

# Be Missionary Disciples

UPDATE

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *What is the difference between pastorate formation and pastorate activation?*

A pastorate is **formed** when its ultimate configuration (as identified in the Be Missionary Disciples Archdiocesan Plan) is reached, usually through the appointment of a single pastor. Single Parish Pastorates, therefore, already are formed. Some Multi-Parish Pastorates may already be formed as well, while others will not be formed until a single pastor is named for all of the parishes involved.



A pastorate is **activated** when it is selected by the Archbishop to engage in a structured planning process as part of a cohort of other activated pastors (for instance, the eight pastorates in Phase IA). Activation as part of a cohort allows the pastors and their teams to be part of a learning community. It also enables the Office of Pastoral Planning to offer key formation opportunities in a coordinated manner and apply learnings from each phase to the next one.

### *What is going on with the Phasing and Timing schedule?*

Our experience with the Pilot Pastorates, the Phase IA Pastorates, and many conversations with other pastorates have revealed a number of factors that can have significant influence on the success of efforts to intentionally plan around missionary discipleship. Because of these learnings, some of the assumptions that had been built into the Phasing and Timing schedule originally laid out are being challenged.

As a result, a process for allowing pastorates to nominate themselves for activation will be used. Nominations for the next phase will be open May 15-June 15; more information and a fillable form can be found on [www.BeMissionaryDisciples.org](http://www.BeMissionaryDisciples.org).

The Phasing and Timing schedule was built around a set of assumptions about when certain pastorates might be ready to be activated, and these assumptions may still factor in. But the nomination process will allow pastorates to assess their own readiness, willingness, and ability to engage in a structured planning process and request to be activated based on that. It remains the Archbishop's expectation that every pastorate will, at some point, be activated and take up the call to Be Missionary Disciples through the work of pastorate planning.

## *What is the planning process and what is the end goal? How do we know we have been successful?*

Any strategic planning process generally tries to answer four main questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where do we want to be?
3. How do we plan to get there?
4. How will we know we are successful?

Answering these questions involves moving through three planning phases:

### **Assessment – Direction – Implementation.**

Go to <https://bemissionarydisciples.org/planning/be-missionary-disciples-planning-process/> for a detailed description of the steps each phase involves and an easy-to-read graphic description of the process.

The success of our efforts can be known by the fruit they bear – new faces in the pews, more people coming to confession, more comfort knowing and sharing our own faith journey, a greater willingness among people to give of themselves for others ... but also, greater awareness of who is missing among us, a stronger compulsion to bring love to the broken-hearted and healing to the injured, an unquenchable thirst for justice, and rejection of intolerance.

## *Why do we need to plan, especially if we are a single-parish pastorate?*

Evangelization-based strategic planning is important for all parishes, whether in a multi-parish pastorate or a single-parish pastorate. Why? You probably have heard phrases that sound like this:

- “Failing to plan is planning to fail”
- “A goal without a plan is just a wish”
- “Tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today”
- “Planning is bringing the future into the present so you can do something about it now”

These phrases frequently get repeated because there is wisdom in them. If there is anything we can learn from looking at parish trends over the last few decades, it is that the Gospel does not take root or stay rooted magically – it is work to which we must constantly attend so that we can respond to the challenges of our times. In other words, we need to be intentional about planning for and cultivating missionary discipleship.

*“If the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.”*

**Pope Francis**

As Christian communities, we are devoted to building up the kingdom of God here on Earth so, naturally, every parish is engaged in tremendous ministry to this end. But there will always be limited resources of time, talent and treasure and a need to direct them to those efforts that will be most pleasing to God in fulfilling the Great Commission. There also always will be shifting cultural and demographic phenomena to which we must respond. A strategic plan helps to ensure that the most impactful efforts are discerned, supported, and sustained.

## *What can pastorates be doing now? How can we get started?*

- Every pastorate can be engaged in exploring missionary discipleship and the core mission priorities.
  - Begin by reflecting on scripture, writings, and Church documents to develop your own definition of what being a “missionary disciple” looks like and demands.
  - Discuss what each of the core mission priorities means to you and how you are living them out now, as well as the challenges and opportunities that exist to engage in them more deeply.
  - Map out a “discipleship pathway” in your pastorate. What are the ways that people continually can grow closer to Christ, no matter where they are in their faith journey?
  - **The Department of Evangelization can help you get started. Reach out to them for assistance with these and other formation opportunities!**
- Dream of what your pastorate might look like and be able to accomplish in the name of Jesus Christ when it is full of disciples who are on fire for the Lord. Transform that dream into an image of the pastorate three to five years from now. What has changed? How does it speak to God’s desired future for your community? Put that down on paper and begin to share that vision with each other.
- Every pastorate can take advantage of the many resources that have emerged to help parishes become vibrant centers of evangelization. No one size fits all. Some success stories to consider include:
  - Rebuilt and the Rebuilt Parish Association ([www.rebuiltparish.com](http://www.rebuiltparish.com))
  - ChristLife ([www.christlife.org](http://www.christlife.org))
  - Divine Renovation ([www.divinerenovation.net](http://www.divinerenovation.net))
  - Amazing Parish ([www.amazingparish.org](http://www.amazingparish.org))
  - Dynamic Catholic ([www.dynamiccatholic.com](http://www.dynamiccatholic.com))
  - Parish Catalyst ([www.parihcatalyst.org](http://www.parihcatalyst.org))

Some of the common themes that all of these models affirm are encapsulated in our core mission priorities. The Sunday Experience, shared leadership, small group faith sharing, and intentional disciple-making are some of the ways that parishes have been able to transform their parish culture and become missionary disciples.

- Every pastorate can address significant issues that could become obstacles for the planning process. These could be issues of faith and formation, as well as issues related to buildings, finances, leadership, or staffing. If internal issues are going to make it impossible to focus outwardly, try to address them sooner rather than later.
  - **The Department of Management Services and Department of Human Resources can provide you with guidance and support in addressing these kinds of issues. They are here to help you build vibrant and sustainable pastorates!**
- Every pastorate can look at how it communicates with parishioners and can develop a communication plan that keeps missionary discipleship and the evangelization of the parishioners and the community in front of the people.



# Could you use help in any of these areas?

*Archdiocesan staff are eager to assist you!  
Contact the Office of Pastoral Planning to get connected,  
or reach out directly to the appropriate office.*

## *How can multi-parish pastorates start working together?*

Multi-parish pastorates that have not already been activated can be exploring ways to build relationship with each other, which cultivates trust and opens hearts and minds to a future forged together. Whether these parishes already share a pastor or not, some suggestions to do this include:

- Come together for times of shared prayer, liturgies and sacramental milestones;
- Bond with each other through service to others and fellowship gatherings;
- Co-host speakers, events or workshops focused on faith formation or social justice;
- Explore opportunities for ministries to evolve into pastorate-wide ministries;
- Publish Mass, confession, adoration or devotional times for all the pastorate parishes;
- Coordinate homilies (especially when preached in a series) so everyone hears the same message;
- Learn together about the community demographics and parish cultures that shape evangelization opportunities throughout the pastorate;
- Establish and publicize a process for using offertory envelopes at any parish in the pastorate;
- Gather the Pastoral Councils and/or Finance Councils for joint meetings or retreats;
- Explore the potential to share staff among the pastorate parishes;
- Consider how buildings on each of the campuses can take on a pastorate-wide function;
- Create a pastorate website portal or shared website;
- Create a pastorate-wide bulletin.



Photos provided by Catholic Review Media.