

Lakeshore Catholic Faith Community

My Dear Lakeshore Catholic Faith Community,

We listened to Bishop Fisher's announcement last week and then saw the News reports and of course many have seen the multiple Social Media Posts. I want you to know our timeline in this process. The Family Council received this information the night I did and are sharing what we have, and are listening to your thoughts.

The Diocese has reviewed all Parishes' Sacramental and Financial Records along with local Demographics to establish four Categories to be analyzed: Parish Demographics, Financial Contributions, Sacramental Participation and Vicariate / Regional Variations. These led to a deeper understanding of: Financial Strain due to Chapter 11, A significant Priest Shortage, Excess property maintenance, declining Mass / Sacrament attendance and that the average parish Congregation is 60% over the age of 66.

The Report also showed that out of the 160 Parishes with 196 Worship Sites at present 49% report a decline in Registered Households, while 39% report an increase. A more specific review 33% report a decline in Contributing Households which indicates decreasing engagement. Using this information the Renewal Office has come up with specific recommendations for merging of Parishes and suggested path forward. This is being put out through Vicariate Meetings, so you may be seeing releases already.

Our Vicariate Meeting is on Thursday June 13 where the Clergy and Parish Trustees will receive our packet I plan to put out the essential information in this same way next week. On Monday June 17 at 6:30pm in St. Mary of the Lake Gym and then on Wednesday June 19 at 6:30pm in Most Precious Blood Hall we will gather our ideas and thoughts about the packet we receive. Both Gatherings are the same, you only need attend one.

My goal is always to get as much input as we can from as many as possible. I believe we are all in this together so as a family we need to be working on it. We will have the Family Council, the Trustees and the clergy give guidance to the final product. So you have four ways to contribute. Thank You.

Remember God's love in all of this and how we can contribute. Pray for all in our Diocese right now.

Choicest Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Tim Koester". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Timothy Koester