



# Archdiocesan Strategic Planning Process

May 23, 2010

Dear Friends in Christ,

On this glorious feast of Pentecost, it is especially appropriate to be reminded that the Church, as the Body of Christ, is a communion of faith, hope and love, sent into the world to bear witness to the Gospel of truth, life and love. This is the vision that needs to be renewed in us on this holy day!

That vision has been the guiding light for the Strategic Planning Task Force which I charged over a year ago to study the future make-up of our Archdiocesan parishes and schools. Their recommendations will be given to me this summer and a new strategic plan will be announced in the fall.

The intent of this letter is to notify you of the fact that changes are coming, but also to assure you that the overall vision for the changes is to ensure that this Archdiocese will be a stronger and more vital church for our children and grandchildren. The changes that will be proposed are, in fact, meant to proclaim and promote this local Church as a more dynamic and effective communion of faith, hope and love.

I understand that change is never easy for any of us. But understanding the reason behind the change goes a long way toward accepting it. As we celebrate today the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, let us pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us through this period of change in such a way that we will be more united together as a real communion of faith, hope and love.

Please pray for me as I promise to do the same for you.

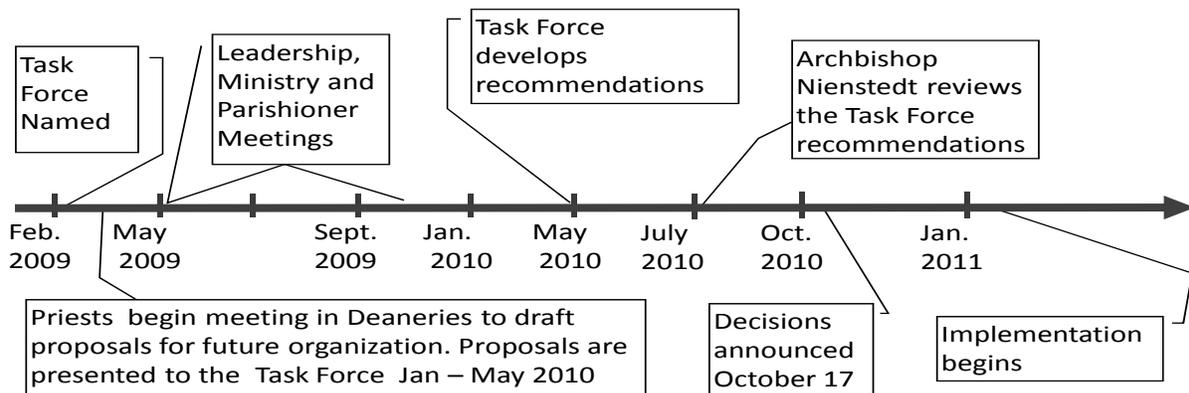
With every good wish, I remain,

Cordially yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

## Timeline: Archdiocesan Planning Process

Consultation, discernment, and recommendation development    Decisions and Implementation



To find out more:

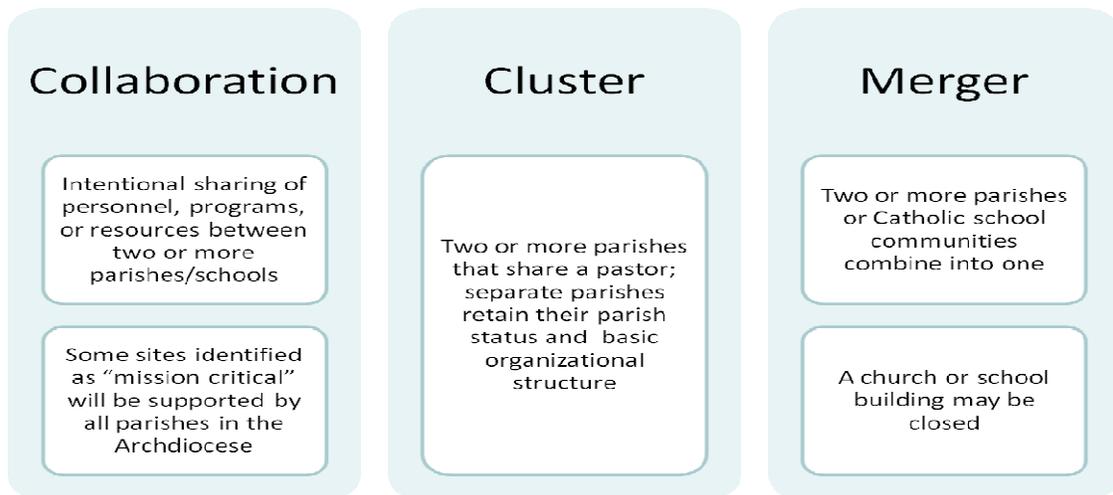
Visit [www.archspm.org](http://www.archspm.org), click on "Archdiocesan Planning Process" button

## **We Heard You:** major themes of input from leadership, parishioners and Catholic school families

- **Outreach:** we recognize the need to reach out to young people, disaffected Catholics, new immigrants, and the poor.
- **Transparency:** we recognize a need for more openness about parish and Archdiocesan finances and improved communication at all levels.
- **Responsible stewardship:** we recognize the need to make better use of the gifts we are given so all are served well and within our means.
- **Collaboration:** we recognize that fostering cooperation, communication and a shared commitment between parishes is important.
- **Healthy and unhealthy competition:** we recognize that parishes and schools often sense we are competing with one another, and it's not always a good thing.

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## **Possible Changes**



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## **Why Change is Needed**

### **Many parishes have been living beyond their means**

- More than 25% of parishes are being monitored by the Archdiocese due to serious debt and budget issues
- 25% of Catholic schools receive subsidies from the Archdiocese

### **We are supporting excess capacity:**

- In parishes across the Archdiocese, 32% of weekend Masses are less than 1/3 full
- Catholic schools have approximately 20% more seats than they have students

### **The Archdiocesan population is aging:**

- From 2005 to 2015 the fastest growing age group within the Twin Cities is 55 to 69 years of age

### **Ethnic diversity is once again growing in the Archdiocese:**

- The current growth in the number of Catholics in the Archdiocese is fueled almost exclusively by immigration
- There are now a significant number of Latino people living within a five minute drive of every parish

### **The number of parishes continues to change in response to conditions**

- The Archdiocese currently has 217 parishes, that's 10 fewer than a decade ago

### **The number of pastors will decline**

- There are currently 182 priests eligible to be pastor, in 10 years that number is projected to be 163.
- It often takes 8-12 years for a man entering seminary to be educated, trained, ordained, and have enough pastoral experience to be eligible for assignment as a pastor.