



St. Malachi Parish

# 2023 PARISH COLABORATION



St. Patrick Parish

30 August 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Saint Malachi and Saint Patrick Parishes,

As a follow-up to Bishop Malesic’s vision of St. Malachi Parish becoming an Oratory and developing a formal relationship with St. Patrick Parish, we held listening sessions after each weekend Mass in July at both parishes. Attached to this letter is a summary of comments that reflect the most common themes, concerns, questions, logistics, etc. I invite you to review these comments to see what others in both parishes are thinking at this time.

At those sessions, I stated that a timeline for a strategic plan would soon be developed. With the assistance of Ms. Rosie Dolan Baker, who will be serving as our facilitator, a general timeline is currently being developed for our parishes to come together in this new relationship.

In addition to the timeline, we will be developing an Integration Steering Committee (ISC). This group will provide leadership with Rosie for creating a useful process. The ISC will be comprised of equal members from each parish. Although the committee will ultimately be appointed by me, members of both Parish Councils and Parish Staffs are being sought for their recommendations. Our plan is to have this committee formed by October in order to begin working with Rosie. This will help the newly formed committee evaluate what parishioners have brought to our conversations and how to proceed. They will need time in the fall to be trained for this important work.

In addition to the formation of the ISC, I invite parishioners to our next round of general conversations after each weekend liturgy. At each of these sessions, we will have an opportunity to meet Rosie in person and to address some of the items or concerns raised in July. We’ll also have an opportunity to learn more about the basic process and timeline. Those meetings times are:

Saint Patrick Parish	Weekend of Sept. 30 and October 1	Club Bldg. Lower Hall
Saint Malachi Parish	Weekend of October 7 and 8	Former School Lower Hall

In the meanwhile, we will offer opportunities at both parishes to come together and get acquainted. I want to thank the many from both parishes who have offered to lend some of their personal and professional expertise as we move forward. The process itself will present opportunities for all parishioners to become engaged at various stages. Please continue to keep this initiative in your prayers. May our two great patron saints intercede for us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Michael K. Gurnick

## Summary of Themes From July Listening Sessions St. Patrick & St. Malachi Parishes

During the weekend of July 15 and 16, communal listening sessions were held at Saint Malachi after each of the two weekend liturgies. Listening sessions were then held at Saint Patrick on the weekend of July 22 and 23 after the three weekend liturgies.

### General Summary

The reaction to Bishop Malesic's was understandably mixed. While Saint Malachi has been conducting a strategic plan for over a year, the Bishop's vision for both parishes is new to Saint Patrick. It is important to note that this surprise is not unwelcomed; it is simply a matter of adjusting and exploring the various questions and concerns. Although the Bishop's decision to specifically pair Saint Malachi with Saint Patrick was a surprise for many at Saint Malachi, his rationale was received as reasonable (that is, both parishes having many common ministries and that parish boundaries are contiguous). While some concern was raised as to the feasibility of this initiative, the overall reaction appears to endorse moving forward in making it work. A large number of concerns were raised about the actual logistics for making the new partnership work but people understood that these next steps will be forthcoming. Questions regarding financial responsibilities, staffing, and parish ministries were also common themes throughout the listening sessions.

After receiving the initial news and with the July listening sessions, many members at both parishes concur that something needs to happen with these smaller parishes as we move forward. Most participants were happy that neither parish closes but strengthens their pastoral care through this new relationship while retaining each respective name. With some degree of caution and many questions needing to be addressed, many people are looking forward to the next steps of this process.

For the sake of organizing this document, the most common concerns or topics raised during the listening sessions are reflected here. Anything presented in red are follow-up remarks offered for purpose of clarification or additional information.

#### I. Reactions to the Bishop's Vision for St. Malachi to Become an Oratory & Sponsored by Saint Patrick Parish

Concern that neither St. Pat's nor St. Malachi's asked to be put together. (Malachi's was looking for a suburban sponsor, not necessarily a neighboring parish sponsor.) It was a surprise that Malachi was "assigned to St. Pat's" rather than exploring the possibilities of working with other parishes.

Is this decision already a done-deal, or can the people choose not to accept the vision of the bishop?

Although, being "sponsored" by a parish that doesn't connect to us, is not practical. Is there still a way to consider a partnership with another parish, or is this vision of the bishop final? **The Bishop sees this as the most practical way to ensure pastoral coverage of the expanded parish boundaries which will become part of Saint Patrick Parish. The Oratory shall continue to play a key role in the works of charity on the near west side.**

Concern as to how finances, liturgies, ministries and staffing will be shared or separated. We need an “US” mentality, not an “us vs. them”.

Is this decision already a done-deal, or can the people choose not to accept the vision of the bishop?

There is plenty of room for parishioners to shape the new dynamic, but the financial and personal realities of St. Malachi as a shrinking parish with high expenses will still remain. Remember that St. Malachi took on the strategic planning process voluntarily to address these needs. This is not being done to us. We need to recognize that many priests are being assigned to more than 1 parish and that there aren't enough parishioners to maintain 2 parishes.

This is completely new information for St. Pat's. It may take some time to adjust to the idea. Nothing needs to change overnight. The budgets for this fiscal year are set. In January, committees will be formed to start planning the next steps. The entire transition could take 18-24 months. People need time to process their grief and feelings. The Diocese has Finance, Legal, and Temporal Goods staff and professionals that can help us to navigate many of the decisions that need made. We will need a Memorandum of Understanding to articulate policies and procedures as we would like to see them in the future. This is not a binding document, but can help set expectations in the short term. **Joint teams from representing both parishes will need to work together on this transition.**

Disappointment that a more permanent arrangement with the Franciscan Capuchins was not a practical solution to the problem. **Most religious communities are assessing their own commitments and ministries due to present availability of personnel.**

When would this be official? **The Bishop of Cleveland will need to write a decree. It is important to note that he wanted his vision presented and to give parishioners of both parishes time to reflect. Nothing is official until such a decree is made by the Bishop.**

## **II. The New Relationship Between and Oratory and a Sponsoring Parish**

If the two parishes are to collaborate, are they equals or is there a hierarchy in the partnership? Who is in control? What about the various councils? No one wants to feel like a step-child of the other. **While Saint Patrick is the sponsoring parish, there would be distinctive identities for both Saint Patrick and Saint Malachi.**

What is the purpose of a parish territory?

This makes caring for the neighborhood (territory) a priority. Coupled with concern that territory could be an off-putting word meant to exclude. Opportunity to explain how territory can be inclusive when assuring pastoral care for all within the boundaries would be helpful.

Which organizations remain partners on the property of St. Malachi and what type of relationship/understanding exists regarding the buildings of the convent, school, rectory, shared boilers, parking lots, etc.? **Need to articulate which Ministries associated with St. Malachi's are actually part of the parish vs. legacy ministries started by the parish, but now operate as completely independent organizations. (Malachi Center, Malachi House, Stella Maris, Back Door Ministry, Monday Night Meal, Saturday Breakfast).**

Finances: who is responsible for what? **Through the efforts of a joint-parish integration team, together with staff, this will be managed. In addition to general operations, each parish has a number of**

restricted funds/endowments which will all remain intact in order to honor donors' intention and to support the mission they are part of. As with other aspects of coming together, we will rely on the guidance of the diocesan finance office and other resources. As discussed in our listening sessions, there are many ways that we can address this in order to preserve restricted funds intended for specific ministries and projects.

### III. Staffing for Both Parishes and Opportunities for Joining Ministries

What would staff at both places look like?

There are already many staff collaborations between St. Pat's and St. Malachi's. The staff already know each other and work together. There will not be a need to maintain all of the full-time staff. This will need further conversation among the people in the current roles, but no role should be dependent on the personality of the individual...we have to look at the actual staff position. We should think in the long-term. Not even the pastor will stay the same forever. We need to look 10 years down the line as to what is most practical, and when many current St. Malachi parishioners will have passed on. Any new pastor of St. Pat's will have to know the realities within the territorial boundaries of the parish and that the pastorship of St. Pat's includes the Oratory of St. Malachi. A priest signs on to care for the Catholic Church of Cleveland. It's never about one priest or one parish. Parishes partnering together is a new normal. Working closer together can help better utilize resources and personnel. Again, this will be addressed in a process.

St. Malachi parishioners value the ministries they have to each other that currently operate independent of the clergy (music, retreats, prayer groups). Will they be able to maintain these ministries if the church is an oratory? How will the ministries of each parish overlap, collaborate, or need to consolidate to thrive? We need to examine all these areas of pastoral life for Saint Malachi as an oratory. The strategic plan will include various integration working groups to help address these very real concerns.

Concern over keeping a Saturday vigil: Diocese-wide, we are revisiting the practicality of having Saturday vigils attended by very few people. As priests become more thinly stretched, Saturday masses may be one of the first things that experiences a cut. This involves a bigger discussion on duties that are exclusive to the priest vs. a lay minister as we attempt to establish a new normal.

We must not let fear steer the course. The opposite of fear is faith. We'll take this topic gradually. Mass times (for the time being) won't need to change unless we lose any of the currently available priests Fr. Hollis, Fr. Gurnick, Fr. Reim, Br. Phil. It is only because so many priests are willing to cover the masses that we can have 5 masses each weekend between the 2 parishes.

Disappointment that a more permanent arrangement with the Franciscan Capuchins was not a practical solution to the problem. Most religious communities are assessing their own commitments and ministries due to shrinking personnel. Additionally, no religious community has been identified as taking on this type of ministry in the Diocese of Cleveland.

Is this a merger?

This is not the same as a "merger" from the Vibrant Parish Life or the clustering process 14 years ago. Even after that process happened, it is acknowledged by diocesan officials that further consolidation would be needed. Several other churches are in the position to have this discussion now, but the bishop does not want to close any church.

Young adults may appreciate the opportunity to belong to 1 parish with 2 worship sites for additional flexibility. The ministries of St. Malachi attract young adults, but they see more people like them at the masses at St. Pat's.

Concerns about staffing: What would the staffing budget of an oratory entail? What portion of a pastor's salary will it need to cover? Is there room for a lay parish life administrator? Is that model still viable?

None of the things that we love about St. Malachi need to change: welcoming atmosphere, place for healing and recovery, location, place of love and acceptance, loving the unloved, lay leadership, outreach, prayerful people, exhibiting spirituality, and proximity to downtown. We can work together and not lose our culture. We will still have some autonomy in our ministries if we choose that. Things that may change are the buildings and staffing, but actual parish life might not have to change. **Again, the invitation here is to think about things anew: Not us and them but US and OURS. This is inclusive of all aspects of parish life.**

Restricted funds (especially for food ministry) can remain restricted at St. Malachi and do not necessarily intermix with St. Patrick money. The same goes for St. Patrick's Restoration Fund, that may also remain restricted and off limits to the maintenance of St. Malachi. That being said, St. Malachi the Oratory will need to be self-sustaining in its budget. Fundraisers specifically using the Malachi name can continue to fund only Malachi ministries.

There is no local model for how to accomplish turning a parish into an oratory, and this type of collaboration with another parish. We can work through building the model as we need it, and may quickly become something other struggling parishes adopt when faced with similar problems to avoid closing. The local population of Catholics is declining in this part of the country. Other churches in the Northeastern United States will need to act soon as the current number of parishes reflects populations of several decades ago. Now growth of Catholic parishes is happening in the southern US reflecting an increase in Hispanic Catholics.

The strategic planning process has been intense, and humbling, but good for St. Malachi. We have been through changes before and there is hope. We can vision and pray together. This partnership will be like a marriage. Both parishes will need to adjust and sacrifice for the other. We can make a stronger church. **We will need to explore the viability of liturgical schedules, times of confession, and other prayer/devotions. Fr. Gurnick is currently the only full-time priest assigned as pastor of Saint Patrick and Administrator of Saint Malachi. Brother Phil is assigned as a part-time parochial vicar to Saint Malachi. Fr. Hollis is retired and in-residence at Saint Patrick and Fr. Reim serves full-time at Saint Ignatius High School and helps with one of the weekend liturgies at Pat's or Malachi's.**

Does St. Patrick have the energy to take on St. Malachi? Isn't it also a small, urban parish?

The number of active parishioners at St. Patrick demonstrates growth, but the ministries of St. Malachi could enrich parish life at St. Patrick. PSR and some staffing are already shared.

What role is there for lay leadership in an oratory? We need to better understand what is implied with the canonical change to an oratory is and how it runs. What rights and obligations does an oratory have compared to a parish? One big benefit is the ability to keep the name for the house of worship and its ministries.



The benefit of being an oratory is that the church can remain open. There is a lot of work that will be needed to negotiate the relationship with the “sponsoring” parish. This is good, hard work that needs to be done to ensure a successful future.

Concern: What happens when the pastor of St. Pat’s changes. Will that person have to maintain St. Malachi or can they decide to close it? **The vision of the Bishop is that we work together to avoid closing a church. This vision strives to fortify and strengthen vitality on Cleveland near west side.**

It must be acknowledged that many St. Malachi parishioners may leave. Because so few live within the boundaries of the parish, many may decide just to attend a church closer to the suburb where they live.

Can St. Pat’s refuse to be a part of this? They never asked for it. What if they reject this vision? What will make the relationship final – a decree from the bishop, and approval from the Holy See in Rome. We have time to shape the agreement before then.

This might be an opportunity to combine resources and increase both of our ministries! Let’s avoid duplicating services and staff. Will Fr. Gurnick get any help, priest-wise? **Considering the size of both parishes, no additional priests would be assigned to either Saint Patrick or Saint Malachi.**

Where do go from here?

Rosie Dolan-Baker will help us through the transition phases.

Can St. Pat’s get a more formal description of what St. Malachi is and does? Number of people, actual ministries, financial situation , etc.? The same is requested of Saint Patrick.

A glossary of terms, feedback from both parishes, and statistics from both parishes will be shared as the next part of the process.

This is the time to include what the future size and shape of St. Pat’s will be, including a growth plan.

Concern that new neighborhood residents in expensive housing will not want to continue homeless ministry near their buildings. The parishes will need to face the “NIMBY” (*not in my backyard*) attitudes of new, wealthy residents. All new property owners in the Old Angle will need to be considered, especially those of buildings previously owned by St. Malachi Parish.

The property needs to be “right-sized” to the capacity of the parish/oratory. Any sale or rental income of Malachi properties should be discussed in a Memorandum of Understanding before formal agreements happen.

Keeping the Malachi name is important, and the fact that the church is not closing at this point is a great thing as we determine the future.

As St. Pat’s takes on more territory, including Lakeview Terrace in it’s current and future forms, we will need to be actively involved in the pastoral care of additional people with different needs than our current parishioners. We will continue to be called to serve the poor and marginalized.

# CANONS REGARDING PARISH AND TERRITORY

## ORATORIES (AND PRIVATE CHAPELS)

*Code of Canon Law, Part III, Title I, Chapter II*

Can. 1223 By the term oratory is understood a place for divine worship designated by permission of the ordinary for the benefit of some community or group of the faithful who gather in it and to which other members of the faithful can also come with the consent of the competent superior.

Can. 1224 §1. The ordinary is not to grant the permission required to establish an oratory unless he has first visited the place destined for the oratory personally or through another and has found it properly prepared.

§2. After permission has been given, however, an oratory cannot be converted to profane use without the authority of the same ordinary.

Can. 1225 All sacred celebrations can be performed in legitimately established oratories except those which the law or a prescript of the local ordinary excludes or the liturgical norms prohibit.

Can. 1227 Bishops can establish a private chapel for themselves which possesses the same rights as an oratory.

## DEFINITION OF A PARISH (AND RELATED CANONS PERTAINING TO TERRITORY)

*Code of Canon Law, Part II, Title III, Chapter VI*

Canon 515.1 provides the definition of a parish: it is a **community of Christ's faithful** that has been established in a stable manner within a particular Church, the pastoral care of which has been entrusted to a parish priest [i.e., the pastor] under the authority of the diocesan bishop.

Can. 518 As a general rule a parish is to be territorial, that is, one which includes all the Christian faithful of a certain territory. When it is expedient, however, personal parishes are to be established determined by reason of the rite, language, or nationality of the Christian faithful of some territory, or even for some other reason.

Can. 519 The pastor (*parochus*) is the proper pastor (*pastor*) of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, also with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful, according to the norm of law.

Annual Statistics 2021-2022  
St. Malachi St. Patrick Parishes

	St. Malachi Parish	St. Patrick Parish
<b>RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (PSR) - Total</b>		
Pre-School	2	3
Kindergarten	0	4
Elementary School (1-5) - Total	3	21
Catholic	0	0
Non-Catholic or Public Schools	3	19
Home	0	2
Middle School (6-8) - Total	0	8
Catholic	0	0
Non-Catholic/Public Schools	0	7
Home	0	1
Secondary School (9-12) - Total	0	2
Catholic	0	1
Non-Catholic or Public Schools	0	0
Home	0	1
<b>YOUTH GROUP</b>		
Does parish have a youth group?	No	No
# of Youths involved?	0	0
Enrolled in Catholic Schools?	0	0
Enrolled in Non-Catholic, Public or Home Schools?	0	0
<b>PSR CLASSES</b>		
Book Series	Loyola Press/Finding God	Loyola Press/Finding God
Day of the Week - # of hours		
Preschool	Sunday - 1 hour	Sunday - 1 hour
Kindergarten	Sunday - 1 hour	Sunday - 1 hour
Elementary School	Sunday - 1 hour	Sunday - 1 hour
Middle School	Sunday - 1 hour	Sunday - 1 hour
Secondary School	Sunday - 1 hour	Sunday - 1 hour
<b>OTHER EDUCATION INFO</b>		
PSR Fee	\$20.00	\$20.00
Religious Ed offered for special needs?	No	No
Religious ed offered in other languages?	No	No
<b>ADULT FAITH</b>		
Scripture Study	Yes	Yes
Advent Study	Yes	Yes
Lenten Study	Yes	Yes
Parish Retreat Weekend	No	No
Parish Mission	No	Yes
Other		Home Group and Online Studies
<b>INTERGENERATIONAL CATECHESIS</b>		
# Sessions per year	3	3
Adults Attending	4	16
Elementary School - Attending, in PSR	3	20
Elementary School - Attending, NOT in PSR	0	0
Secondary School - Attending, in PSR	0	6
Secondary School - Attending, NOT in PSR	0	0
<b>COMMUNICATIONS/ACCESSIBILITY</b>		
Internet connection?	Cable-Modem	Wireless Broadband
Website?	Yes	Yes
<b>ACCESSIBILITY</b>		
Church handicapped accessible?	Yes	Yes
Sound system hearing impaired compatible?	Yes	No



Annual Statistics 2021-2022  
St. Malachi St. Patrick Parishes

	St. Malachi Parish	St. Patrick Parish
# Registered Catholic households	558	1,393
# Registered parishioners	948	2,654
Capacity of main place of worship	350	676
Last year of census?	2015	2011
Method for conducting census	Contact Registered Parishioners	Contact Registered Parishioners
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	African-American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American	African-American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American
<b>MASS TIMES</b>	Sunday Vigil - 4:00 PM	Sunday Vigil - 4:30pm
	Sunday - 10:00 AM	Sunday 8:30am & 11:00am
	Holy Day Vigil - 5:30 PM	Holy Day Vigil - 5:30 PM
	Holy Day - 12:00 PM	Holy Day - 8:00am & 5:30pm
Shared Partner Parish	Legal Holiday - 9:00 AM	Legal Holiday - 9:00 AM
	Tuesday - 12:00 PM	Tuesday -
	Wednesday -	Wednesday - 5:30pm
	Thursday -	Thursday -
	Friday - 12:00:00 PM	First Friday - 5:30pm
<b>ADORATION</b>		Lenten Fridays and Periodic
<b>LITURGY of the HOURS</b>		
<b>SACRAMENT OF PENANCE</b>	Friday 12:30pm	Monday 4:50pm
<b>BAPTISM - Total</b>	6	32
Infants (0-7)	6	31
Children (7-17)	-	
Adults (18+)	-	1
<b>FIRST RECONCILIATION</b>	0	6
<b>FIRST COMMUNION - Total</b>	0	8
Children (7-17)	-	6
Adults (18+)	-	2
<b>CONFIRMATION - Total</b>	0	8
Infants (0-6) (in case of danger of death)	-	
Children (7-17)	-	6
Adults (18+)	-	2
<b>FULL COMMUNION - RCIA - Total</b>	0	2
# Baptized Candidates	-	2
# of Catecumens	-	
<b>MARRIAGE - Total</b>	3	16
Catholic - Catholic Marriages	3	11
Catholic - Other Christian Marriages	0	5
Catholic - Non-Baptized	0	0
# of Second Marriages?	0	0
# of Marriages with stepchildren?	0	0
# of Marriages with convalidations?	1	0
<b>MARRIAGE PREPARATION</b>		
Using Prepare and Enrich?	Yes	Yes
Program(s) used to prepare?	catholicmarriageprep.com	One Day Pre-Cana (offsite), Date w/Fr. Gurnick, Theology of Marriage 101
<b>MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT Programs</b>	None	Marriage Encounter, Retrouvaille
# of Deaths	8	24
<b>Sacramental preparation programs for parents?</b>		
Baptism	Yes	Yes
Eucharist	Yes	Yes
Reconciliation	Yes	Yes
Confirmation	No	No