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UPDATE ON ALL THINGS NEW Planning Committee Recommendations to Presbyteral Council

From Fr. Chris Martin, Vicar for Strategic Planning

"We are grateful for all the parishioners and parish ministries who have provided feedback, gathered, reviewed, and synthesized data, volunteered in many ways, and most importantly who continue to pray for the success of All Things New.

The All Things New planning committee, which includes priests, deacons, parish life coordinators, lay leaders and religious from across the Archdiocese, has reviewed the parish feedback summaries, parish workbooks and financial data of every parish in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. All are posted on allthingsnew.archstl.org. Using that information, the planning committee has refined the draft models to one recommended model per planning area. As is required by the Church's law, these recommended models were the subject of consultation conducted by the Archbishop with the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council. These recommended models are also available for all to see at allthingsnew.archstl.org.

The recommended models consist of some parishes that are proposed to remain unchanged in any way and other parishes which are proposed to share the same pastor. During the consultation which the Archbishop undertook with the Presbyteral Council, and as the Archbishop continues his own prayerful discernment thereafter, it is possible that the data which represents the current circumstance of a parish and its potential viability for the next 10-15 years may be discerned to present just cause for a possible merger or suppression (closure).

As is required by the Church's law (Canon law), the Archbishop consulted the Presbyteral Council (which is a group of priests elected from each deanery, appointed, or otherwise ex officio to advise the Archbishop in the governance of the Archdiocese) to review all of the data pertaining to each parish that is a part of any of the recommended models involving any potential change. Each council member was duty bound in conscience to provide the Archbishop his prayerfully discerned advice regarding each parish situation. There were 137 parishes to be considered in this canonical consultation process.

Canon law does not permit a parish to be altered in its juridic structure (i.e., suppressed, merged with another parish, or combined in some other juridic grouping) except for a just cause. A just cause is required because the Church's law prioritizes, as of paramount importance, the duty of safeguarding the rights of Christ's faithful. Foremost among these rights is the assurance of access to pastoral care provided in a stable manner. The parish is the main place where the faithful have access to pastoral care. Therefore, the diocesan Bishop has to assure that parishes are established and that churches are erected in a way that is equitable throughout the diocese. In all such matters, the Church's law favors preserving the stability of parishes (leaving them as they are).

A just cause is never required for leaving a parish as it is. A just cause is always required for changing its juridic structure (i.e., merging or suppressing it or combining it into some other juridic grouping).

All of these requirements of the law seek to assure that the diocesan bishop makes well-informed, prayerfully discerned decisions for the spiritual well-being of the archdiocese, taking into account the needs of the faithful for pastoral care as well as the overall needs of the archdiocese.

After consultative input from the Presbyteral Council, Archbishop Rozanski will study and prayerfully discern the proposals before announcing a final decision by May 28, the Solemnity of Pentecost.

Please continue to pray for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to guide us and help us spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

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[The Archdiocese of St. Louis](#) was established in 1826 and has grown to currently serve more than 491,000 Catholics in 11 Missouri counties. As Catholics in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, we strive to fulfill our Baptismal calling by prayer and worship, teaching and sharing our faith, serving others, and fostering unity in diversity.