



Archdiocese of Louisville

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING - 2005

INTRODUCTION

Late in 2004 the Archdiocese of Louisville released a demographic report. This study analyzed the make-up of the Catholic population as well as general population trends; existing parish and school structures; the number of priests; and external challenges and opportunities (aging population, poverty) facing the Archdiocese.

The study identified several major trends:

- ◆ There is a major redistribution and growth of the Catholic population in Jefferson County from the urban core to suburban and surrounding counties.
- ◆ There is growth in multicultural populations in several areas of the Archdiocese, especially the Hispanic population.
- ◆ The Archdiocese contains a larger percentage of smaller parishes than is present nationally.
- ◆ There is a decline in the number of priests available to serve the Catholic population.
- ◆ There are declining numbers of school-aged children and projections of a dramatic growth in the senior population.

- ◆ 20 to 30% of the population is in poverty or at risk for poverty in most of the counties of the Archdiocese. The highest levels of poverty are concentrated in the most rural and most urban areas.

Since the report was released, parishes, both individually and in regions, have been discussing its implications for planning. In order to assist parishes with planning, we are presenting a companion staffing study that examines the current reality as well as models that can be considered for the future.

Parishes exist to carry out the mission of the Church and to provide pastoral care to their members. Parish planning allows parishes to create the most effective system of programs, ministries, and services to meet these dual obligations. During the last fifteen years, parishes have increasingly looked beyond their parish boundaries to work with other parishes to more effectively and efficiently carry out their mission.

This process of regional planning and collaboration has taken on added urgency as the number of priests has declined,

financial pressures have increased, and external shifts have occurred that have affected the viability of traditional ministries, such as Catholic schools. At the same time, the Church has experienced growth in lay ministry and an expansion of ministry services.

One of the basic challenges facing the Church is to provide parish ministers that are adequate in number and quality. The specific challenge for the Archdiocese is to recruit, train, and nurture professional ministers and to encourage effective stewardship of the resources that have been entrusted to our care. These challenges require reflection and action in the areas of structural change (opening, closing, and merging parishes, schools, and other ministries) and human resources (recruitment, retention, and new leadership models.)

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

The declining number of ordained priests has made the primary leadership position in the parish the subject of sustained discussion. The reality is, however, that there are three basic approaches to the challenge of pastoral leadership for a parish:

1) Continue to assign the same amount (and in some cases growing amount of) work to decreasing numbers of priests. Priests may take more than one parish (e.g. cluster), or only one priest may serve large parishes.

2) Give some of the work to persons other than priests, such as pastoral administrators. Pastoral administrators can be deacons, religious women, or lay persons. Parishes also may decide to expand professional staff to take on delegated responsibilities from the pastor.

3) Attempt to reduce the amount of work for priests or others by closing or merging parishes.

In this Archdiocese, we have employed versions of all three approaches to meet these challenges. Throughout the United States, other versions of these approaches have been used. The following list summarizes models that are being used to address parish leadership and staffing challenges:

MODEL 1: INDIVIDUAL PARISH WITH PRIEST PASTOR

In this model each individual parish is a separate community and has its own pastor. Fifty-five (45%) of our 122 parishes operate under this model.

MODEL 2: FORMAL COORDINATED MINISTRY

In this model, individual parishes decide to work with one or more other parishes to provide services and avoid duplication of ministries. For example, parishes in a region may decide to come together and coordinate their Mass schedules so that there is not a duplication of weekend liturgies. Parishes also may work together to discern needs and offer services or to share staff or co-sponsor programs. Our Archdiocese has the majority of its experience with this model in school planning. The recent development of regional schools being sponsored by 3 or more parishes is an example of formal coordinated ministry.

MODEL 3: PASTORAL ADMINISTRATOR

This model involves separate parishes with a pastoral administrator as leader. A pastoral administrator is a deacon, religious, or lay man or woman appointed by the Archbishop to provide pastoral care and administrative oversight to a parish. Pastoral administrators are assisted by sacramental moderators who provide sacramental ministry to the parish and are monitored by presbyteral moderators who have canonical powers and faculties for the parish. Sacramental moderators and presbyteral moderators may be the same priest or different priests. This model also can be structured with a pastoral administrator assisted by a priest as presbyteral and sacramental moderator who also serves as a pastor at another parish. Generally the pastoral administrator assumes all of the operational responsibility for the parish, including planning, formation, parish life, finances, etc., except for the celebration of the sacraments. We have eight parishes (6%) operating under this model right now. Five of these parishes are led by deacons, 1 by a lay woman, and 2 by religious women.

MODEL 4: CLUSTER

A cluster involves two or more parishes that remain separate but have one leader. The leader can be either a priest or pastoral administrator. This model requires a limited amount of organizational change, but can be a challenge for the priest pastor depending upon the organizational complexity of the parishes involved.

This model offers the opportunity to foster interparish collaboration. Some pastors use this opportunity to encourage more collaboration among the parishes to be clustered by sharing staff and resources, coordinating Mass times, etc. Others maintain very distinct parish organizations at each of the clustered parishes. Both the geographic proximity and the leadership style of the pastor affect these decisions. We have 59 parishes (48%) operating under this model now.

MODEL 5: CLUSTER TEAM

Though not in use in this Archdiocese, some dioceses are experimenting with groups of parishes being served by a team of priests appointed to serve in solidum (Canon 517.1) or by a team of priests and other professional staff members. This leaves individual parishes intact, but assigns pastoral responsibility for two or more parishes to a team that can be made up of priests or a combination of priests, deacons, and lay staff. Each parish maintains its own identity and has its own parish council, but all of the team members serve all of the parishes. By necessity this approach fosters interparish collaboration and joint ministry efforts, especially in formation and service programs. In some forms of this model, parishes may form “clusters” where there is as much joint effort as possible, including joint parish and finance councils, joint committees, coordinated worship and prayer services, joint schools, and other collaborative ministries and programming.

MODEL 6: MULTIPLE WORSHIP SITES

This approach involves a single parish using more than one worship site for Mass and other celebrations. The parish may use multiple churches, such as when a parish has an oratory or a chapel, or it may use a facility other than a church when a space is needed for large gatherings.

MODEL 7: MERGER

When population shifts, finances, or other factors indicate a need to reduce the number of parishes in a given area, two or more parishes may be merged into one new parish. When a merger occurs, the parish communities and staff are combined, a single pastor is appointed, and one worship site and facility is usually established on the site of one of the merging parishes. We have merged a number of parishes over the years.

MODEL 8: CLOSING PARISHES

Parishes have opened and closed throughout the nearly 200-year history of the Archdiocese. This occurs when demographic, financial, or other factors determine that pastoral care can best be provided by another parish.

Closing and merging parishes are very difficult and disruptive processes. However, in some cases, our experience shows that parishioners are eventually happier when they move to new parishes, especially if the parish they were attending did not have sufficient resources (financial and human) to carry out its mission effectively.

These models are not exhaustive. Certainly elements of them can be combined or changed to address the challenges of pastoral leadership in the future.

VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

Some propose that the challenges of declining numbers of ordained priests can be addressed through our approach to the recruitment of priests or through changes in Church law about who is ordained. Several solutions are typically presented:

- ◆ **Vocation Recruitment:** Encouraging vocations has always been a priority in this Archdiocese. The Vocations Office has recently restructured its efforts to develop a team approach to the invitation and formation of men for the priesthood. Recruitment efforts include vocation awareness programs in parishes, elementary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities, as well as long-standing successful programs such as the “Dinner with the Archbishop.”
- ◆ **Religious Orders:** Religious orders of priests have a long history of service to the Archdiocese of Louisville. However, the number of religious order priests also is declining. In recent years, several parishes that were staffed by religious orders are now staffed by diocesan priests. Thirteen parishes (11%) are staffed by religious orders.
- ◆ **Foreign-born priests:** Some propose recruiting priests from Africa and Asia, where the numbers of priests are assumed to be more plentiful. However, there are not many priests available from other countries. Today there are 2,642 Catholics for every priest worldwide, and this ratio is greater in many parts of the world. (See Persons Per Priest Chart on page 5.) Foreign-born priests must overcome considerable cultural and language barriers to serve effectively. In addition, in 1998 and again more recently, the Vatican has asked the wealthier nations of the world not to recruit priests from poorer countries.
- ◆ **Who is ordained?** In any discussion of the shortage of priests, the inevitable question of who is ordained will be raised. While there are many points of view about church practice in this area, the issue cannot be resolved by the Archdiocese of Louisville. Therefore parish and diocesan planning must proceed within the current parameters of who is called to priestly ordination.

VOCATIONS TO THE DIACONATE

The deacon is an ordained minister of the Church. The first deacon was ordained for this Archdiocese in 1976. As of this date, we have 109 deacons in the Archdiocese. Of those, 83 are assigned to parishes and 11 are assigned to other ministries such as prison ministry, hospital ministry, etc. (The remaining deacons are retired or on a leave of absence.) Sixty-one (50%) of our parishes have one or more deacons.

Deacons must complete four years of formation before ordination. The average age of ordained deacons is 65, and the average age of deacons in formation is 50.

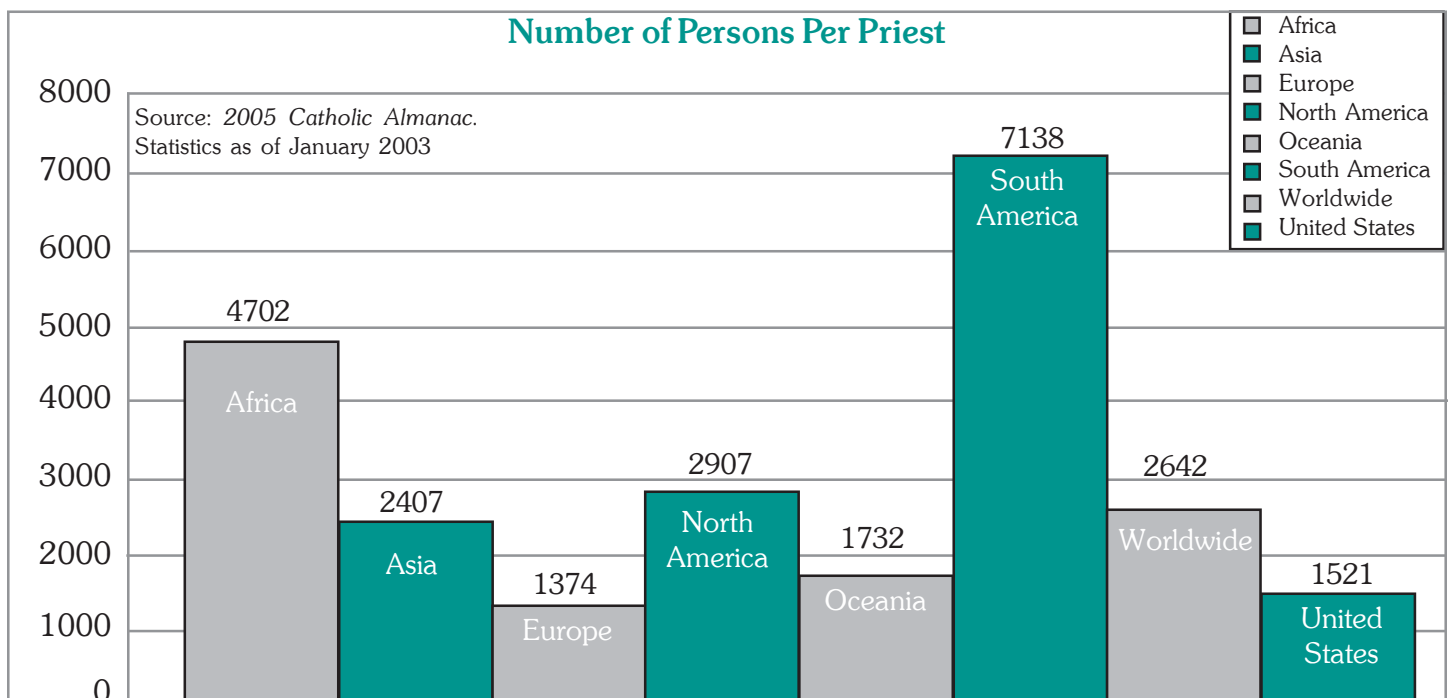
Deacons' ministry is primarily the works of charity. Deacons who assist pastors in providing service to the parish community are involved in many aspects of parish

life including preaching, ministering to the sick and homebound, preparing couples for wedding and parents for baptism, and presiding at baptisms, vigil prayer services and weddings. Usually deacons serve as volunteers, but some deacons also work in paid ministry positions, such as business managers, directors of religious education, and so on. Other deacons provide service to the Church through ministry in hospitals or prisons.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- ♦ What are some of the opportunities and challenges with each model?
- ♦ Which models have been used in your parish or region? What has been the experience of parishioners?

- ♦ What options do you see working in your parish or region?
- ♦ How would you describe the most important responsibilities of a priest pastor? What is distinctive about his ministry? What responsibilities do you think your pastor can responsibly delegate to others? How will our image of priests change with the various models?
- ♦ Reflect upon some of the conscious and unconscious expectations that parishioners have of their leadership. In today's Church, which expectations are realistic? Which are unrealistic? What expectations would you be willing to change?
- ♦ What are some effective ways to prepare parishes and parishioners for change, such as when a parish becomes clustered or is led by a pastoral administrator rather than a priest?



PARISH STAFFING

Over the past 40 years, a variety of professional ministry positions have emerged in the Church in the United States. The development of professional lay ministry and the demand for new ministry services have created many positions within parishes. A generation ago, almost all Catholic parish ministers were priests or sisters, and the primary ministry was the parish elementary school. A generation later, most Catholic parishes have lay people or religious in paid pastoral staff positions. These persons assist the pastor in carrying out the five major ministry responsibilities of the parish:

1. **Ministry of the Word:** Includes preaching, teaching, and encouraging the Gospel message and our Catholic tradition including catechetical formation, promotion of social justice, and evangelization. (Canon 528.1)

2. **Liturgical Leadership:** Includes leading prayer, liturgy, sacramental preparation and administration, and providing quality celebrations of initiation, Eucharist, reconciliation, and marriage. (Canons 528.2 and 530)

3. **Pastoral Ministry:** Includes parish visitation; presence to people in times of grief and joy; counseling; care of the sick and dying; advocacy for the poor, afflicted, lonely, and alienated; family ministry; and supporting spouses and parents. (Canon 529.1)

4. **Ministry Development:** Includes development of the laity's sense of mission, participation and shared responsibility, parish planning, and fostering the formation and coordination of lay ministry. (Canon 529.2)

5. **Administration:** Includes legal representation of the parish with responsibility for the administration of church finances and property. (Canons 531, 532, 535, 536)

In the Archdiocese of Louisville, there are a number of positions that have been created to carry out the responsibilities for these five areas of ministry. In some parishes, paid professional women and men have been hired to fill these positions, while other parishes rely on the parish volunteer coordinators for these ministries. Whether as paid staff members or as volunteers, these ministers depend on the stewardship of parishioners to serve along with them to meet particular parish needs.

In recent years, standardization of titles, responsibilities, and salary ranges for paid personnel have brought greater clarity to these positions. The ministry positions in the following listing indicate the number of full-time or part-time (minimum of 20 hours per week) paid personnel serving as of 2005. There are many others who work in part-time positions of less than 20 hours, have more than one job, or serve more than one parish. The major ministry positions include:

Pastoral Associate:

The pastoral associate is a minister who is responsible for the daily care of the faithful. He or she shares in the responsibility of needs assessments, planning, and implementation of a variety of parish ministries and operations. Most often these ministers are engaged in adult formation, RCIA, liturgical ministry, and pastoral care. We have approximately 31 pastoral associates serving parishes in the Archdiocese.

Director of Religious Education or Director of Lifelong Formation and Education:

The Director of Religious Education (DRE) is a parish minister who has acquired specialized training in religious education, theology, and ministry. He or she provides leadership in the design and implementation of programs for adults, youth, and children that nurture their lifelong faith formation. A DRE is responsible for directing all parish religious education activities including needs assessment, planning, execution, staffing, and evaluation of programs. We have approximately 54 Directors of Religious Education in the Archdiocese.

Director of Music Ministry:

The music minister has specialized training and credentials in liturgical music and a thorough understanding of the Roman Catholic liturgy. This person is responsible for the effective design, facili-

tation, and implementation of the parish liturgical music program. We have approximately 34 music ministers working in the Archdiocese.

Director of Worship:

The Director of Worship is a member of the parish staff with specialized training and credentials in liturgy and liturgical music. This person is responsible for the preparation and coordination of parish liturgical and sacramental celebrations in collaboration with the pastor, staff members, liturgy committee, and other parish groups. We have approximately 16 directors of worship in the Archdiocese.

Coordinator of Youth Ministry:

The person is responsible for meeting the personal and spiritual needs of young people (junior high, senior high, and young adult) and drawing youth into the life, mission, and work of the Church. The youth minister reaches out to all youth in the community, develops personal relationships with youth, invites and enables youth to serve others, coordinates adult volunteers, and develops close communication with and mutual support for the families of youth. We have approximately 22 youth ministers working in the Archdiocese.

Business Manager or Parish Manager:

The parish business manager is a professional administrator in service to the Church. This minis-

ter is a steward of the physical, financial, and personnel resources of the parish. He or she is responsible for budget development and parish finances, supervision of support staff, supervision of maintenance and janitorial work, scheduling of parish activities, public relations, coordination of the stewardship program, and in some instances, parish fundraising efforts. We have approximately 47 business managers serving the Archdiocese.

Bookkeeper:

Parish bookkeepers are administrators, though their responsibilities are more limited than those of business managers. Most often, bookkeepers focus on administrative tasks such as record-keeping, accounts payable, and payroll, and they have fewer management responsibilities. There are approximately 50 bookkeepers in our Archdiocese.

In addition to these positions, parishes employ a variety of other staff in these categories:

Education: Parishes with schools employ principals, teaching staff, counselors, librarians, and possibly assistant principals and other educational specialists. Parishes with childcare programs also employ directors and childcare workers. These positions depend upon the size and needs of the programs.

Liturgical and music staff: Many parishes employ cantors,

organists, choir directors, and other musicians to see that worship and music run smoothly and well.

Pastoral Staff: This includes a wide variety of positions including parish nurses, volunteer coordinators, ministers to the elderly, or parish counselors.

Office Staff: Most parishes employ secretaries or administrative assistants. The number and type of these positions vary greatly depending upon the size of the parish and its ministries.

Facilities Staff: Many parishes employ janitors and cleaning staff, and some have workers to maintain parish campuses and cemeteries.

The availability of professional and experienced ministers is one of the many factors and resources that must be evaluated as parishes plan both individually and collaboratively for the future.

PARISH STAFFING REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ How have you witnessed professional staff assisting at your parish? What gifts do these men and women bring to the parish?
- ◆ What responsibilities do baptized Catholics have to their parishes?
- ◆ How can we more effectively educate Catholics about their baptismal call?
- ◆ How can we nurture more commitment and involvement from parishioners?

CONCLUSION

There will be many changes as a result of these demographic shifts, declining numbers of ordained clergy, and other societal challenges (and opportunities) for our Church. These changes have many implications:

- ◆ Given the challenges and tensions in our complex society, the mission of parishes will be ever more compelling, and the need for services will likely increase.
- ◆ Given the challenges of pastoral leadership for parishes, we will have fewer, and in some cases, larger parishes with a variety of leadership and staffing models in place.
- ◆ We will have fewer and larger elementary schools.
- ◆ Our parishes will be more multicultural, and parishes will be served by a more diverse priesthood. In addition to African American Catholics, who have been present in this Archdiocese since its beginning, parishes will see new immigrants from Africa, South and Central America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Middle East.
- ◆ Many parishes that have a tradition of services to children will need to adapt to also meet the needs of older populations.
- ◆ In some areas of the diocese, parish structures and services may need to be reduced, and in other areas, they may need to be expanded.
- ◆ As economic challenges increase, the Church's ministry to the poor and oppressed will be more needed than ever.
- ◆ The Church will need to carefully balance services and presence in declining areas against services and presence in growing areas.
- ◆ There will be fewer celebrations of the Eucharist both on weekends and weekdays, and we will have to focus on ways to maintain our Eucharistic identity with fewer numbers of ordained clergy.
- ◆ Lay ministry will thrive. A continuing challenge will be the need to attract, train, credential, and maintain professional ministry staff and to mentor, compensate, and support ministers effectively.
- ◆ Effective pastoral planning will continue to grow in importance and will need to be seriously undertaken across parish boundaries. Where good planning does not exist, parishes can be forced into crisis-oriented solutions that fail to meet the needs of the community.
- ◆ One of the challenges of parish planning will be planning for parish leadership. Should planning be driven by personnel (assigning priests) or by mission and pastoral needs? Certainly the two should not be seen as totally opposed to one another, but the challenges can become acute when pressing needs are combined with limited resources, especially with the declining numbers of priests.

CONCLUSION REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- ◆ Of the implications described above, which have you observed happening in your parish?
- ◆ What would you add to the list?
- ◆ Our Archdiocese will be experiencing the strong presence of multicultural populations and an aging population. What changes do parishes need to make to respond effectively to these trends?
- ◆ How do we retain our sense of mission and vision as we experience these changes in the Church?