

*Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary
St. Benedict
St. John the Evangelist*

*St. Mary Star of the Sea
St. Michael
St. Joseph - Gnesen*

April 11, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, we, the pastors/administrators of the parishes in the east end of Duluth join together to announce the steps to be taken to fully implement the Diocese of Duluth Diocesan Strategic Plan for 2012-2017. This plan was approved and issued by Bishop Paul Sirba in January 2012. The plan was crafted in 2011 to address four important challenges in our local church:

1. The availability of priests and deacons to minister to the needs of the Diocese of Duluth and its parishes;
2. Changing demographic trends;
3. The infrastructure and financial health of parishes;
4. The insuring that our clergy are healthy and able to minister to our needs.

While most of the implementation of this plan was completed across the Diocese within the original timeframe of 2012-2017, some elements of the plan that pertained to the eastern half of Duluth have yet to be fully completed. Due to present needs within the Diocese, the completion of these plan elements is now necessary.

Accordingly, after considering the plan as presented, as well as subsequent discussions among the area clergy as to other options and how best to move forward, Fr. James Bissonette, our Diocesan Administrator, together with the input and support of the Diocesan College of Consultors has determined that the following reconfiguration of parishes be implemented beginning July 14, 2021:

- **St. John (Woodland) be clustered with St. Benedict (Kenwood).**
- **St. Michael (Lakeside) be clustered with St. Joseph (Gnesen).**

With these new parish clusters, there is a reduction of one priest among these four parishes, moving from the need for a total of three priests to two; allowing the third priest to be assigned elsewhere. The terminology of **clustered parishes** signifies separate parishes “that work together sharing clergy (and possibly staff), but maintaining separate Pastoral and Finance Councils (although they may choose to have joint meetings). In clustered parishes each parish maintains its church building for worship and is a separate legal entity.” In these new cluster arrangements, St. John, St. Benedict, St. Michael, and St. Joseph all will remain as separate parishes, with St. John and St. Benedict sharing one priest and with St. Michael and St. Joseph also sharing one priest.

As these changes are announced, we assure you that more information will be forthcoming. Clergy and parish staff members along with members of each parish will be working together in the near future to consider such details as weekend and daily Mass schedules along with other sacramental and parish schedules. At this time, we ask your prayers for the parishioners, staff and clergy of all our parishes to grow in the love of Christ and in living according to the will of the Father.

In Christ through Mary,

			
Fr. Anthony Wroblewski <i>Cathedral of Our Lady St. Mary Star of the Sea</i>	Fr. Seth Gogolin <i>St. John the Evangelist St. Joseph</i>	Fr. Andrew Knop, OMI <i>St. Michael</i>	Fr. Joel M. Hastings <i>St. Benedict</i>