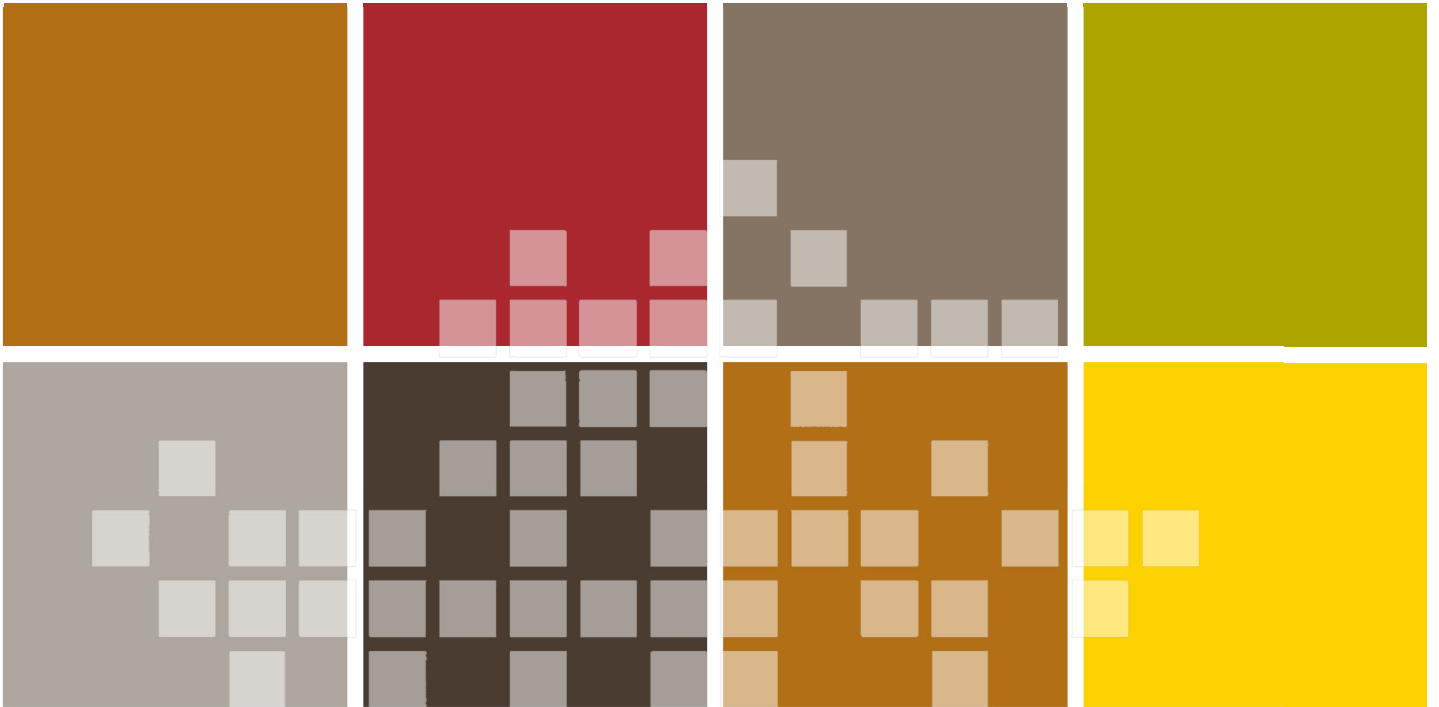

Pastoral Plan for Blue Ridge Area (Deanery 5)



Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

September 2020



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LETTER FROM THE BISHOP

September 30, 2020

Dear Faithful of the Parishes in the Blue Ridge Deanery,

Beginning in January of 2020, we undertook a study of the seven parishes in the deanery which surrounds Blue Ridge Boulevard. The purpose of the study was to review community demographic projections and forecasts as well as parish data trends to determine a pastoral strategy which would lead to greater vitality for the future. The study has now culminated in this pastoral plan.

The guiding vision for the plan comes from our diocesan vision – **One Family: Restored in Christ, Equipped for Mission**. The plan is a guide for new vitality among the deanery parishes and a path to carry out mission and ministry more effectively in the surrounding neighborhoods. The plan also incorporates the specific goals of the vision: **Healing our Family, Using Resources Wisely, and Growing God’s Family**.

The plan was developed collaboratively and in the spirit of subsidiarity. Each parish selected a steering committee comprised of the pastor and other parish leaders. These committees met at individual parishes and also jointly as representatives for the entire deanery. The overall plan was developed by all the steering committees. The details for each configuration of parishes were completed by the parish steering committees. A diocesan leadership team involving deanery and diocesan officials reviewed the work of the steering committees and responded to their suggestions and questions. We proceed in the conviction that the Holy Spirit has guided this process and inspired those involved to discern a future filled with hope.

Mindful of the challenges that the deanery parishes are facing, the implementation of this plan will not be easy. It will require dedication, perseverance and hard work, not just on the parts of our priests, deacons, and parish staffs, but from all present and future parishioners. Over the centuries, the Church has faced many challenges and difficult times which were overcome by those who have gone before us in faith. We know that we will succeed because Christ has promised “to be with us always.” This planning effort serves as a call to each and every parish member to commit ourselves anew to help build up the Church.

Many of the parishes in this area were built at a time when Catholic life in the deanery looked different than now: pews were filled, Catholic school enrollments were at all-time highs, and new parishes were being built and opened. From our experience, we know that people, neighborhoods, and lifestyles change. The opportunity is now for the parishes in the deanery to focus on building up the Church by casting our nets wider and deeper. May all who work on the implementation of this pastoral plan be blessed and all the plans for greater parish vibrancy be realized.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr., DD, JCL
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph

I. INTRODUCTION

On July 20, 2020, the Vatican’s Congregation for Clergy issued new instructions on parish reform. The document is titled, “The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelizing Mission of the Church.” Its stated goal of parish reform is to move parishes from a “self-preservation” model to one of “evangelization.” The document further encourages parishes to become less “interested in preserving a nostalgia of former times as opposed to looking to the future with courage.” The pastoral plan for the Blue Ridge deanery will emphasize both evangelization and looking to the future with courage.

The study of the Blue Ridge area or deanery 5 in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph is an effort to bring new vibrancy to its seven parishes and possibly other surrounding parishes in the image suggested by Pope Francis. The study is conducted by Meitler, a Milwaukee-area based national consulting firm that has focused on Catholic school and parish strategic planning for nearly 50 years in collaboration with diocesan and local leaders.

Beginning in January of 2020, community demographics and parish data were collected and studied. In March, interviews were conducted with pastors, staff and parish steering committees. These interviews produced many ideas about the direction which the plan should take for the future. Each parish campus was visited, and the buildings were toured. Due to the state of emergency in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, subsequent gatherings were conducted via video conference to review the data and to identify some common areas of future direction.

Much has been learned about the makeup of the various communities within the deanery as well as the projected and forecast futures. The population and makeup of the northern and central parts of the deanery will retain their racial and ethnic diversity, household economics, and population stability. The southern part of the deanery will experience population and household economic growth. The picture is similar for the parishes in the deanery. The majority of sacramental participation and ministry involvement is in the south. From a religious perspective, over three-of-five residents do not belong to or participate in any religious community or congregation. All of the information is available in a “Key Findings and Observations Report” on the diocesan website.

The data and future projections tell us, above all, that most parishes cannot continue to function as they have in the past. Change, perhaps a significant amount of change, will be needed for these parishes to turn the corner into a new future. We move forward with the promise that Jesus left with His disciples and all of His future followers – “I am with you always.” (*Matthew 28:20*)

II. VISION AND STRATEGY

One of the pioneers of church planning, the late Fr. George Wilson, S.J., rooted his zeal for planning the future of parishes in the death and resurrection of Jesus. All parishes and dioceses experience dying and rising in their histories. Without dying, there can be no new life. Planning, according to Fr. Wilson, is an act of hope – dying parishes can be resurrected and good parishes can become better through a commitment to a life-giving strategic plan.

As this planning process unfolds, it is apparent that there will need to be a vision which can guide the strategy for the next five to ten years and, likely, beyond. The vision of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph – **One Family: Restored in Christ. Equipped for Mission.** – offers the essential inspiration to provide for the best spiritual and pastoral care for the people of the deanery. There are three key priorities in the vision:

- **Healing Our Family – *Tending wounds and accompanying hearts to freedom in Christ***

The area served by the parishes in the Blue Ridge corridor has experienced considerable change and transition over the past decades. Parishes in the future must be prepared to be in the forefront of a response to those in need.

- **Using Resources Wisely – *Aligning God’s gifts for the Church’s life and mission***

The smaller a parish becomes, the more difficult it is to fund staff positions and to offer a full range of ministries. The plan must provide every person in the deanery with the opportunity to experience the mission of Jesus in its fullness.

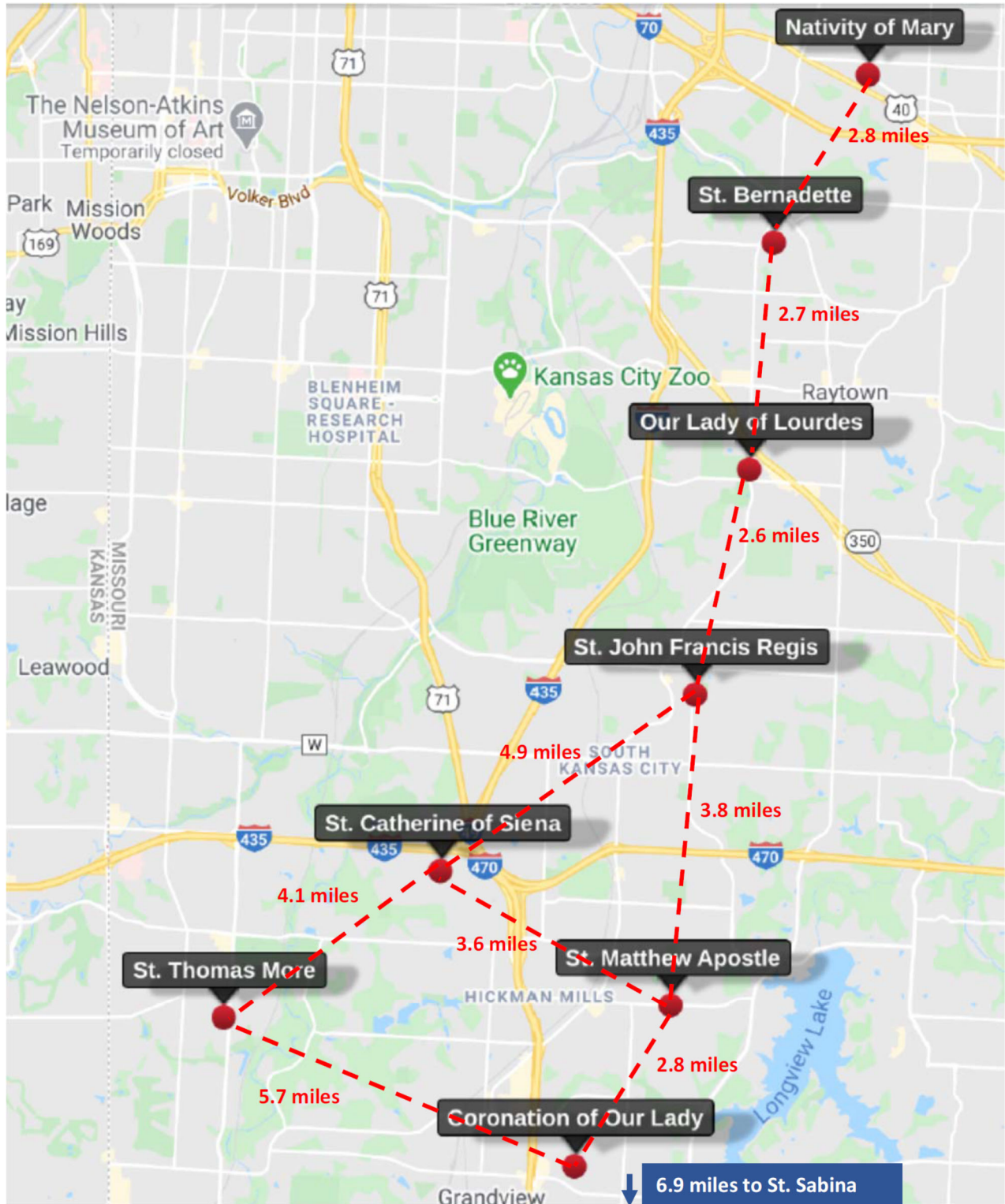
- **Growing God’s Family – *Activating our baptismal call to holiness and being missionary disciples***

The path to growth in the future will be different than the paths which led to the amazing growth of the Church in the United States. The Church has grown significantly through immigration, the migration of peoples, and baptism. Heralded by all the Popes since the 1960’s, the Church must now be focused on a new evangelization. Catholics do not automatically join parishes, have their children baptized, and are not attending Mass regularly. Parishes must become more intentional about inviting and welcoming people into their communities of faith as well as forming them into missionary disciples.

The conclusions which can be drawn from the deanery data are generally quite clear: little population growth in the central and northern parts of the deanery; diminishing connection with any religious denomination; decreasing memberships and declining sacramental practice. In order to bring new vitality to the deanery parishes, a plan will need to emphasize the consolidation of resources and the creation of operational efficiencies.

Every parish will be impacted by the plan in some way. The diocesan vision will serve as the measure of how effectively the plan has helped parishes carry out the mission of Christ and the Church.

III. MAP SHOWING DISTANCES BETWEEN PARISHES



Note: Distances shown are the shortest route reported by GoogleMaps.

IV. CRITERIA FOR THE DETERMINATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Making recommendations about the future of parishes requires some objective criteria or indicators of vibrant ministry in order to guide the decision-making process. Five areas have been identified as ways of evaluating not only how well each parish has conducted itself in recent history but of assessing the parish's capacity to build upon that experience in the future. The criteria are listed below and, even though they are numbered, the numbers do not represent a priority of importance.

1. Parish membership, sacramental life, involvement of parishioners in councils and other ministries.

What do the parish data trends tell us about the current state of the parish and its likely future? Does the parish have the people power to reverse negative trends?

2. Financial stability of the parish.

What is the financial condition of the parish and what are the financial trends? Has the parish significantly reduced its ability to rebound by cutting staff and ministries?

3. Potential for population and membership growth and other demographics.

Is the parish located in an area where growth and other hopeful demographics are projected and forecast? Does the parish have the capacity to attract new people to the parish?

4. Seating capacity of the church and the capability of other facilities to support vibrant ministry.

Does the parish have the physical capacity to accommodate more worshippers? Are there adequate facilities and fixtures to support ministries which are needed today?

5. Condition of the facilities and capability to update and renovate.

Has the parish practiced deferred maintenance? Are the facilities able to be updated and does the parish have the financial resources and support to fund any building projects and ongoing maintenance?

These criteria were used to determine which parish designations would have the greatest long-term impact for the parishes in the deanery. The parish designations are described on the next page.

V. PARISH DESIGNATIONS

Parish life has become more complex and culturally diverse. Both church law regarding parishes and the collective wisdom of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) have provided some potential strategies for parishes to better serve their people. The following have been in use in the Diocese but not necessarily in this particular deanery.

- **STAND-ALONE PARISH**

A traditional parish with its own pastor, parish church, finances, finance and pastoral councils, parish staff and office.

- **CLUSTERED PARISHES**

Two or more parishes with a shared pastor, their own churches, finances, councils and staffs. There can be additional collaboration in personnel, ministries and resources.

- **MERGED PARISH**

Two or more parishes become a new parish with a new name, one pastor, finances, finance and pastoral councils, parish staff and office. One church is identified as the parish or “mother” church. There can be additional sites for Mass and other celebrations which are referred to as “sister churches.”

- **SHARED PARISH**

A parish in which two or more languages or cultural contexts are present in the ministerial life of the parish and they worship and share their common faith under the same roof.

- **SISTER CHURCH**

When two or more parishes are merged, one church is designated as the parish or “mother” church and the others serve as “sister” churches.

These designations will be referred to or used in the next section on the proposed recommendations for each parish in the deanery.

VI. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE PARISHES OF: CORONATION OF OUR LADY AND ST. JOHN FRANCIS REGIS, WHILE REMAINING STAND-ALONE PARISHES, WILL COLLABORATE ON MUTUALLY AGREED UPON MINISTRIES. ST. MATTHEW APOSTLE WILL MERGE WITH CORONATION OF OUR LADY. OUR LADY OF LOURDES WILL COLLABORATE WITH ST. JOHN FRANCIS REGIS FOR THE PRESENT, BUT MAY MERGE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

A. Parish facts

Coronation of Our Lady, Grandview

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	8	15	8	7	10	2	25%
Youth First Communions	8	3	15	6	5	-3	-38%
Youth Confirmations	13	4	7	4	0	-13	-100%
Youth Catechumens	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of Candidates	2	1	4	3	1	-1	-50%
Marriages	1	2	1	0	1	0	0%
Deaths	6	4	12	17	6	0	0%
Registered Catholic households ¹	444	451	462	467	460	16	4%
Average Mass attendance	369	376	329	344	340	-29	-8%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	15	14	9	10	20	5	33%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	3	0	0	0	25	22	733%

¹ Number of registered parish households as of January 1, 2020 is 387.

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and parish data form.*

Our Lady of Lourdes, Raytown

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	7	7	7	7	0	-7	-100%
Youth First Communions	7	7	7	7	17	10	143%
Youth Confirmations	7	7	7	7	0	-7	-100%
Youth Catechumens	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of Candidates	0	0	0	5	0	0	
Marriages	2	2	2	2	1	-1	-50%
Deaths	18	18	18	16	20	2	11%
Registered Catholic households ¹	370	370	370	370	341	-29	-8%
Average Mass attendance	195	195	195	195	228	33	17%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	1	1	1	1	1	0	0%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	

¹ Number of registered parish households as of January 1, 2020 is 330.

Number in italics indicates estimate based on trend as data was not provided.

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and parish data form.*

St. John Francis Regis, Kansas City

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	8	15	10	14	6	-2	-25%
Youth First Communion	23	18	14	5	17	-6	-26%
Youth Confirmations	12	14	16	5	10	-2	-17%
Youth Catechumens	1	0	3	0	3	2	200%
Number of Candidates	2	1	0	0	4	2	100%
Marriages	3	2	0	2	3	0	0%
Deaths	13	21	21	18	20	7	54%
Registered Catholic households ¹	548	535	532	528	520	-28	-5%
Average Mass attendance	487	391	404	467	370	-117	-24%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	21	30	26	27	27	6	29%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	

¹ Number of registered parish households as of January 1, 2020 is 508.

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and parish data form.*

St. Matthew Apostle, Kansas City

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	11	<i>10</i>	9	5	3	-8	-73%
Youth First Communion	16	<i>16</i>	17	27	23	7	44%
Number of Candidates	4	<i>8</i>	11	10	5	1	25%
Youth Catechumens	0	<i>0</i>	0	0	0	0	
Number of Candidates	0	<i>0</i>	0	0	0	0	
Marriages	2	<i>4</i>	6	0	0	-2	-100%
Deaths	10	<i>10</i>	11	12	9	-1	-10%
Registered Catholic households ¹	310	<i>280</i>	256	260	265	-45	-15%
Average Mass attendance	424	<i>350</i>	284	305	307	-117	-28%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	41	<i>45</i>	53	29	29	-12	-29%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	<i>10</i>	14	12	0	0	

¹ Number of registered parish households as of January 1, 2020 is 264.

Number in italics indicates estimate based on trend as data was not provided.

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and parish data form.*

B. Parish recommendations

1. The parishes of Coronation of Our Lady and St. John Francis Regis will remain stand-alone parishes. St. Matthew will merge with Coronation of Our Lady. Our Lady of Lourdes will collaborate with St. John Francis Regis. All three parishes will collaborate on these mutually agreed upon ministries.
 - a. **Communication Platforms**
 - Raise awareness of each parish's ministries and activities so as to promote them between parishes via bulletins and pulpit announcements.
 - Explore the creation of a regional website hub or a shared-web developer.
 - Advance the use of email and apps, such as Flocknotes.
 - b. **Education**
 - Advertise St. Regis Academy more intentionally at Coronation and Our Lady of Lourdes.
 - Share the cost of a part-time catechetical position which will facilitate the Clear Path for Discipleship at each of our parishes as well as work with young adults and families.
 - Offer faith formation opportunities for the elders in the parishes.
 - c. **New Outreach to Communities and People in Need**
 - Initiate a ministry to the Hispanic community at St. John Francis Regis in the fall of 2020 in which Coronation will also participate.
 - Initiate a new outreach to African Catholics who are recent immigrants of African descent with the collaboration of both parishes beginning in the spring of 2021.
 - Broaden social outreach to those in need in the area which will be centered at Coronation with the ongoing involvement of St. John Francis Regis with visioning and services.
2. The parish of St. Matthew Apostle will be merged with Coronation of Our Lady Parish and will no longer be used for Sunday Mass after Sunday, November 22, 2020, the last Sunday of the liturgical year. The disposition of the church and other property will be determined in consultation with diocesan leadership.
3. With the merger of St. Matthew Apostle and Coronation of Our Lady, the parish of Coronation of Our Lady may be re-named. The pastor and parishioners will discuss the advisability of choosing a new name for the parish. If they so choose, a short list of new names can be submitted for consideration by the Bishop.
4. The parish of Our Lady of Lourdes is not sustainable at its present level but will be given up to two more years as a parish, collaborating with St. John Francis Regis, in order to build greater vitality.
 - a. This status will be evaluated on an annual basis from October to October until October of 2022. Greater vitality will be measured by variables such as sacramental activity, financial contributions, and other parish data. The parish will use a worksheet to monitor progress and lack of progress. The worksheet is included in the plan appendix.

- b. The parish will share a pastor with another parish or be pastored by a priest who serves in some apostolate with an appointment beginning no later than January 1, 2021. If at any time during this two-year period, the parish is unable to be sustained, the parish will consider two options:
 - 1) Merge with St. John Francis Regis and close.
 - 2) Merge with St. John Francis Regis and continue as a sister church to St. John Francis Regis with a Sunday Mass and other activities as long as Mass attendance and contributions can be maintained.
5. The parishes of Coronation of Our Lady and St. John Francis Regis will have their own pastors. St. John Francis Regis will also have a part-time priest who will assist with Hispanic ministry.
6. St. John Francis Regis will become a shared parish as it serves the Hispanic population in the central and northern parts of the deanery. St. Sabina Parish is available to assist with the transition and organization for the ministry.
7. Coronation of Our Lady will become a center for pastoral outreach and services to those in need. Catholic Charities will open a food pantry at Coronation in the near future. The coordination of outreach ministries at other collaborating parishes will also be determined.
8. At a future date, the parishes of Coronation and St. John Francis Regis should initiate a ministry to the Black/African American community, those who have lived in the United States for generations. The initiative should involve the families of children enrolled in St. Regis Academy. The effort includes a commitment to three steps: 1) form a core team to organize members and to evangelize the communities; 2) consider introducing Black/African American themes in liturgical planning; and, 3) organize and conduct a revival to further reach out to the communities. After those three steps have been conducted, an evaluation should be conducted regarding the sustainability of the ministry and/or other further steps.
9. The parishes should continue to study facilities usage and future needs. At some point, all ministerial activity in the area will likely be centered at the Coronation and Regis sites. Coronation will become the major site in Grandview, and Regis will be the main site in the South Kansas City-Raytown area.
10. The parishes should form an evangelization team to contact present and former parishioners to engage in the parishes.
11. The parishes will recommend in which deanery they will participate, to be determined by the Bishop.

C. Projected impact of recommendations

- By making every effort to retain the current membership from all the parishes, the new configuration could begin with 1,586 households or nearly 3,800 members. The parishes can further increase membership through an evangelization initiative, the introduction of Hispanic ministry, and a successful ministry to the Black/African American communities.
- The new configuration should be able to achieve a greater level of financial stability, improvement in the quality of ministries, and an increase in the number of participants in various formation programs.
- A better coordinated outreach to those in need should make a significant impact on the communities of Raytown, South Kansas City, and Grandview.

2. THE PARISHES OF: ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA AND ST. THOMAS MORE WILL REMAIN STAND-ALONE PARISHES FOR THE PRESENT, BUT MAY MERGE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

A. Parish facts

St. Catherine of Siena, Kansas City

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	4	3	4	7	6	2	50%
Youth First Communions	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Youth Confirmations	0	0	0	0	5	5	
Youth Catechumens	0	0	0	3	1	1	
Number of Candidates	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Marriages	1	4	2	2	1	0	0%
Deaths	13	14	9	22	14	1	8%
Registered Catholic households ¹	284	253	265	425	389	105	37%
Average Mass attendance	341	312	312	268	318	-23	-7%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	

¹ Number of registered parish households as of January 1, 2020 is 325.

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and parish data form.*

St. Thomas More, Kansas City

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	57	57	57	62	56	-1	-2%
Youth First Communions	75	79	62	76	53	-22	-29%
Youth Confirmations	76	64	60	68	99	23	30%
Youth Catechumens	0	0	0	0	3	3	
Number of Candidates	7	2	2	5	4	-3	-43%
Marriages	31	21	17	14	12	-19	-61%
Deaths	60	79	77	66	56	-4	-7%
Registered Catholic households	1,765	1,768	1,769	1,719	1,658	-107	-6%
Average Mass attendance	2,184	1,780	1,952	1,794	1,629	-556	-25%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	28	30	36	35	9	-19	-68%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	0	0	0	4	4	

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.*

B. Parish recommendations

1. St. Catherine of Siena's status as a parish is not sustainable at its present level but will be given up to two more years as a stand-alone parish in order to build greater vitality.
2. This status will be evaluated on an annual basis from October to October until October of 2022. Greater vitality will be measured by variables such as sacramental activity, financial contributions, and other parish data. The parish will use a worksheet to monitor progress and lack of progress. The worksheet is included in the plan appendix. If at any time during this two-year period the parish is unable to be sustained, the parish will consider two options:
 - a. Merge with St. Thomas More Parish and close.
 - b. Merge with St. Thomas More Parish and continue as a sister church to St. Thomas More with a Sunday Mass and other activities as long as Mass attendance and contributions can be maintained.
3. St. Catherine should continue as well as explore further collaboration with St. Thomas More Parish. The details of this collaboration should be agreed upon by both parishes.
4. St. Catherine may become a shared parish for the Syro-Malabar Rite.
5. The parish should form an evangelization team to contact present and former parishioners to listen to them and to invite them to engage in the parish. The ComparativeInsite for the parish in the "Key Findings" document should also be studied to better understand who the parish already attracts as members and various age groups they are not reaching. This analysis can serve as the basis for evangelization efforts beyond the parish membership. The parish should continue to make use of the Clear Path to Discipleship program.
6. St. Catherine should participate in the same deanery as St. Thomas More.

C. Projected impact of recommendations

- The combined membership of both parishes could be 2,047 households or approximately 5,000 members. St. Thomas More has a baptism to funeral ratio of 1 to 1 as compared to St. Catherine's ratio of more than twice as many funerals for each baptism.
- St. Catherine of Siena has a history of collaboration with St. Thomas More which is a stable and vibrant parish community. Further collaboration between the parishes will allow St. Catherine to provide a presence in the area and continue to serve people as they have for so many decades.
- The sharing of the facilities and land at St. Catherine may also benefit the ministries at St. Thomas More.

3. THE PARISHES OF: ST. BERNADETTE AND NATIVITY OF MARY WILL BE CLUSTERED

A. Parish facts

Nativity of Mary, Independence

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	15	3	26	20	31	16	107%
Youth First Communions	25	23	22	23	14	-11	-44%
Youth Confirmations	0	10	19	24	0	0	
Youth Catechumens	2	1	0	0	2	0	
Number of Candidates	2	1	0	0	9	7	350%
Marriages	11	5	4	9	6	-5	-45%
Deaths	19	21	24	23	21	2	11%
Registered Catholic households	661	675	640	648	652	-9	-1%
Average Mass attendance	496	510	521	525	505	9	2%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Number in italics indicates estimate based on trend as data was not provided.

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.*

St. Bernadette, Kansas City

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	4	3	3	4	6	2	50%
Youth First Communions	3	5	2	4	3	0	0%
Youth Confirmations	3	0	1	4	0	-3	-100%
Youth Catechumens	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Number of Candidates	0	0	0	2	2	2	
Marriages	0	1	0	1	1	1	
Deaths	19	16	16	17	21	2	11%
Registered Catholic households ¹	363	348	336	326	323	-40	-11%
Average Mass attendance	412	315	336	324	325	-87	-21%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	22	19	18	12	6	-16	-73%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	0	0	0	0	0	0	

¹ Number of registered parish households as of January 1, 2020 is 321.

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and parish data form.*

B. Parish recommendations

1. St. Bernadette Parish will be clustered with Nativity of Mary Parish.
2. The parish will share a pastor with Nativity of Mary. The parishes will share all costs associated with priestly ministry to the parishes. The appointment as a shared pastor will become effective as of January 1, 2021.
3. St. Bernadette will form an evangelization team to contact present and former parishioners to listen to them and invite them to become engaged in the parish. The parish should also study the ComparativeInsite in the “Key Findings” document to understand the people it attracts as well as those age groups it is not reaching. This analysis will assist with evangelization efforts beyond the parish. The parish should make use of the Clear Path to Discipleship program.
4. St. Bernadette will now participate in the same deanery as Nativity of Mary.
5. The parishes have proposed that the cluster relationship will follow these organizational and ministerial practices:
 - a. **Mass Schedule**
 - 1) There would be one Saturday Mass at each location. Anticipated Sunday Masses normally do not begin before 4:00 pm.
 - 2) One Sunday Mass at each location, likely at 8:30 am and 10:30 am.
 - 3) Weekday Masses at 8:30 am could be alternated, except for the school Mass on Thursdays at Nativity. If there is a funeral, there will be no weekday Mass.
 - 4) Pastors will begin pulpit exchanges so that parishioners get to know both of them.
 - 5) Liturgy preparation and planning should be unified to assist the presiders.
 - 6) The Triduum will be celebrated together with Good Friday services possibly celebrated at both sites because of the number of attendees.
 - b. **Sacraments**
 - 1) The Sacrament of Reconciliation, both individual and communal, as well as the Sacrament of the Sick can be offered at both locations.
 - 2) Baptismal and marriage preparation can be shared, but the sacramental celebrations will take place at the home parish.
 - c. **Administration**
 - 1) Finances will remain separate with identified shared expenses.
 - 2) Envelopes can be deposited in either parish’s collection.
 - 3) Each parish retains a finance council. These can meet on the same night with a common time for prayer and shared as well as individual agenda items. Pastoral or parish councils may be combined.
 - 4) Annual calendar meeting and a shared calendar.
 - 5) Shared meeting space. Establishing a “check out key” system with a checklist of tasks after the meeting.
 - 6) Common bulletin with a St. Bernadette corner.
 - d. **Staff**
 - 1) Monthly staff meeting of both staffs.
 - 2) Some staff will function at both sites.

e. **Ministries**

- 1) Nativity School will be promoted at St. Bernadette.
- 2) Nativity will focus donation of food and money to St. Bernadette's food pantry.
- 3) Parish School of Religion (PSR) will include students from Nativity. Nativity will need to provide volunteers for the program.
- 4) Other ministries are also under consideration.

C. Projected impact of recommendations

- The combined membership of the two parishes could be 985 households or approximately 2,400 members. Nativity of Mary has a favorable baptism to funeral ratio of 1.5 baptisms to each funeral as compared to St. Bernadette's three times more funerals than baptisms.
- The stability and vitality of Nativity of Mary Parish will be beneficial for St. Bernadette. The collaboration could create financial and ministerial efficiencies for both parishes.
- The sharing of facilities and land at St. Bernadette may also be beneficial for the ministries at Nativity of Mary.

4. THE PARISH OF: ST. SABINA WILL REMAIN A STAND-ALONE PARISH

A. Parish facts

Parish data	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Infant baptisms	45	47	37	55	48	3	7%
Youth First Communions	73	71	107	55	94	21	29%
Youth Confirmations	30	30	30	44	51	21	70%
Youth Catechumens	8	3	2	9	10	2	25%
Number of Candidates	4	2	4	4	2	-2	-50%
Marriages	20	10	12	20	10	-10	-50%
Deaths	31	34	39	45	35	4	13%
Registered Catholic households ¹	1,395	1,454	1,463	1,522	1,088	-307	-22%
Average Mass attendance ²	1,188	1,191	1,168	1,103	1,083	-105	-9%
K to 8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	121	181	171	140	195	74	61%
9 to 12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment	35	27	44	25	22	-13	-37%

Parish data on Hispanic population	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 13/14 to 17/18	
						Number	Percent
Number of registered Hispanic parishioners	1,900	2,038	2,068	2,209	1,480	-420	-22%
Number of Hispanic Masses	1	1	1	1	1	0	0%
Average Spanish Mass Attendance	322	341	385	356	356	35	11%

¹ Number of registered parish households as of January 1, 2020 is 1,177.

² Includes Spanish Mass

Source: *The Catholic Key, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and parish data form.*

B. Parish recommendations

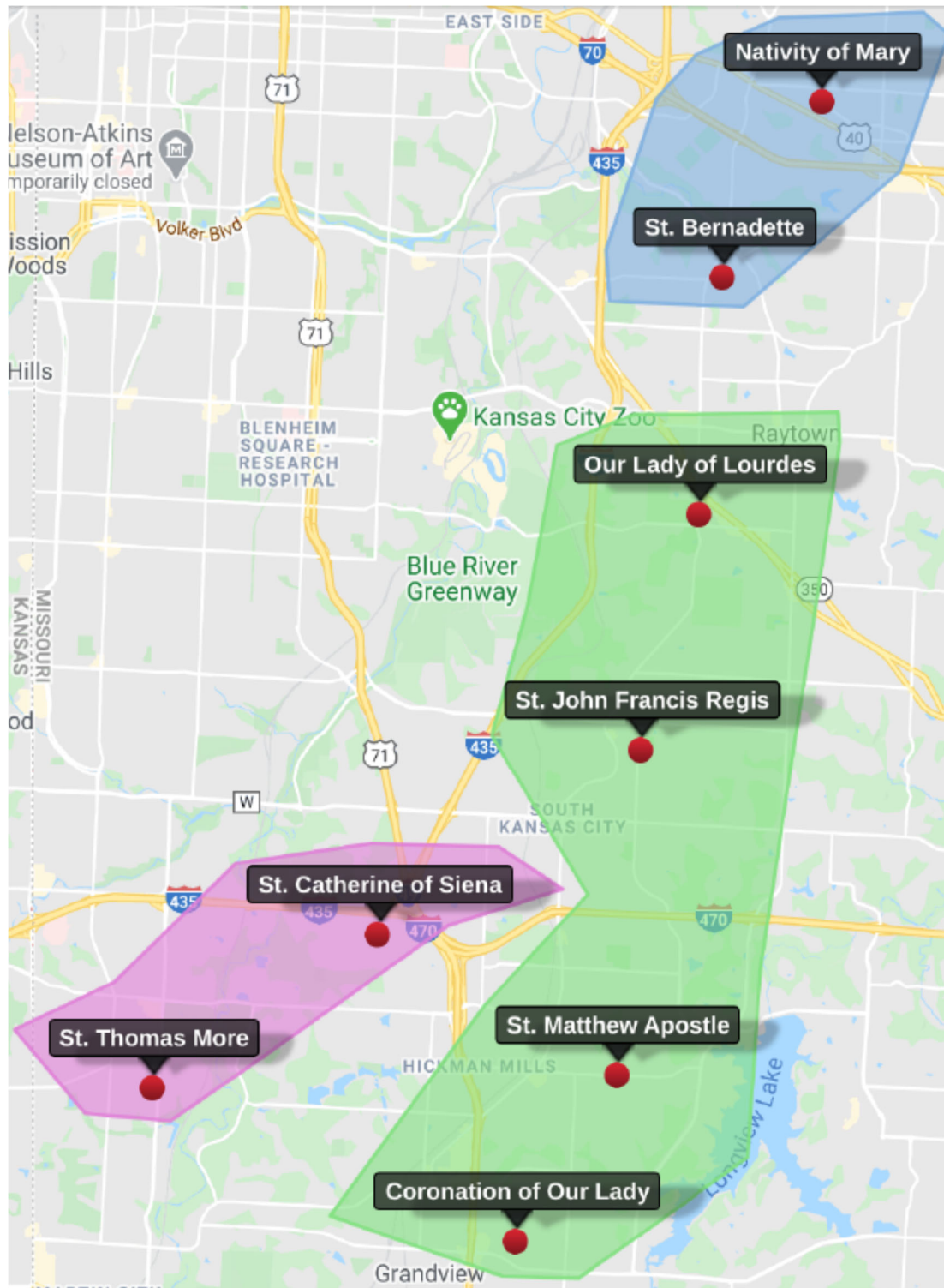
1. St. Sabina will continue as a stand-alone parish as well as a shared parish.
2. The parish should assist St. John Francis Regis Parish with the opening of a second site for Hispanic ministry to serve the central and northern parts of the deanery area.
 - a. Assist with the organization of the Mass in Spanish at St. John Francis Regis, including identifying musicians, liturgical ministers, and volunteers in the parish office to communicate with Spanish-speaking parishioners.
 - b. Promote the date and time of the Mass among parishioners at St. Sabina who live in the South Kansas City/Raytown areas and may want to attend Mass at a location closer to their residences.
 - c. Identify people in leadership within the Hispanic ministry community at St. Sabina who live in the South Kansas City/Raytown areas and who may be interested in helping or even joining a parish closer to their residences.
 - d. Provide volunteers who can assist with RCIA, prayer and life workshops, and the development of small Christian communities.
3. St. Sabina should continue and expand its evangelization efforts.
 - a. Continue evangelization efforts through the RCIA, prayer and life workshops, and small Christian communities.
 - b. Expand efforts to engage with the wider civic community.

4. St. Sabina should continue its study of seating capacity in the church, parking for Sunday Masses, and the potential need to accommodate more students in the Parish School of Religion.
 - a. There is available capacity at most Masses and there is potential for additional overflow space, if needed.
 - b. Parking is not an immediate issue and there are spaces where more parking can be developed in the future.
 - c. The Parish School of Religion currently uses all available space on Sunday morning. If enrollment continues to grow, the parish will consider other options to accommodate an increase in students, most likely by offering another time for sessions.
5. The parish recommends a change in deaneries to deanery 4.

C. Projected impact of recommendations

- Even though the parish will lose some members from the Hispanic community because of the introduction of a Mass in Spanish at St. John Francis Regis, with the projected (5-year) and forecast (10-year) population growth in the communities of Belton, the western side of Raymore and Peculiar, the membership at St. Sabina could grow by 560 households or 1,376 members. That amount of growth represents a 56% increase in the number of registered households in the parish.
- St. Sabina, over the next ten years, could grow to be a parish of more than 1,500 households or 3,600 parishioners, with a total Mass attendance of approximately 1,600 people.

VII. NEW CONFIGURATION MAP



St. Sabina (Stand Alone)

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation strategy begins with the approval of the plan on September 30, 2020. There are several elements to the implementation:

1. Parish Steering Committees, which included the pastor of the parish, have played a very important role in the development of the deanery plan as well as individual parish plans. Their role has been successfully completed.
2. The specific implementation of the plan takes place on the local level and becomes the responsibility of pastors, staffs and councils. The plan includes recommendations for parishes to put in place. Parish leaders should review each recommendation and develop a local timeline and identify who will be responsible for overseeing or implementing each recommendation. Councils should monitor and review the implementation progress/lack of progress until all of the recommendations have been realized.
3. A diocesan timeline is included in the parish sections of the plan for any parish status changes and priest assignments. Those parishes which have been extended additional periods of time to improve their sustainability will be in dialogue with the Vicar General for Pastoral Affairs regarding their progress.
4. Most of the major recommendations will be implemented within the first year. Some recommendations are planned to be initiated within two or three years.
5. Parishes should be aware that much of the plan calls for greater collaboration between parishes. A priority should be placed on building relationships between parish leaders and parishioners. By deepening these relationships, parishes will find that their implementation will likely go far beyond the recommendations in this pastoral plan.

APPENDICES



Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph
 Pastoral Plan for Blue Ridge Area (Deanery 5)

Appendix A – Survey: Possibilities for Vibrant Ministry – Results of 4/22 meeting

Instructions: From these suggestions which surfaced in the interviews with pastors and meetings with parish steering committees, select your **(one)** top priority in **each** of the five ministry areas.

Ministry Area	Total
A. Faith Formation	
1. Strengthen Parish Schools of Religion for elementary students perhaps on a deanery basis.	17%
2. Develop a deanery-wide youth ministry for high school students.	33%
3. Develop deanery-wide adult formation opportunities which includes classes like Bible Study, Alpha, and opportunities for spiritual retreats.	30%
4. Organize small groups in parishes throughout the deanery in order to build community and make disciples.	20%
B. Evangelization	
1. Establish teams of parishioners to contact every person on the parish roster to listen to them and invite them to engage in the parish.	32%
2. Initiate ministry to Black/African Americans at one or more parishes.	14%
3. Identify a site for Hispanic ministry in the northern part of the deanery in addition to the already-existing ministry at St. Sabina Parish.	36%
4. Develop a ministry for young adults (ages 20's and 30's) which may be centered at one parish but can serve all the parishes in the deanery.	18%
C. Outreach to those in need	
1. Expand outreach ministry in each parish to better serve those in need within the area.	20%
2. Collaborate with other parishes to coordinate and expand the types of direct service which parishes can provide.	50%
3. Develop a deanery-wide approach to outreach so that parishes with higher rates of poverty and need can be better funded and staffed by all the parishes.	30%
D. Catholic schools	
1. Promote Catholic school education among Hispanic families to increase enrollment in Catholic schools.	11%
2. Promote St. Regis Academy within all parishes in the deanery with the intention of making it a deanery school.	64%
3. Identify sites for Catholic schools in the northern, central, and southern parts of the deanery so that all parishioners have easier access to a Catholic education.	25%





Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph
Pastoral Plan for Blue Ridge Area (Deanery 5)

Appendix A – Survey: Possibilities for Vibrant Ministry – Results of 4/22 meeting

Ministry Area	Total
E. Parish organization	
1. Extend the practice of sharing pastors to include the sharing of ministries so that parishes can improve the number and quality of ministries and potentially increase membership.	23%
2. Increase membership by focusing each parish on a ministry to a particular cultural group.	17%
3. Establish three new parishes – north, central and south – and consolidate all the existing parishes into the three sites.	23%
4. Consider a combination of sharing pastors and consolidation of sites to phase in dynamic and sustainable ministry in the deanery.	37%

POLL 2: What is the best way to proceed with pastoral planning for the Blue Ridge area?

Response	Total
1. Mail a brief cover letter and survey used for this meeting to all parishioners.	30%
2. Wait until the “stay in place” order has been removed and conduct the meetings at that time.	70%





Worksheet for _____ Parish

Parishes which have been informed that their status as a parish is not sustainable at its present level, have been given extended time to reverse the downward trends and move towards a greater vitality. The hope is that every parish will thrive. But when the level of participation falls too low, as measured by variables such as sacramental activity, financial contributions, and so forth, the parish can no longer effectively serve the needs of its parishioners. In the spirit of fairness to God’s people and good stewardship, parishes that can no longer meet these needs should be closed and the care of their parishioners should be assumed by other parishes.

The worksheet serves as a “dashboard” or “monitor” for parish efforts and progress. Progress/lack of progress will be reviewed on an annual basis – October to October – and a determination will be made regarding future status. Parishes are already aware of their future options as outlined in the Pastoral Plan.

PARISH DATA CATEGORY	OCTOBER 2020	OCTOBER 2021	OCTOBER 2022
Average Mass Attendance			
Infant/Children Baptisms			
First Communions			
Confirmations			
Adults Received into the Catholic Faith			
Adult Initiation			
Marriages			
Funerals			
Registered Members			
Grades K-8 Parish School of Religion Enrollment			
Grades 9-12 Parish School of Religion Enrollment			
Contributions (Envelope and Basket)			
Number of Donors			
Total Income			
Total Expenses			