

AN IMPORTANT LETTER FROM FR. ZACHARY CECIL

Dear Parishioners of St. Lawrence, St. Teresa of Avila, St. William, and Resurrection of our Lord,

It is hard to believe that we have already celebrated Labor Day. It has been two months since we formed our new Family of Parishes, Southwest-4 (SW-4). I know that there have been many questions and thoughts circulating. For the next few weeks, I will try to answer some of these questions and give you an idea of where we are headed.

Right now, we are in the first phase of Beacons of Light. Beacons of Light, a term you have undoubtedly heard many times, began a couple of years ago when the Archdiocese began to evaluate and deeply look at where we are as an Archdiocese and where we are going. With the desire to build upon the rich and enduring history of the Archdiocese, it became clear that some changes needed to happen. A plan was formulated and named “Beacons of Light.” At the highest level it was determined that the best possible chance for success for the parishes of the archdiocese would be to group into “Families of Parishes.” These “Families” would then work together to create a stable and lively structure for their particular area. The groupings have now been formed and we know the incredible challenge the Families have been entrusted with will take time and require patience, but it is a process that has the potential to create a lot of good for our parishes. We are now in phase one of Beacons of Light, where we are committed to coming together, getting to know each other, and forming groups that will help us with this endeavor.

It is essential to remember who we are and why we are here. Our collective clergy and staff have determined “the mission of the Southwest-4 Family of Parishes is to create a solid Catholic culture on the West side of Cincinnati through authentic worship, strong devotion, and loving outreach. We intend to be a strong source of truth, beauty, and goodness that attracts people to the faith, reengages those who have fallen away, and strengthens the faith of practicing Catholics.” This mission statement is a reminder that God has blessed this area with the gift of His Church. Our parishes will continue to work toward bringing faith to our Westside community. In all honesty, we don't know all the details of how that will look or what adjustments will be made, but we can be confident that our parishes and schools will continue to work toward bringing Christ into Price Hill and the Westside in powerful ways.

I also want to update you on some of the plans currently happening. First, we are actively forming our Family Planning Team (FPT). The FPT will serve as a unified pastoral council during the beginning stages of this process with representatives from all four parishes who will advise the leadership and the staff of the Family as we move forward. They will work together to evaluate any adjustments that may be necessary for developing a pastoral plan for parish vitality which we will submit to the archdiocese. To start, they will be helping us evaluate Mass, Confession, and Adoration schedules, our ways and means of communication, and how we can grow stronger and closer together as a family of parishes. To guide everyone through this process the Archdiocese has given us 31 parameters that we will follow and take into consideration. I have attached them to the back of this letter so that you can begin to understand what is expected and what we need to examine. I am always available for any questions, concerns, or ideas as we go through this process together.

I know that, at least for me, these last two months have been very quick. It seems that I blinked, and summer was over. With that said, it has been terrific getting to know parishioners and celebrating Mass at St. Lawrence and Resurrection. We will continue to have the priests of the family rotate Mass times so that we all get to know each other a little more. Please be patient with this process. With weddings, family events, and other things that come up, the rotation will not always be even or predictable.

Lastly, I wish to thank the Knights of Columbus for organizing a welcoming picnic for our Family of Parishes scheduled for Saturday, October 8. This will be an excellent opportunity to gather together and get to know each other. I sincerely hope that you and your family can join us. You will find more details in the bulletin.

Please know you are in my daily prayers.

Fr. Zachary Cecil
Pastor SW-4

PASTORAL PLANNING PATHWAY

GENERAL PARAMETERS FOR FAMILY OF PARISHES AS APPROVED BY ARCHBISHOP SCHNURR TO GUIDE THE FOLLOWING 6 PRINCIPLES: EUCHARIST, CHURCH, LEADERSHIP, STEWARDSHIP, EVANGELIZATION, AND LOVE IN ACTION

- 1) Families of Parishes must follow canon law, civil law, all universal and particular Church law, and archdiocesan policies.
- 2) Families of Parishes must develop a pastoral plan for parish vitality, submitted at least annually, reviewed by the dean, to be approved by the archbishop in conformity with the parameters of the Pastoral Planning Pathway according to the published deadlines.
- 3) By September 1, 2022, every Family of Parishes must form a Planning Team, led by the pastor, to coordinate pastoral planning geared toward the unification of the Family by June 30, 2027.
- 4) The regular mass schedule for a Family of Parishes may not assume more than two masses per day per priest.
- 5) A regularly scheduled mass for the Sunday precept must have an annual average attendance of at least 50% of the church capacity.
- 6) The regular mass schedule must provide the opportunity for priests to spiritually prepare for and be present to the community after mass.
- 7) There must be a sufficient number of trained and formed liturgical ministers to serve as readers, servers, EMsHC, music ministers, et al. for liturgical celebrations.
- 8) Sacramental formation must be provided.
- 9) In pastoral planning and parish life, every Family of Parishes will adhere to the spirit and norms of the Vatican Instruction: "The pastoral conversion of the parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church." (2020)
- 10) Families collaborate with other Families with the deanery to provide coordinated pastoral ministry (e.g. hospitals, care facilities, young adult evangelization, high schools, jails, etc.)
- 11) Every Family of Parishes will have a unified Pastoral Council, with other relevant and necessary consultative groups for specific areas of parish life.
- 12) The Finance Councils of each parish with the Family will work together to appropriately plan for and monitor finances of the Family of Parishes.
- 13) Competent and qualified staff are necessary to serve the Family of Parishes, especially in the areas of worship, evangelization (including love in action), and administration. As is possible, staff will be unified to serve the entire Family.
- 14) Priests must have a regularly scheduled day off and must be able to take all annual vacation and retreats.
- 15) Priests, deacons, staff, and other lay leaders will participate in ongoing spiritual formation and training for leadership.
- 16) Every Family of Parishes will form people to embrace stewardship as a way of life.
- 17) Every Family of Parishes will actively promote vocational discernment.
- 18) Every Family of Parishes will create and implement a plan that ministers to all persons in every season of life and every stage in the process of evangelization.
- 19) Every Family of Parishes will have an Evangelization Team, overseen by the pastor and led by competent and qualified staff.
- 20) Every Family of Parishes must offer support to their communities through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and promote a culture of life, charity, and justice.
- 21) Every Family of Parishes will incorporate principles of Catholic Social Teaching into faith formation for youth and adults.
- 22) Every Family of Parishes will promote intercultural competence and facilitate the participation of all people in the life of the church.
- 23) The parish/school financial ID # cannot be changed unless a new parish is formed or a parish formally changes its name.
- 24) Each parish must maintain their own financial and sacramental records until parish territories are merged.
- 25) Families of Parishes must be fiscally accountable.
- 26) Parishes within each Family must work together to have an agreed upon and signed shared expense agreement annually when planning the yearly fiscal budget.
- 27) Each parish/school must follow all policies within the Temporal Affairs Handbook.
- 28) Every Family of Parishes must follow relevant civil law and archdiocesan policies for information (record) retention and location.
- 29) Every Family of Parishes must work with the Pastoral Center Department of Human Resources to review staffing models.
- 30) Each school must follow the approved School Change Process when making structural changes or closure decisions
- 31) Every Family of Parishes will utilize the archdiocese-provided census database for managing parishioner contact information and sacramental records.