

## Status of Synod Initiative V: Sacramental Life of the Church

### *Origins of the Report*

At its January 26, 2008 meeting, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) considered a proposal to offer Cardinal Mahony six reports, one on each of the six Initiatives of the 2003 Synod. The six reports would outline the work being done throughout the archdiocese in implementing the six initiatives. An ad hoc committee studied the APC's ability and willingness to do these reports. In May, 2008, the APC heard the report and endorsed the proposal. This document for Synod Initiative V is the sixth report to be prepared.

### *Scope of the Report*

A committee<sup>1</sup> was established by the APC to develop the report on Initiative V. To facilitate developing this document this committee has been having planning sessions in the conference center of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels during the past year.

The heart of Synod Initiative V are its two priorities: each parish is to give priority to “the Sunday celebration of Mass as the primary occasion and opportunity for revitalizing the spiritual life of the community” and “as the availability of priests continues to decline ... a comprehensive plan is to be developed ... for providing for the liturgical and sacramental needs of the people”.<sup>2</sup>

The documents of Vatican Council II are supportive of these two priorities. “For the liturgy, ... especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is supremely effective in enabling the faithful to express in their lives and portray to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true church.”<sup>3</sup> Also noted in *Presbyterorum Ordinis* is “... the Lord also appointed certain men as ministers, in order that they might be united in one body in which ‘all the members have not the same function.’ (Rom 12:4)”

“These men held in the community of the faithful the sacred power of order, that of offering the sacrifice and forgiving sins, and exercised the priestly office publicly on behalf of men and women in the name of Christ.”<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that *Apostolicam Actuositatem* has strong supportive statements about the shared role of the laity in the mission of the church “Lay people, too, sharing in the priestly, prophetic and

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<sup>1</sup> Committee Members: Gabriela Reitzell, Deacon David Estrada, Deacon Bob Seidler, Jean Brown, David Kennedy, Tanya Gutierrez, and Chris Caenepeel

<sup>2</sup> *Gathered and Sent: The Documents of the Synod of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles 2003*, p. 37

<sup>3</sup> The Basic Sixteen Documents Vatican Council II Constitution Decrees Declarations, Gen. Editor A. Flannery, O.P., *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Sacrosanctum Concilium, Item 2, 4 Dec 1963.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Item 2, 7 Dec. 1963

kingly office of Christ, play their part in the mission of the whole people of God in the church and in the world.”<sup>5</sup>

This APC report on Synod Initiative V will initially address its two priorities. This will include a focus on the need of providing Eucharist, sacraments and other spiritual support to the large Los Angeles Archdiocesan Catholic community. The challenge of the aging priesthood and the annual low number of the newly ordained will be reviewed. The use of a large international priesthood, the growing use of permanent deacons, religious and lay pastoral associates, and parish life directors to have major administrative and spiritual growth responsibilities in parishes will be summarized. Also analyzed will be implementation of models such as building mega parishes or having one priest assigned to multiple parishes. The archdiocesan viability study and the need for continual assessment of the changed parishes in meeting their spiritual and administrative needs will be analyzed. The report will also include a summary of the responses from the regional bishops about the quality of liturgies in their regions. In order to be proactive, this report will also address sacramental programs that give parishes direction in the sacramental life of the Church. The important topic of homiletics will also be addressed. The report will conclude with a series of recommendations which are targeted to assist parishes and regional bishops in successfully attaining the priorities of Synod Initiative V.

### **Synod Initiative V**

*Priority 1: Each parish is to give priority to the Sunday celebration of Mass as the primary occasion and opportunity for revitalizing the spiritual life of the community and, accordingly, make appropriate provision for the full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful.*

Los Angeles is the largest archdiocese in the country with 4,180,859 Catholics and 287 parishes. The size and diversity of the archdiocese has brought its own unique challenges but the Eucharist has brought us together. The Second Vatican Council stressed:

The full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit, and therefore, pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work. In addition, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Item 2, The Vocation of Lay People to the Apostolate, 18 Nov., 1965

<sup>6</sup> Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, December 4, 1963.

It is necessary to make the Sacraments available to all Catholics in the Los Angeles Archdiocese. We have many challenges to completing this objective – the cultural differences, the multiple languages spoken (43 languages) and most importantly the availability of priests.

It is important that all the faithful strive for the reality of the conscious presence of Christ in the form of the Eucharist.

In addressing the Eucharist, we do well to focus on the words of Canon 897:

"The Most Holy Eucharist is the most august sacrament, in which Christ the Lord himself is contained, offered and received, and by which the Church constantly lives and grows. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated over the centuries, is the summit and the source of all Christian worship and life....."

*Priority 2: As the availability of priests continues to decline within the Archdiocese, a comprehensive plan is to be developed on the Archdiocesan, regional and parish levels for providing for the liturgical and sacramental needs of the people.*

At the present time, the overall number of priests in the archdiocese continues to decline as seen in the following tables:

**Ordination vs. Retirements\***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Ordinations</b>	<b>Retirements</b>
2003	4	6
2004	6	9
2005	5	13
2006	4	6
2007	6	9
2008	12	8
2009	6	11
2010	3	9
2011	8	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>86</b>

\* Statistics from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and does not include deceased priests.

**Projected Ordinations vs. Retirements**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Ordinations</b>	<b>Retirements</b>
2012	4	11
2013	2	16
2014	4	7
2015	6	11
2016	7	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>56</b>

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In addition, many parishes are staffed with priests from religious orders. Currently there are 173 resident diocesan priests, 58 resident religious order priests, and 41 parishes administered by religious orders. Just as the number of diocesan priests has diminished, the number of religious order priests has also lessened.

The archdiocese has chosen to not close any parishes, but to implement a number of alternatives to the management of the parish recognizing this priest shortage. The alternatives have recognized the growing role of the laity to aid in parish life. All parishes have been asked to have an active Pastoral Council and Finance Council to aid in this task. The alternatives to the parish with a priest pastor are the appointment of Parish Life Directors (a lay person or a deacon responsible for the administrative and spiritual life of the parish, who collaborates with a Priest Minister, responsible for the sacramental life of the parish) and the twinning or clustering of parishes (where a priest is asked to attend to the spiritual needs of parishioners from two or more parishes). The role of the Deacon has allowed some sacraments to be performed without a priest. The Eucharist must be celebrated by a priest, but these alternatives allow the priest to focus on the Eucharist.

All parishes were asked to complete a Viability Study to determine if the parish was a candidate for an alternative pastoral solution. This study is available as input when the pastor leaves. The original Viability Study was completed in 2005; the parishes have been asked to re-visit the study and determine if the parish has changed.

In addition, the archdiocese has been using international priests as pastors. This decision has brought additional challenges to pastoral life. In order for these priests to operate in parishes there is a transitional program provided for them. The first step is accent reduction. Although these priests speak English, they undergo a number of sessions to help them to be understood by the parishioners. Another topic is cultural immersion. Many of these priests have not worked in parishes where the laity assumes as many of the responsibilities as is done in the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Another cultural difference is the role of women. Many countries do not have the same outlook towards woman in leadership as our Archdiocese does.

## **Emerging Role of the Deacon**

### **Identity**

In 1987, during his apostolic journey to the USA and Canada, Pope John Paul II addressed deacons and their wives in these words:

“You represent a great and visible sign of the working of the Holy Spirit in the wake of the II Vatican Council...This Council explains that the service of the deacons is the Church’s service sacramentalized. Yours is not just one ministry among others, but is

truly meant to be, as Paul VI described it, a “driving force” for the whole Church’s service.”<sup>7</sup>

The categories of diaconal functions, as listed here, differ in order and name from the functions in the diaconate restoration documents issued by the Vatican and the United States National Conference of Bishops. The Vatican documents list the functions as: Diaconia of the Word, Diaconia of the Liturgy, and Diaconia of the Charity; whereas the United States Bishops list them as: Ministry of Love and Justice, Ministry of the Word of God, and Ministry of the Liturgy. The functions, as listed here, were organized and prioritized after analysis of the written and oral data gathered from Deacon Assembly - 2000.

The deacon facilitates in voicing the needs of the people in the general intercessions. The deacon assists in the presentation of the gifts, and distribution of Holy Communion. The sacramental responsibilities of the deacon include officiating at baptisms and witnessing marriages.

The deacon is also able to bring Viaticum to the dying, preside over vigils, funerals, and burials, preside over Liturgies of the Word and Eucharistic Services and Liturgies of the Hours as well as the exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Finally the deacon is able to assist in leading non-sacramental reconciliation services, conduct prayer services for the sick and dying and administer sacramentals.

### **The Role of Consecrated Women and Men**

*“The Consecrated Life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ, the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to his Church, through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>8</sup>*

*“In every age there have been men and women who, obedient to the Father’s call and to the prompting of the Spirit, have chosen this special way of following Christ, in order to devote themselves to Him with an “undivided” heart. Like the Apostles, they too have left everything behind in order to be with Christ and to put themselves as He did, at the service of God and their brothers and sisters. In this way, through the many charisms of spiritual and apostolic life bestowed on them by the Holy Spirit, they have helped to make the mystery and mission of the Church shine forth and in doing so have contributed to the renewal of society.”<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> *Meeting with the Men Ordained to the Permanent Diaconate, Address of His Holiness John Paul II, Ford Auditorium, Detroit, Saturday, September 19, 1987*

<sup>8</sup> Vita Consecrata, John Paul II, Introduction

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Throughout the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, consecrated women and men live out their religious consecration through their service to God and their brothers and sisters in a variety of ministries that encompass the corporal and spiritual works of mercy across the two hundred eighty eight parishes and other ministries in over one hundred twenty cities in the greater Los Angeles area. Included in these various ministries are religious who serve as Pastoral Associates, Parish Life Directors, Catechetical Directors, Chaplains, Liturgical Ministers and a variety of other ministries and apostolates which enhances and contributes to the role of worship and life within the Archdiocese as well as furthering the charisms of their Institutes. Consecrated religious women number 1,897 representing one hundred eight religious congregations. Religious brothers number 89 representing eleven Congregations.<sup>10</sup>

We cannot underestimate the powerful outreach of these religious brothers and sisters across our Archdiocese who bring the good news of salvation to those in need as well as the constant intercessory prayer of those contemplative communities. The Church in Los Angeles has been built upon the loving service of these consecrated women and men; they are integral to the Church's mission, especially as they minister and witness to the poor among us.

### **Emerging Role of the Laity**

Because of the diminishing numbers of priests, a comprehensive plan is to be developed to provide for the liturgical and sacramental needs of the people. It will be vital for the laity to take an ever increasing role in the spiritual, sacramental and administrative duties of the Church. The laity is encouraged to recognize their call to be leaders by virtue of the charisms or spiritual gifts given to them in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

A preliminary step to address this issue was initiated by the Archdiocese when in September 2005 the Cardinal Archbishop promulgated "As One Who Serves," a pastoral statement on the emergence of parish pastoral leadership under competent lay persons and religious. This was followed in late 2006 by "Serving Shoulder to Shoulder," another pastoral directive by the Cardinal Archbishop which described the role, qualifications, and responsibilities of the Parish Life Director, Priest Minister, Priest Moderator and other ministerial entities.

The term laity is here understood to mean all the faithful. "These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God. They are in

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<sup>10</sup> The Official Catholic Directory: PJ Kenedy and Sons, 2011

their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ: and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and the world.”<sup>11</sup> All baptized and confirmed should be aware of their active responsibility in the church’s life. Therefore preparation and formation classes appropriate to the level of responsibilities should be available to the laity.

As lay persons assume positions of parish leadership, perhaps nothing is more important than cultivating, nurturing and sustaining collaboration between and among priests, deacons, vowed Religious and lay leaders. Such collaboration is more readily assured as each one has a clear sense of the distinctiveness and particularity of his or her vocation, recognizing the importance of bringing different gifts to bear in the common mission of the Church.<sup>12</sup>

Participation in their Parish Pastoral Councils is one way the lay faithful may become involved in the life of their parish. According to Canon 511, in every diocese and to the extent that pastoral circumstances suggest it, a pastoral council is to be constituted which under the authority of the bishop investigates, considers, and proposes practical conclusions about those things which pertain to pastoral works in the diocese.<sup>13</sup> They have the right, indeed at times the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and prestige, to manifest to their Pastors their views on matters that concern the good of the Church. They have the right also to make their views known to others of Christ’s faithful, but in doing so they must always 1) respect the integrity of faith and morals, 2) show due reverence to the Pastors and 3) take into account both the common usefulness and the dignity of persons.<sup>14</sup> An archdiocesan pastoral council consists of members of the Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church—clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life, and especially laity—who are designated in a manner determined by the diocesan bishop<sup>15</sup> or in the case of Parish Pastoral Council, by the pastor or parish life director.

### **Lay Ecclesial Ministry**

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<sup>11</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, Ch IV No 31

<sup>12</sup> *As One Who Serves*, Cardinal Roger Mahony, 9-4-2005

<sup>13</sup> Canon Law 511

<sup>14</sup> Canon Law 212

<sup>15</sup> Canon Law 512§1

The term lay ecclesial minister encompasses and describes several possible roles in parish life including parish life director, pastoral associate, parish catechetical leader, youth ministry leader, school principal and director of music and liturgy. Canon Law 517§ 2 addresses this issue directly by allowing that the pastoral care of a parish be entrusted to a deacon or lay person as follows; “If, because of a shortage of priests, the diocesan Bishop has judged that a deacon, or some other person who is not a priest, or a community of persons, should be entrusted with a share in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish, he is to appoint some priest who, with the powers and faculties of a parish priest, will direct the pastoral care.”<sup>16</sup> In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the deacon or lay person appointed to shepherd a parish community is designated the Parish Life Director.

**Parish Life Director** (In charge of the Spiritual and Pastoral Administration of a Parish)

The Parish Life Director is a professional minister who is formally appointed by the Archbishop and entrusted with the leadership of a parish without a resident pastor. In collaboration with a Priest Moderator appointed by the Archbishop, and a Priest Minister, the Parish Life Director has the responsibility for providing for the overall day –to-day pastoral care and administration of a parish. Collaboratively, the Parish Life Director enables and empowers the community to be a sign of the reality of the Reign of God. The Parish Life Director is accountable to the Priest Moderator and to the Archbishop or his delegate, the Regional Bishop.<sup>17</sup>

Those who are discerning to be a Parish Life Director are often personally invited by the Bishop, Pastors, Deacons, Lay Ecclesial Ministers or by others who know them. The qualifications for a Parish Life Director must maintain the four elements of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral) which put together will make a whole unified and well formed lay ecclesial minister.<sup>18</sup>

According to the Archdiocesan Office of Parish Life, there are currently eight Parish Life Directors: six women and two men, one of whom is a deacon.

**Pastoral Associates**

Pastoral Associates are generalists in ministry who collaborate with a priest pastor, and other parish staff, to provide for the pastoral needs of the people. Pastoral Associates for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are women and men who are commissioned by the

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<sup>16</sup> 517§2

<sup>17</sup> *Serving Shoulder to Shoulder*, #4 Parish Life Director

<sup>18</sup> *CoWorkers in the Vineyard*, Formation for Lay Ecclesial Ministry



Archdiocese of Los Angeles to provide ministry in partnership with the clergy of the local Church in a variety of pastoral settings. In drawing up the purpose and function of the Pastoral Associate, three priorities were set which framed a vision for the Church in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles; Education, Spiritual Formation and Skills for Ministry.<sup>19</sup>

The education requirement for a Pastoral Associate is a Masters in Theology, Pastoral Studies, Religious Studies, or the like. In the Los Angeles Archdiocese we currently have 20 Pastoral Associates ministering in parishes, according to the Archdiocesan Office of Parish Life.

### **Women Laity**

Women in the Church today must recognize their responsibility as leading participants in the Church. “Since in our times women have ever more active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely also in the various fields of the Church’s apostolate.”<sup>20</sup>

In his apostolic exhortation, “Christifideles Laici” (Christ’s Faithful People), Pope John Paul II states that the 1987 Synod of Bishops, while addressing the topic of vocation and Mission in the church and in the World Twenty Years after the Second Vatican Council, “gave special attention to the status and role of women, with two purposes in mind: to themselves acknowledge and to invite all others to once again acknowledge the indispensable contribution of women to the building up of the Church and the development of society.”<sup>21</sup>

“Women, who already hold places of great importance in transmitting the faith and offering every kind of service in the life of the Church, ought to be associated in the preparation of pastoral and missionary documents and ought to be recognized as cooperators in the mission of the church in the family and in professional life and in the civil community.”<sup>22</sup>

“The participation of women in the life of the Church and society in the sharing of her gifts is likewise the path necessary of her personal fulfillment, on which so many insist today, and the basic contribution of woman to the enrichment of church communion and the dynamism in the apostolate of the People of God.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Serving Shoulder to Shoulder*

<sup>20</sup> Vatican II, *The Various Fields of the Apostolate*, Ch.III.9

<sup>21</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, Women and Men #49

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>23</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, *Mission in the Church and in the World* #51

### **Wives of the Deacons**

The wives of Deacons hold a special place in the Diaconate and their parish communities. Although the wife of a Deacon is not ordained, she becomes an integral part of the Diaconate Community by participating in the formation program and being an active member of the deacon community of the Archdiocese, working with her husband or on her own ministries in the parishes they serve.

The wife of a Deacon has attended most of the classes with her husband in the Diaconate Program. With all of her knowledge and gifts, her importance in the parish in which her husband serves should be acknowledged by granting her a position of responsibility in the parish. Also, she often ministers alongside her husband.

### **Continuing Challenges**

There are several challenges that exist to these alternative leadership models for parishes:

- Often the Parish Priest does not accept the PLD or the Pastoral Associate. They sometimes see them as a threat, not a great help.
- Some Priests do not want to be pastors and would rather be a Priest Minister.
- More education is needed to aid priests in the acceptance of each ministry. This is a solution to most of these challenges.
- Many old time Catholics resist the idea of a lay person running the Parish.

For the most part, there is little open conversation or catechesis within parishes so parishioners can understand the need and the assistance given by the lay leaders, and be better prepared for the changes that are coming.

### **Liturgical Celebrations: Perspective of The Regional Bishops**

One of the principal pastoral priorities to have emerged under Pastoral Initiative V requires each parish throughout the Archdiocese to give priority to the Sunday celebration of Mass as the primary occasion and opportunity for revitalizing the spiritual life of the community. It further requires, in accordance with the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* that appropriate provision be made for the “full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful within the Mass.”<sup>24</sup> In the years following the conclusion of the Synod in September 2003, there has been a consistent awareness of this important priority, and a great deal of effort has been expended in trying to establish the best and most effective liturgical practices that meet the needs of the faithful in accordance with this pastoral priority.

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<sup>24</sup> *Sacrosanctum Consilium*

Pastoral Initiative V has generally been considered a challenge to implement by the five Regional Pastoral Councils because of the breadth of its scope and the limited ability of the faithful to influence the quality of any liturgical celebration without pastoral support and approval. Nevertheless, much has been initiated and accomplished by various individual parish communities, despite the fact that these achievements may have not always been evident to the greater Archdiocesan community due to their parochial character and the tendency for parishes to keep to themselves.

In light of the above, a questionnaire was developed by the APC Synod V Committee and submitted to the regional bishops for their response. What follows is a compilation of the responses from the regional bishops to this questionnaire.

Question 1: *In your experience in your region, do you see an emphasis on the Mass as the primary occasion for revitalizing the spiritual life of the community?*

“I find the Mass as the center or heart of the parish, especially (in) revitalizing and invigorating the spiritual life of the community.” “Some parishes have good liturgies” but “with the majority of the parishes the unfortunate focus is we have to have a Mass.”

Question 2: *As you have had the opportunity to visit your parishes, have you seen any improvement in the quality of the Sunday celebration of Mass and the full, conscious, and active participation of the parishioners?*

There was a mixed response on this question. Answers varied from “the majority of parishes provide (a) wonderful Mass experiences” to “there are still too many parishes where full participation is limited.” Additional comments varied from “...(the Mass is) a communal celebration...with full conscious participation of the congregation” to “there (are) still some parishes whose liturgies are as arid as the desert.”. “We need to remind pastors and the parish leadership that the Eucharist is important.”

Question 3 *If the quality of the liturgies and homilies has been outstanding, please explain why?*

“Some parishes with good liturgies are putting the time and money into training the homilists.”

“Generally they (liturgies and homilies) are most outstanding at parishes where pastors are devoted to preparation and truly celebrating; where the homilist has had proper time to prepare the sermon; where resources are made available; where lay people are well formed and involved in the planning; where music is inspiring and inviting; and the importance of

environment and hospitality are recognized as vital aspects of the celebration, not just secondary components.”

Question 4 *If the quality of the liturgies and homilies has been unsatisfactory, explain how they might be improved.*

“...professionalism is necessary for improvement (of the quality of liturgies and homilies).” “Education and formation (of) ...ministers of the word ...liturgical musicians, cantors, accompanists (are needed).” “We need to emphasize Synod Initiative V. The priests need to be the key to this. We need to encourage priests to work on all aspects of the liturgy.”

### **Formal Liturgical and Homiletic Studies**

The need for liturgical ministers to participate in ongoing formal liturgical formation programs, including homiletic studies was an important consideration voiced by Synod delegates. Therefore, the continuing development and implementation of a pastoral strategy for formal liturgical and homiletic studies is advised.

### **The Availability of Priests**

As has been indicated previously, the availability of priests continues to decline within the Archdiocese. This has led to considerable concern about the Archdiocese’s ability to respond to the future sacramental and liturgical needs of the faithful. In response, the Synod delegates strongly voiced the need to develop a comprehensive plan on the Archdiocesan, regional and parish levels to address this issue. It is important that the diocese follow existing procedures for establishing new models of parish leadership, when appropriate.

In early 2006, parishes were directed by the Cardinal Archbishop to enter into a process, specifically a Viability Study, targeted at evaluating each parish’s strengths and challenges as evidenced by its ability to meet the ongoing needs of the faithful. At its conclusion, the Viability Study called for each parish to determine how it could best meet its needs under two distinct scenarios: 1) if there were a priest pastor to oversee the parish, or, 2) if no priest was available to pastor the parish. Each parish then selected one of four alternatives for each of the two scenarios, namely, a) Twinning the parish with another parish under the same pastoral leadership; or b) Clustering the parish with another parish, thereby sharing resources while keeping the identity of each parish intact under two distinct pastors; or c) Consolidating or merging the parish with another neighboring parish, wherein the second parish church becomes a chapel for occasional liturgical celebrations; or d) Appointing a Parish Life Director (i.e., a non-Priest “pastor”)

to the parish. It should be noted that the Cardinal Archbishop had previously determined that closure of any parish was not an option at this time.

According to the Archdiocesan Office of Parish Life, there are currently eight Parish Life Directors leading parishes and over 20 Pastoral Associates in place with many more in formation.

### **Recommended Continuing Development**

- Develop training programs for ongoing parish leadership.
- Ensure that parishes are properly prepared for the appropriate parish leadership or structural model to which they are transitioning. (Parishes that are transitioning to Parish Life Director, clustering or twinning models will need considerably more time to understand and prepare for the transition than parishes that remain under the care of a Pastor.)
- Continue, promote, and support vocational programs for clergy, religious, and laity.
- Parishes should continue educating the faithful that they encounter the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic celebration.
- Those charged with the responsibility to deliver homilies and reflections should continue to engage in sufficient preparation, as well as appropriate and ongoing training.
- Conduct a study into the obstacles to priestly and religious vocations to better understand how we might increase the number of vocations.