities.

Scenarios include a few standard categories for consideration:

1. Status of the parishes and church buildings, e.g.,
 - Remain as is (i.e., no structural changes)
 - Join together with another parish and all church buildings remain open (for example, a single pastor and parish administration overseeing multiple church building locations – all of which continue to remain open and celebrate the sacraments)
 - Join together with another parish and some church buildings close)
2. School status (i.e., remain open, close, merge with another school)

Example of possibilities:

Grouping: St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Rafael Parishes



Foundational principles guide and address...

- **Vitality of pastoral life that supports:**
 - New and vibrant ways to form missionary disciples
 - Create a culture of vocations
 - Outreach to all demographics for religious education and faith formation
 - Meeting the needs of the entire community
- **Balanced workloads for priests** – sacramental, pastoral care and administration
- **Supportive Facilities** with adequate, safe, accessible space and capacity for growth
- **Parish and school financial stability**



Two types of meetings

Meeting Type	Purpose	Audience
Grouping Sessions	Discern scenario feedback Incorporates feedback or insights heard at the parishes Submit a Feedback Summary Report to the Commission	Grouping Feedback & Discernment Team
Parish Sessions	Enable input-gathering from the broader parish Keep the parish informed about what is being discussed	Parishioners, staff, school families, and GFDT

How will discussions and feedback occur?

Grouping Sessions:

- Pastors and their parish/school representatives will meet together as a grouping for facilitated discernment conversations

Parish Sessions:

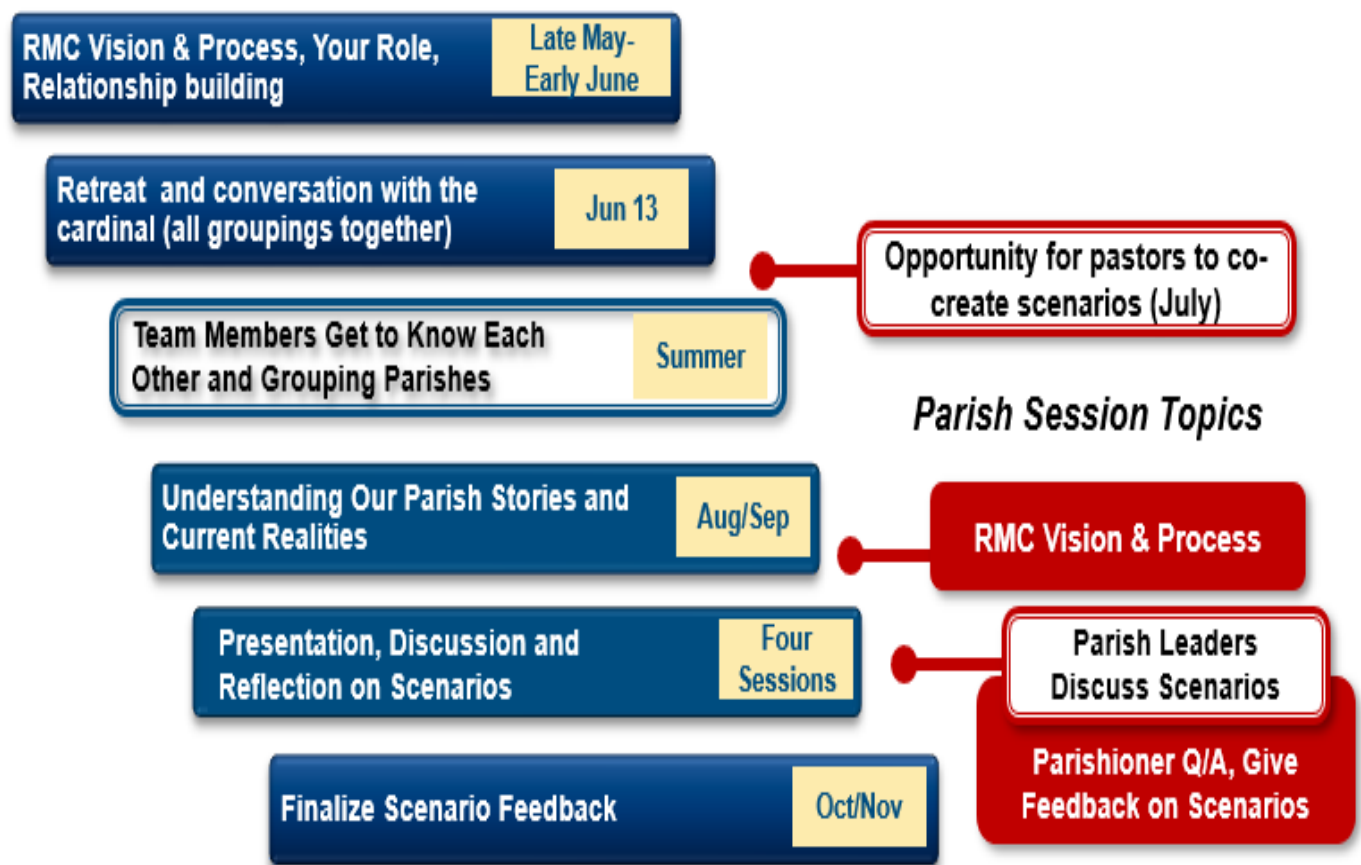
- Pastors and their parish representatives will meet with parishioners including school families at various times during the process to share information and gather feedback



Session Flow

There will be a series of facilitated conversations to gather input and discern feedback

Grouping Session Topics





Important roles

Grouping Facilitator: Your grouping facilitator will manage the process for your grouping – facilitating the conversations, following-up between sessions, helping answer questions

Vision Liaison: Each grouping will have someone who walks with the grouping as a neutral pastoral presence and resource

Vicariate Team Liaison: One member of the vicariate team (e.g., DVO, RD, PVC, LFC) will serve as liaison to the grouping, attending grouping meetings to keep the vicariate team informed and provide area of expertise when needed

Feedback Summary

WHAT IS IT?

The Feedback Summary is a formal document summarizing the Grouping Feedback & Discernment Team's compiled thoughts on the given scenarios.

WHO WRITES IT?

By Grouping Session 3, we will be requesting 3-4 volunteers (1 from each parish) to meet as an interparish writing team to draft a Feedback Summary for your Grouping. Decide who on your team might best fit the task. The team will write a draft that will be reviewed and shaped by the entire Grouping Feedback & Discernment Team.

WHAT IS DONE WITH IT?

The writing team will present it to the RMC executive committee.

Informed by the vital input from a multitude of resources, including the grouping's feedback summary, a commission of local laity, clergy and Archdiocesan leadership recommends a scenario to Cardinal Cupich.

An executive committee of the commission will conduct an in-depth review of each grouping's feedback summary and other input to propose a recommendation for the full commission to review and accept or reject.

Community Engagement and Planning Feedback Summary for the Holy People Grouping

Submitted to the
Renew My Church Standards and Recommendations Commission
September 9, 2017

Dear Commission Members,

The pastoral leaders in the Holy People Grouping are grateful for the opportunity to submit this feedback to you toward the renewal of Jesus' mission in our local church. This summary represents the fruit from our discernment and conversations over the past three months as individual parishes and collectively as a grouping. We are grateful for your prayerful consideration of this feedback as you discern a recommendation for the Episcopal Vicar and Cardinal Cupich. We look forward to receiving the decisions of the Cardinal and the Archdiocese in the Fall of 2017.



Your role in the grouping

Parish team's primary responsibilities:

1. **Discover:** Get to know the other parishes and schools in your grouping. Visit them, participate in their liturgies and/or events.
2. **Consult:** Participate in consultation conversations at the grouping and parish levels in order to generate feedback on Archdiocesan proposed scenarios of structural configuration for your grouping and if possible, propose alternatives scenarios.
3. **Listen:** Summarize the feedback from fellow parishioners so that the Cardinal and Archdiocese can benefit from the timely and thoughtful insights of parishioners in making decisions.
4. **Discern:** Prayerfully reflect during and between sessions and listen for possibilities, clarity, and direction. *Renew My Church* is primarily about spiritual renewal which begins with prayer, both individually and with others.
5. **Share:** Publicize and support Renew My Church in daily interactions so that as many people as possible can receive the invitation to participate and connect to the initiative as possible.
6. **Stay Mission-Focused:** All that you consider and discuss should be done so with the Renew My Church three mission imperatives in mind: *Called by Jesus Christ we are Making Disciples, Building Communities, and Inspiring Witness.*

What questions do you have in regard to your role? What clarifications do you need?

What will be easy?

What will be challenging?



What's next?

Your retreat with other Grouping Feedback & Discernment Teams

Summer Discoveries – become better acquainted with all the parishes and schools in your grouping

Our next grouping conversation:

- Topic: Grouping Strengths and Challenges

See schedule and location in your binder

Look for an email from your facilitator pre-conversations and post-conversations.

Hone your RMC “elevator speech”

How will you describe it to your friends and family?



What is Renew My Church?

As a member of the Grouping Feedback & Discernment Team, you will undoubtedly be asked questions about Renew My Church; what it is, why your parish is involved, and what it means for the people in your grouping. While fellow parishioners will approach you with questions, we also encourage you to spread the word.

What's your RMC elevator speech?

An “elevator speech” is a term used to describe a brief speech/message that outlines an idea or explains a process. The name comes from the notion that the message should be delivered in the short time period of an elevator ride, usually 20-60 seconds. Sometimes that is all the time you will have when someone asks you about Renew My Church. And often, messages in “smaller bites” are easier to receive.

When answering the question, “What is Renew My Church?” you should feel confident with your message and express it with words that resonate with your understanding and that represent you - say it in your own words.

Below are some examples of an RMC elevator speech. You are welcome to use them or adapt them to your own voice.

Example A: *Renew My Church is about responding to Jesus' constant call for renewal – renewal in ourselves and the way we invite others to Jesus and the Catholic faith. Given today's world in the Archdiocese of Chicago, for example, its changing population and the trend of more and more people leaving the Church or even having a belief in God, especially young people, we need to find new ways to build up the Church and reach out to those in need of God's love and mercy. To best respond to the needs of people today, a part of renewal is looking at ways our parishes and schools can pull together our resources and best structure ourselves for renewed effective ministry and to sustain ourselves as we grow the Church. Come to our parish conversations to find out more.*



What is Renew My Church?

Example B: *Have you noticed the pews at Mass on the weekends? More and more, people are leaving the Church or just go out of habit rather than truly living the faith. Somethings must change and Renew My Church will bring about that change. We need to do something different to respond to how today's culture pulls people away from hearing and living the good news of the Gospel. We are being called to find new ways to make disciples, build stronger community among the parishes and schools in our area, and to reach out to the needy. This is requiring us to first look at how the parishes and schools around us can pull our resources together and better structure ourselves. Renew My Church will revitalize our efforts and better position us to grow the Church and bring Jesus Christ to the World. Renewal is a process and we will all be called to contribute in various ways over the years to come. Come to our parish conversations to find out more.*

Example C: *Renew My Church is about responding to Jesus' constant call to our personal renewal in the way we live out the Gospel and how we bring God's love to those around us, especially those in need. It's also about finding new ways to reach out to those who are spiritually lost. So many have either left the Church, are not really engaged in the Faith, or don't even claim a belief in God. Renew My Church is centered on three mission imperatives: making disciples, building communities, and inspiring witness. And, there are several initiatives that the archdiocese will implement that will help us live out those imperatives. Right now, our parishes and schools are looking at ways we can pull together our resources and best structure ourselves for renewed effective ministry and to sustain ourselves as we grow the Church. Come to our parish conversations to find out more.*



SUMMER DISCOVERIES

Our grouping's strengths and challenges

Activity: Between now and Grouping Session #2, individually and as a team, visit the parishes in your grouping. Consider attending Mass at each parish. What events or activities can you attend? Walk around the campus.

Consider:

What do I notice about the demographics of this parish? Who is being served?

What do I find most engaging about the people?

What do I find most engaging about the Liturgy?

How do the facilities (e.g. space and condition of the buildings) support ministry today?

How can they support ministry and stability for the long-term (10+ years)?

As you visit each other's parish, prayerfully reflect and summarize your discoveries using the worksheets on the following pages. Be prepared to reconvene as a whole Grouping Feedback & Discernment Team and discuss what you initially see as ministry and operational strengths and challenges for the parishes in your grouping.

Having visited and experienced each other over the summer will better prepare you to come to the discernment table and provide feedback on best ways to structure your parishes to: *Make Disciples, Build Communities, Inspire Witness* in renewed ways.



Parish Name: _____

What have I observed at this parish that supports the three RMC mission imperatives of making disciples, building community and inspiring witness?

What have I observed at this parish that might make it challenging to make disciples, build community and inspire witness?

What questions do I have about this parish?



Parish Name: _____

What have I observed at this parish that supports the three RMC mission imperatives of making disciples, building community and inspiring witness?

What have I observed at this parish that might make it challenging to make disciples, build community and inspire witness?

What questions do you have about this parish?



Parish Name: _____

What have I observed at this parish that supports the three RMC mission imperatives of making disciples, building community and inspiring witness?

What have I observed at this parish that might make it challenging to make disciples, build community and inspire witness? (e.g. space available, demographics)

What questions do you have about this parish?



Parish Name: _____

What have I observed at this parish that support the three RMC mission imperatives of making disciples, building community and inspiring witness?

What have I observed at this parish that might be challenging to make disciples, build community and inspire witness?

What questions do you have about this parish?



GROUPING SESSION #2

Our grouping's strengths and challenges

Keeping before us our 3 mission imperatives:

1. Making Disciples
2. Building Communities
3. Inspiring Witness

We answer the questions:

- What are current strengths within our grouping?
- What are challenges that present opportunities to combine resources and minister in renewed ways?

Strengths identify...

- Effective mission (ministry, outreach and community)
- Ability to grow
- Operating budgets, buildings and resources that support current and future sustainability

Challenges identify...

- Needs to strengthen mission (ministry, outreach and community)
- Questionable capacity to grow
- Necessities to align resources (finances, buildings) to invest in ministry

Identify strengths and challenges

To identify strengths and challenges we:

- Reflect on current realities within our grouping
- Use structural foundational principles as a guide for viability



Our grouping's realities

What are they?

Information that reports status on and reveals trends about:

- Significant population and ethnic demographic changes in your grouping
- Your parishes' Mass attendance, sacramental records
- Your church and school operating income and expenses
- School and religious education enrollments
- Building conditions and affordability

Why consider them?

To begin to revitalize our parishes and schools, it is essential that we take an honest look at changing demographics, the conditions of our buildings and our human and financial resources and ask: How can we best share resources and structure our parishes and schools to create future sustainability to carry out the mission of Jesus Christ?

Foundational principles guide and address...

Vitality of pastoral life that supports:

- New and vibrant ways to form missionary disciples
- Create a culture of vocations
- Outreach to all demographics for religious education and faith formation
- Meeting the needs of the entire community

Balanced workloads for priests – sacramental, pastoral care and administration

Supportive facilities with adequate, safe, accessible space and capacity for growth

Parish and school financial stability



Holy People Grouping

Our collective strengths and challenges:

Strengths - maintain and build upon

- Cultural diversity
- Numerous opportunities for prayer/devotions
- Hospitable, welcoming, and friendly
- Bilingual Masses and school

Challenges - align resources and strengthen

- Low Mass attendance
- Not enough weekly collections
- Not attracting young adults
- Significant operating debt
- Costly building up keep
- Low school enrollment and cost of building



Notes



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