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## WHY DO CATHOLICS DO THAT?

- Father Jacob Maurer

Dear friends,

As you know, the archbishop's pastoral program *Partners in the Gospel* continues to unfold across the archdiocese. You may have watched [the archdiocesan Current Reality Report video](#), [read the recent update from the archbishop](#), or seen [his recent invitation for parishioners to take part in the local input sessions](#). Those are linked in this letter if you would like to revisit them.

This weekend is when I have been directed to share with you the current draft configuration of the parish family that will include Saint Mark. There are a total of 61 parish families across the archdiocese - we are part of parish family 13. **The current draft of parish family 13** includes three parishes: Saint Mark parish, Saint Matthew parish, and Saint Catherine parish. If approved by Archbishop Etienne in December, we would begin working with them as a parish family under a newly appointed pastor and parochial vicar effective July 1, 2024.

The coming together of three different parish communities and their schools as one parish is a major undertaking. There are a great number of elements to consider, concerns to be addressed, and plans to be made. Even this far into the *Partners in the Gospel* process, there are questions to which we do not yet have answers; we are still in the discernment phase of *how* this will unfold and not yet ready to answer the many *what* questions that this draft configuration elicits.

As we enter this phase of discernment and feedback, **I encourage you to root yourself in the Lord, in the community, and in your various support networks**. Now is the time to (re) commit to regular participation in the sacraments (especially Sunday Mass and confession), to pray daily, to be active in the fraternal life of the parish, and to offer support to & ask support from those who love you. And we must be sure to invite Jesus into the midst of this all.

We will be having a **parish townhall-style Q&A** gathering on Saturday, September 23, from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm in the school gymnasium. Our **formal parishioner input session** will be on Thursday, September 28, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm in the school gymnasium. I encourage you to participate in both, but **especially the input session, as this is our opportunity to offer feedback** to the archbishop and the committees helping to advise him in his discernment.

Above all, let us turn to the Lord. The Body of Christ has endured uncertainty, persecution, and even great suffering from the very beginning. We can be sure not only of our share in the cross, but of Christ's loving presence and care for us throughout.

yours in Christ,

Father Maurer



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## Frequently Asked Questions

With the launch of the public input phase of *Partners in the Gospel*, this bulletin feature will seek to address commonly asked questions & concerns. To submit your own question for consideration, use the form at our parish website: [www.saintmarkshoreline.org/partners](http://www.saintmarkshoreline.org/partners)



# PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

### What is the timeline for *Partners in the Gospel*?

The archdiocese has given key milestones for *Partners in the Gospel*:

January 2023:	Public launch
Fall 2023:	Invitation to provide input on parish families
Early 2024:	Final parish family structures announced
July 2024:	Parish families go into effect with one pastor
2024-2027:	Parish families journey together
2027:	Parish families become one canonical parish

### What will happen to Saint Mark parish?

Though the future of each parish is perhaps foremost on the minds of its parishioners, the only honest answer at this point is 'we don't know'. The purpose of *Partners in the Gospel* is to bring together the communities of the parishes in each parish family and, under the guidance of their pastor, to discern together the best path forward towards being one canonical parish.

### Who will lead our parish family starting in July 2024?

The choice of the pastor and parochial vicar of each parish family has not yet been made. Before he announces appointments in early/mid 2024, the archbishop will be consulting with the Priest Personnel Board (PPB) to discern which priests are placed at which parish families.

### What will happen with our parish staff?

Over the course of the three years of the parish family's discernment (2024-2027), there will inevitably be staff changes. How this will happen will depend on the needs & makeup of the new parish family. A team at the archdiocesan Human Resources department is exploring ways to help support people who may be displaced through this process.

### What will happen with our school?

During this same period of the parish family's discernment, the new parish family leadership will evaluate how to best approach the bringing together of multiple schools.

[For more information - including the archdiocesan Q&A documents - see our parish website](#)