

Hello Friends,

As we begin our third year as a Parish Family, I want to re-center ourselves in the Partners in the Gospel process, especially because a large amount of my time this year will be dedicated to the final stage of this process.

Letter

FROM THE
PASTOR



A Partners in the Gospel Update

This year is going to be critical for us in Partners in the Gospel. The key aspect of Partners in the Gospel is called the **“One Parish Plan.”** This plan is what will set our course from July 2027 onward. In this document, we will come up with the vision for the Parish Family, its key initiatives, and all the tasks that need to happen to execute these initiatives. In other words, while we have been experiencing change already, the real change begins with this document on July 1, 2027, when we will become one legal entity.

PLANNING BACKWARDS: WHY HAVE WE DONE ALL THIS PREVIOUS WORK?

To develop this plan, we need two essential things: input from parishioners (the ground-level perspective), and people who can prayerfully discern what that input is telling us. This is why we have held listening sessions, information nights, and surveys.

So what are the categories of input we need? These have been the focus of the listening sessions:

- What are our gifts?
- Parish Family Data Snapshot
- What are our opportunities and challenges?
- Who do we want to become?
- How do we get there?

This year we will be answering “Who do we want to become?” and “How do we get there?” This last question is primarily for the Pastoral Leadership Council to answer in conjunction with staff and me.

SO WHERE ARE WE RIGHT NOW?

In June, we began exploring the question “What opportunities and challenges do we face?” during the initial listening session we conducted. We still need more input from you through our survey. Your feedback is essential as we move to the next question “Who do we want to become?” Listening sessions on this question will take place in February.

On the next pages, you will find an overview of what we have accomplished together over the past two years, a summary of the input gathered during our listening sessions, and the steps we need to take now and in the months ahead.

Oct
Nov
2025

First Listening Session

WHAT ARE OUR GIFTS?

Through the listening sessions and survey conducted, we heard from approximately 200 parishioners across our Parish Family. In summary, here is how you described in once sentence the people, gifts, and ministries present in each of our parishes:

- **St. Alphonsus** is a reverent, welcoming, and family-centered Catholic parish where beautiful worship, sacred music, and a vibrant community form disciples who live and share the love of Christ.
- **St. Benedict** is a welcoming, inclusive, and service-centered parish and school community with deep relationships and vibrant family life, but parishioners feel increasingly anxious and unheard due to rapid changes, limited priest presence, and a lack of communication about the future.
- **St. John** is a warm and welcoming Catholic community where people encounter Christ through reverent liturgy, beautiful music, strong preaching, a mission-driven school, and a spirit of generosity and service that embraces families, cares for neighbors, and builds lasting relationships.

To read the full results, please visit bit.ly/PF141stListeningResults. We will use these identified gifts and charisms when we answer the question “Who do we want to become?” We hope to develop specific initiatives, such as ministries, outreach, evangelization, or programs, that will put our gifts into action.



Scan the QR code to
view the First Listening
Session Results

May
2026

PARISH FAMILY DATA SNAPSHOT

To help identify our Parish Family's current state and assess our ability to sustain our operations into the future, you were presented with the Parish Family Data Snapshot: bit.ly/PF14DataSnapshot. It includes key information about our pastoral area, demographics, and parish resources to help guide us in prayerfully discerning the opportunities and challenges our Parish Family faces today.

As we presented the data and metrics, we asked you to draw inspiration from Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), particularly paragraphs 12–18, and use the “See, Judge, Act” method. **See:** Understand the present reality. **Judge:** Discern and comprehend that reality in light of the Gospel. **Act:** Respond faithfully and take meaningful action.

One of the key findings from our Parish Family Snapshot is that approximately 18,000 of the 144,000 people living within our parish boundaries are Catholic, yet only about 900 people attend our Masses each week. This reminds us that our mission extends beyond those already in our pews to the entire community around us.



Scan the QR code
to view the PF14
Data Snapshot

Jun
Sep
2026

Second Listening Session

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES EXIST FOR US?

Last June, some of you joined our initial listening session to answer the question “What opportunities and challenges exist for us?” With the Parish Family Data Snapshot in hand, there were several ideas shared on evangelization, youth engagement, parish-school relationship, community outreach, and more.

Now, we need to hear from everyone across our Parish Family!

ANSWER THE SURVEY!

bit.ly/PF14OppsChallenges

If you prefer pen and paper, printed copies will be available in the vestibule.



Please participate in this brief survey and share your thoughts by answering just three questions.

- **Having seen information from the Parish Family Data Snapshot: bit.ly/PF14DataSnapshot, what opportunities do you see to better serve and accompany people within our parishes and the wider community? Who could we do a better job of reaching?**
- **What challenges are we facing within our Parish Family?**
- **What challenges do you see that exist in the wider community?**

This survey will help us identify what you believe should be most important as we look toward the future. In the next phase, your responses to this survey will be considered alongside our Parish Family Data Snapshot, our gifts and charisms, existing ministries, and the mission of the Church.

Feb
2027

Next (Third) Listening Session

WHO DO WE WANT TO BECOME?

This is a critical phase in our One Parish Planning process. Guided by prayer and everything we have learned about our Parish Family - our gifts, charisms, opportunities, and challenges, **we will hold a listening session to discern who God is calling us to become as one parish.** The outcome will be a shared vision that will guide our priorities, ministries, and decisions for the future. Your voice is essential to this discernment, so please plan on attending this session.

As part of this phase, another listening session will be held to give the Parish Family an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft vision and proposed initiatives.

June
2027

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

In this final phase, our Pastoral Leadership Council together with the Pastor and key parish staff will turn our shared vision into action by identifying the initiatives, resources, responsibilities, and timelines needed to achieve it. The outcome will be the **One Parish Plan** that will guide our Parish Family as we move forward together as one parish.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I want to remind us of what we are meant to be in principle, therefore, what does our end goal look like? To this I want to remind you of what the nature of the Church is, and what her mission is.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

Christ continues his mission

The Church is the continued Human Presence of Jesus on Earth. Christ is still working and has a mission, and His mission has a Church. His mission is to save humanity, which is held hostage by sin and death, and to raise it up and make it like Himself. *See Ephesians 4.*

He lives in us and acts through us

Jesus continues His work in a personal and human way through our flesh. We are cells in His body, but the life of the body is what keeps the cells alive. By analogy, we are cells in Christ's mystical body, the Church, and His life permeates us and keeps us alive.

WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH?

Mission: Worship - Witness - Charity

"The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-martyria), celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia), and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable." *Pt 2, Ch 25 of Deus Caritas Est, Pope Benedict XVI.*

What is a parish?

"The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented." *Paragraph 28, Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis*

All Partners in the Gospel planning and events are intended to strategically put us back into our mission. When any organization has experienced mission creep, forgotten part of its mission, or even taken on a different mission, the process of returning to its roots and true life will be difficult. Yet, the result will be new life, joy, and freedom. Even if it seems foreign compared with what we are used to, it will be beautiful.

Blessings,
Fr. Colin Parrish
Pastor