

April 11, 2021

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

10 years ago, the diocese of Duluth entered into Strategic Planning 2012-2017, to align the priests and the parishes based on four criteria and backed by other data from each parish, which included number of parishioners, sacraments, financial condition and projected availability of priests. These criteria were established at the beginning of the Strategic Plan and were the guiding rule applied to the process and to any alternative proposal submitted to the Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee.

For variety of reasons, the process of clustering of the four parishes on the east side of Duluth was postponed. As explained in the letter, included with this mailing, the time has come to finalize the Strategic Planning.

Based on the information and input gained during the process the decision was made to cluster the parishes of St. Michael and St. Joseph in Gnesen.

Please noticed the description of **clustered parishes** in the letter, so there is no confusion of what this decision means for our parish.

I can see three main areas that will be impacted by this decision:

1. As parish administrator I will have more responsibilities
2. Both parishes will have to make Sunday's morning Mass time adjustment
3. Some parish expenses will be shared, and in our case the overall expenses will be lowered (this would affect the salaries of the priest and the administrative assistance and some office expenses)

In the next couple months, we will be working together on the details of clustering our parishes, and particularly on finding compromised Mass schedule. I invite you all to pray for this process and to look at any of the changes from the perspective of the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News and to celebrate the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist.

We are becoming a missionary Church and we need to pray for the Spirit of Christian charity as we must learn how to collaborate in humility among our Catholic faith communities and not compete against each other. The Eucharist, which in itself is a sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our salvation, teaches us that we too need to make sacrifices in our lives.

May we remain grateful to the Lord for the gift of the Eucharist, being offered every day in our midst by the priests of our diocese and accept the changing circumstances with faith. May the spiritual welfare of all our parishioners, to have the Eucharist celebrated in our own parishes, and not just our convenience, help us accept the outcome of this next chapter in the life of our Catholic communities.

Our Lady of the Rosary, St. Michael and St. Joseph – pray for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Andy, omi