

All Things New Update

Last week, the Archdiocese announced the latest draft models as part of the All Things New process. Below are some commonly asked questions that I (Fr. John) have been asked since this announcement:

What does pastorate mean?

Pastorate is a word that is probably more common to our Protestant brothers and sisters than to us Catholics. A pastorate is a place (either a church or multiple churches) over which a pastor is assigned. For instance, I am now the pastor of St. Raphael the Archangel, and one way people could describe my tenure is “the pastorate of Fr. John Mayo at St. Raphael the Archangel.”

In the Archdiocese, we are used to each parish having its own pastor. But with the looming priest shortage, we will not have enough priests to staff every parish with one priest while also providing needed associates to assist in the larger parishes. So a pastorate is a way of saying that two or more parishes will, in certain situations, share one pastor.

So does this mean we are merging with St. Gabriel the Archangel?

No, not at all! St. Raphael the Archangel will remain an independent parish from St. Gabriel and visa versa. Both parishes will have separate finances managed by independent finance councils. There will be no changes to names of parishes. St. Raphael will remain St. Raphael and St. Gabriel will remain St. Gabriel.

What potential changes could this bring to St. Raphael the Archangel if we are sharing a pastor with St. Gabriel?

At this time, we are all a bit unclear about this. Even the priests are talking about how this can work with a pastor managing two or more parishes.

The most obvious change will be that our two parishes will be working more closely together. Since there is one pastor, there could be more joint efforts between the parishes on many different events, topics, and committees. What and how this happens will be up to the discernment of the pastor and parish leadership in both parishes.

Another change could be the combining of parish staffs and/or centralization of parish offices at one campus since there is one pastor over both parishes.

Further changes could be to the Mass schedule. Currently, we have five priests serving in St. Louis Hills. The current projection sees that number dropping to two priests. There may need to be adjustments to the Mass schedule to accommodate this change in the numbers of priests.

What about the school?

This model has only to do with the parishes. The Archdiocese is beginning conversations based on this parish model to better stabilize the footprint of the schools. The fruit of these conversations will not be released until the fall of the 2023-2024 school year.

The other known fact between the parishes is that, based on current enrollment, it is not possible to combine the two schools on one campus. Thus, for Catholic schooling to continue in St. Louis Hills, with the current capacity being maintained, utilizing both St. Raphael and St. Gabriel campuses will be necessary going forward.

Who will be the pastor? Will there be transfers of priests?

We do not know right now who the pastor will be of the St. Gabriel and St. Raphael pastorate. What Fr. Chris Martin, Vicar for Strategic Planning in the Archdiocese, has said to the priests and publicly is that there will be a “significant” transfer of priests announced on or around May 28.

What is coming next?

Really, the next announcement about All Things New is not expected until Pentecost Sunday, May 28. That will be when the parish plan is announced in the Archdiocese. The actual how and when of the implementation of this plan are still being discerned. But I think it safe to say that things will begin moving within a few months of the announcement, with priests beginning to be transferred and the vision of a joint pastorate is articulated. The process to get to the goal may take a number of months and even years, as this model is really unknown in our Archdiocese. All people, from the priests, to the parish leadership, to the parishioners, will have to get their heads around how this will work and what are the best practices for this model. But do not think that there will be an announcement and then a lull of many, many months will occur before any changes begin to happen.

When do we get to social outreach and to evangelization?

There has been a document produced for each planning area identifying social outreach needs. Plans are being put together right now for how this document will become a living reality in each area in the Archdiocese.

Evangelization plans are also being addressed by the Archdiocese as well. But they will be implemented locally.

For this to occur, we need to free up priests to be who they were ordained to be: priests. We need to be prepared for a new reality on the administrative side, then, of the parish.

What this means, as of right now, I do not know. Undoubtedly, we are going to see the need for more laity in the administration and maintenance and odds and ends of the parish, both employed and volunteer. We need to be ready for a reality where Father is not at every meeting or making every decision. It will just not be possible. He may need to delegate someone else to make the final decision or someone else to represent him at the meeting and get back to him so he can make the decision. It may mean more volunteers will take care of items that the priest formerly handled. Ultimately, it will be up to the new pastor to make the call in each situation as to how this will work. We need to begin preparing now, though, for a shift in parish life and how the priest ministers to the parish so that we can get to what we need to get to: a purposeful living of Catholic life.

I have said this before, but I mention it here now to drive home this point. In 2011, we had 576 people attending Mass on Sunday. In the latest count, we had 403 people attending Mass. Similar drops in Mass attendance can be seen Archdiocesan-wide, as we saw at the listening sessions in October. If these declines continue, what will our parishes look like in 10 years? No one wants to close churches or schools, but if these declines continue, will we realistically be able to sustain the footprint we currently have?

We need to get to a purposeful living out of our Catholic faith, witnessing to it, and inviting people to join us on a regular basis so these trends begin to reverse. This attitude will, in time, provoke an increase in the number of priests that will allow us to return to an individual pastor for every parish.

Auction

Thank you to everyone who attended, supported, or helped in any way with our Black and Gold Dinner Auction last weekend. It was a great success and a great time for everyone who attended! Thank you, especially, to Mark Pfeiffer and our auction committee for all of their hard work in making this evening possible.

"Bother Father"

"Bother Father" for February will be on Tuesday, February 21, from 3:00-5:00pm. A Signup Genius was sent out on Wednesday with the midweek update or you can contact the parish office for a time to meet with me.

Parish Rosary Program

This week, our prayer intention will be for the people of Turkey and Syria as they recover from the recent earthquake there. Would you like to pray with

us and see that number of Rosaries increase? If so, please fill out this intention card and return it in the Offertory.

I will see you online or in church! - Fr. John #SRAstrong

P.S. Please remember to talk up our school as we continue our re-enrollment and enrollment process. Visit sraschool.org for many videos and information on our school or to inquire about attending!

I commit to participating in the Parish Rosary Program (Name Optional) _____	I will pray... _____ Decade(s) _____ Rosary(ies)	Every: _____ Day _____ Week
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