



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Office of the Archbishop

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September 17, 2021

*Memorial of Saint Robert Bellarmine,
patron of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The mission of the Catholic Church, *our mission*, entrusted to the apostles by Jesus, is to proclaim the Good News of salvation and “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:19-20). In short, to radiate Christ.

We have a responsibility to make the best use of all the means which God has provided us to pursue this sacred mission. It is therefore appropriate to ask, are all our resources – human, physical and financial – properly ordered to missionary discipleship? Are they working in concert to continuously draw parishioners and attract new members into a more intimate relationship with Jesus? Or are they consumed by efforts to maintain the status quo and spread too thin to be truly effective?

These are the concerns that **Beacons of Light**, the multi-year process of comprehensive pastoral planning for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, has been addressing. After months of study and analysis, we cannot escape the conclusion that in many cases our church buildings are grossly underutilized, our priests and parish staff members are stretched to the limit, and our parishes are simply not the vibrant, evangelizing communities Catholics want and need them to be.

To help remedy this situation and be better stewards of the resources God has made available to us, parishes in the archdiocese will be grouped into “Families of Parishes” under the leadership of one pastor. After that, each Family will collaborate internally to determine the best and highest use of their shared resources to radiate the love of Christ and form a strong, vital community of evangelization and service centered on the Eucharist.

Your thoughtful feedback at this stage of the planning process would be most valuable. **A draft of the Families of Parishes will be shared for public comment October 1-20** at www.BeaconsAOC.org, the website of the Beacons of Light initiative. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the information on the website, then prayerfully provide your input on this important step which will shape the future of our archdiocese.

RADIATE CHRIST

As we continue this challenging but necessary endeavor, it is critically important that we earnestly seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we might together discern the best path forward with humility and courage. Please join me in asking for the intercession of our Blessed Mother, to whose care we have entrusted our archdiocese, that God continue to bless us with His presence and His love, as we pray:

*Mary, Mother of the Church and our Mother,
present our prayer of thanksgiving to your Son.
Beg from Him the graces we need to be faithful disciples
who follow Him with enthusiasm and joy.
May our witness to the love of God bear fruit
in our archdiocese, parishes, homes and hearts.
Teach us to be God's joyful witnesses,
to radiate Christ in all we do,
so that all people might know, love and follow your Son
through this life and into the next.
Amen.*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dennis M. Schnurr". The signature is written in a cursive style and includes a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr
Archbishop of Cincinnati

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