

GLOSSARY FOR ST. CLOUD DIOCESE

All Things New

“All Things New: Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future” is a pastoral planning initiative of the Diocese of Saint Cloud.

Amalgamation

Amalgamation denotes the action or process of absorption of two or more things. In the case of the merger of parishes, one parish amalgamates into another parish corporation.

Area Catholic Community

An Area Catholic Community consists of two or more parishes in a given area. Every parish in the Diocese of Saint Cloud is part of an ACC. All ACCs will collaborate to provide for the pastoral and spiritual needs of all. As ACCs share resources, talents and efforts, we hope to reenergize Catholics so all parishes thrive in the Diocese of Saint Cloud.

Church

“Church,” when capitalized, refers to the Catholic Church, the faithful of the whole world united under the guidance and authority of the pope, the successor of St. Peter. A “church” is a sacred building set aside for public worship. Each parish has at least one church. Each church has a title which cannot be changed after its consecration.

Co-responsibility

Co-responsibility refers to the shared duty of all baptized individuals—both clergy and laity—in fulfilling the Church's mission. This concept emphasizes that every member of the Church, by virtue of baptism, contributes uniquely to evangelization, pastoral care, and the life of the Church.

Current Reality Report

A current reality report is a structured assessment that captures the present state of a system, organization, or process. Its purpose is to identify existing challenges, inefficiencies, and underlying causes to inform effective decision-making and strategic planning. This approach involves a comprehensive evaluation of an organization's existing processes, structures, and performance metrics and serves as a baseline for planning future improvements by highlighting gaps between the current state and desired outcomes. By systematically analyzing the current reality,

organizations can develop targeted strategies that address core issues, leading to more effective and sustainable improvements.

Diaconate

The diaconate, restored as a permanent order of ministry by the Second Vatican Council as part of its renewed vision of the church, brings back to the Church the full complement of active Apostolic ministries. In communion with the bishop and priests, the deacon is ordained to function in all three areas of church life: in the transmission of the word; in the celebration of the sacraments and commitment to prayer; and in the community's love in action through social service.

The deacon is called to be the presence of Jesus, touching the oppressed and the alienated, as well as being a source of encouragement to all the baptized in answering their call to service. By his life, the deacon makes visible to the church and to the world the redemptive service fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

Discernment

The Holy Spirit calls us to pray, listen and discern together what God is asking of us today. By listening to each other, we are guided by learning to best respond to the spiritual needs of all people in our diocese.

The process of searching for a solution or making a decision that is in accord with God's will through prayer and reflection. Prayerful and communal discernment frees the mind and spirit from vested interests and distractions and reaches a conclusion for the common good of the community.

Extinctive Union

Two or more parishes unite to become a new parish with a new name. The old identities are extinct. The separate territories are united.

Evangelization

Fulfilling Christ's instruction to share the Good News and make disciples through our words and actions. "The evangelizing efforts of the baptized are not simply focused on those who have not heard of Christ. They are also directed toward our brothers and sisters who no longer join us around the Lord's table. Furthermore, the baptized disciple of Christ is also continually evangelized through ongoing renewal of faith and living out that same faith." (Living as Missionary Disciples, p. 6)

Laity

The faithful who, having been incorporated into Christ through Baptism, are made part of the people of God, the Church. The laity participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ. Laity are distinguished from clergy... and those in consecrated life (Catechism of the Catholic Church, glossary).

Merger

When parishes are merged, two or more parishes become a single [faith] community. Parish boundaries are redrawn and a new canonical entity is formed. Two or more parishes, rich in tradition, come together...to form a new faith community, deriving ... strength from the gifts of the former communities.

A parish merger can be likened to a marriage – the resulting parish has everything the previous parishes had and a new life is begun together.

Missionary Discipleship

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Matthew 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization. ... Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples.’

In short, missionary disciples are followers of Jesus Christ whose hearts burn with a love of God and others that compel them to share the Good News with others.

Parish

A stable community of the faithful constituted with a church or group of churches within a diocese. Its oversight and care are entrusted to a pastor as its shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop. “The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration” (Evangelii Gaudium, 28).

Parochial Administrator

Parochial administrators have all the same rights and duties as pastors, but they are named for situations that are temporary. For example, a parochial administrator could be named if the Pastor becomes seriously ill and is not able to lead the parish.

Parochial Vicar

A parochial vicar is a priest assigned by the bishop to a parish or ACC to assist a pastor in the care of the faithful. The Code of Canon Law defines the office as follows: "Parochial vicars are priests who render their services in pastoral ministry as co-workers with the pastor in common counsel and endeavor with him and also under his authority" (Code of Canon Law, c. 545 §1).

Pastor

The pastor is the proper shepherd of the parish or parishes entrusted to him under the authority of the bishop. He is an ordained priest responsible for the ministry of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other priests or deacons in the parish and the assistance of lay members of the faithful.

Pastoral Planning

A process by which a diocese, parish or ACC evaluates its current situation and resources, prayerfully discerns God's will for the future of that community and creates a plan to move toward that future.

Particular (Local) Church

According to the Code of Canon Law, "[p]articular churches, in which and from which the one and only Catholic Church exists, are first of all dioceses. ... A diocese is a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a bishop for him to shepherd with the cooperation of [his priests], so that, adhering to its pastor and gathered by him in the Holy Spirit through the gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative. ... Every diocese or other particular church is to be divided into distinct parts or parishes" (Code of Canon Law, #368, 369, 374).

Priest

"An authorized mediator who offers a true sacrifice in acknowledgment of God's supreme dominion over human beings and in expiation for their sins. A priest's mediation is the reverse of that of a prophet, who communicates from God to the people. A priest mediates from the people to God.

Christ, who is God and man, is the first, last, and greatest priest of the New Law. He is the eternal high priest who offered himself once and for all on the Cross, a victim of infinite value, and he continually renews that sacrifice on the altar through the ministry of the Church.

Within the Church are men who are specially ordained as priests to consecrate and

offer the body and blood of Christ in the Mass. The Apostles were the first ordained priests, when on Holy Thursday night Christ told them to do in his memory what he had just done at the Last Supper. All priests and bishops trace their ordination to the Apostles. Their second essential priestly power, to forgive sins, was conferred by Christ on Easter Sunday, when he told the Apostles, 'For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained' (John 20-22, 23).

All the Christian faithful, however, also share in the priesthood by their baptismal character. They are enabled to offer themselves in sacrifice with Christ through the Eucharistic liturgy. They offer the Mass in the sense that they internally unite themselves with the outward offering made by the ordained priest alone" (Modern Catholic Dictionary).

Stewardship

Stewardship is the responsible management and care of resources, people or property that are entrusted to someone's care. It involves making ethical and sustainable decisions to ensure that resources are preserved, protected and enhanced for current and future generations. Stewardship emphasizes accountability, integrity and thoughtful consideration of the impact of one's actions on others and the environment.

Stewardship helps build trust, promotes sustainable practices and aligns actions with long-term benefits rather than short-term gains. It is a crucial principle for responsible leadership and sustainable development.

Synodality

Synodality is rooted in collective participation, dialogue, and shared decision-making among all members of the Church community, including laypeople, clergy, and bishops ensuring that all voices contribute to the Church's direction. The word comes from the Greek "synodos," meaning "journeying together" or "walking together."

Synodality is seen as a way to foster greater transparency, accountability and unity within the Church. It emphasizes that the Church is a community journeying together in faith and mission, rather than a purely hierarchical institution. This approach also aims to respond more effectively to the needs of the Church and society by valuing diverse perspectives and working collaboratively toward shared goals.