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Catholic archdiocese's makeover moves ahead

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The fact-gathering is over, and now it's time to decide the future shape of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The archdiocese announced Thursday that its 13-member strategic planning task force has presented its recommendations to Archbishop John Nienstedt. The task force has been gathering information from parishioners and church and school leaders since its appointment in February 2009.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Nienstedt will evaluate the recommendations during July, August and September, "seeking further facts and analysis as needed, before he approves a final detailed strategic reorganization plan," the announcement said.

The plan will be announced at weekend masses Oct. 16-17.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

"Key economic and demographic factors." Churches in the inner city and in first-ring suburbs are facing declining and aging memberships while churches in the outer suburbs are swelling with young families. Changing demographics mean that on an average Sunday, 16,500 people attend Spanish-speaking masses. Masses also are offered in Hmong, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino and French.

WHAT'S THE SCOPE?

The Twin Cities archdiocese serves about 650,000 Catholics in 217 parishes.

There are 93 elementary schools and 14 secondary schools with a total enrollment of 36,000. It also includes four hospitals, six nursing homes, six monastic communities and 10 retreat centers.

WHAT'S THE OUTLOOK?

"No decisions are predetermined at this point, however some parishes and schools will merge or cluster and it is likely that some buildings will close," the announcement said. "The strategic planning process is intended to address these current realities while remaining true to the mission of the Church."

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STAFF REPORT

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An advertisement for a performance by Williams and Ree. On the left is a photograph of a woman in a colorful, patterned jacket and a man in a yellow shirt playing a guitar. The background of the ad is a warm, orange-toned brushstroke. The text reads: "WILLIAMS AND REE", "FRIDAY, JULY 9", "ON SALE NOW TICKETMASTER.COM". On the right, it says "Mystic LAKE CASINO • HOTEL" and "mysticlake.com". At the bottom, it states "Owned and Operated by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community".

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