PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

One Parish Plan: What should we be called?

Possible start: Apr-Jun 2027 | Anticipated duration: 1-3 months

Document E1: Overview

Part of becoming one canonical parish is getting a new parish name. While some parish families may have taken on a temporary family name (e.g., Point Roberts Parishes, Ebey's Landing Catholic Community), it is now time to consider the new *canonical name*. Selection of the name for the new canonical parish is the responsibility of the archbishop. Parish communities support the archbishop's discernment by reflecting on all the work in the One Parish Planning process and using that reflection to recommend a set of names for his consideration. Please note church buildings will retain their names.

Parish family leadership with consultation from the parish community, will select several potential names from a pre-approved list of names provided by the archbishop. To ensure that the selection reflects the vision discerned through the parish family consultation, the following process should be followed:

- Review the outcomes of the *Who are we?* and *Who do we want to become?* discussions with the PFAC and reflect on them.

- Hold a Parish Family Advisory Council (PFAC) discussion to create a list of up to 7-10 names compiled from the list of pre-approved names. Please include reasons for each name. This list can also include one "write-in" name not provided on the pre-approved list given by the archbishop.

- Hold a community listening session to reflect on the proposed names to provide final input to the PFAC.

- Hold a PFAC discussion to review the feedback and create the finalized list of 5-7 proposed parish names. Each proposed name should be accompanied by the reason it was chosen.
    - Only one of the names listed can be a "write-in" name.

This should not be a popularity contest or selection determined by simple majority vote. The parish family should articulate *why* they chose the final potential names, which could be related to unique charisms of the parish community, cultural connections between the community and a particular saint, or any other number of community-specific reasons.

Church names vs. parish names

Parishes and churches are canonically distinct. Parishes are usually defined as the people who live within the boundaries of a designated geographic territory (personal parishes being the exception). Often a parish includes one church, but this is not always the case; a parish may include two or more churches within its boundaries.

In addition, the geographic boundaries of a parish may be changed. There can be a merger of parishes such that the geographic boundaries are expanded and the newly defined parish includes all the churches in the parish boundaries that were merged. This is the plan envisioned with Partners in the Gospel. On the other hand, churches are the physical entities designated for divine worship.

Canon law requires that the name of a *church* be permanent, but the name of a parish may change. Canon law also requires that parishes identify a parochial (or "main") church within their boundaries. The name of the parish historically is the same as the parochial church, but this is not required. Moving forward with Partners in the Gospel, all churches will retain their names while the newly merged parishes will receive a new parish name.

Standards for a parish name

While canon law does not place formal requirements on the naming of a parish, the *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar* promulgated by the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments gives guidance on the titles of *churches* that have traditionally been applied for parishes. The names that have been preapproved for the new canonical parishes conform to this guidance, and any names proposed by the community should as well. The guidance states that names can be:

- A name of the Holy Trinity
- A name for Jesus, invoked during liturgy, or a mystery of His life
- A name of the Holy Spirit
- A name for Mary, invoked during liturgy
- A name of a holy angel
- A name of a canonized saint as it appears in Roman Martyrology (or appendix) • A name of a blessed (with permission of the Holy See)

Approval of a name

The archbishop will ultimately decide which name to give the new parish, using the proposed list to assist him in his discernment. A “write-in” name, along with a strong reason for its selection, will be given equal consideration. “Write-in” names will not be considered if they do not adhere to the name requirements listed above. To avoid confusion, no two parishes will be approved to share a name (barring extenuating or unique circumstances).

Additionally, the name of the new canonical parish should *not* be the same as the name of any of the existing churches — although this can be allowed in special cases. For the name of an

existing church to be considered as the name for the new parish, an exceptionally strong case will need to be made including the reason for this particular name and demonstration of strong support by the people of God across the entire new parish. Significant consultation will be needed for these types of names to be considered. This type of name will be considered a "write-in" alongside other names not on the pre-approved list.

How to have these discussions

Understandably each community is unique and the way to facilitate these discussions will look different based on the language, geographic, personnel and resource realities in each parish family.

Completion of the identified forms is a required part of the One Parish Planning Process.

Timing, steps and tools

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- Complete the "PFAC name generation" exercise
  (Event Hosts: PFAC/PFLT members | Audience: PFAC members | see doc. E2)

- Hold a listening session for the community to review the proposed name list (Event Hosts: PFAC/PFLT or pastoral leader | Audience: parishioners | see docs. E3A-E3E)

- Complete the "PFAC input review and revision" exercise
  (Event Hosts: PFAC/PFLT members | Audience: PFAC members | see docs. E4)