

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



**RENEW MY CHURCH**

**Parish Conversation #1**



St. Julie Billiart Church

Fr. Tirso Villaverde

March 7-8, 2021



## Where we were

Culture **was more Christian**,  
**open** to faith, **enabled** people  
to live out their faith,  
and **recognized** religion as  
avenue for spiritual life



## Where we are

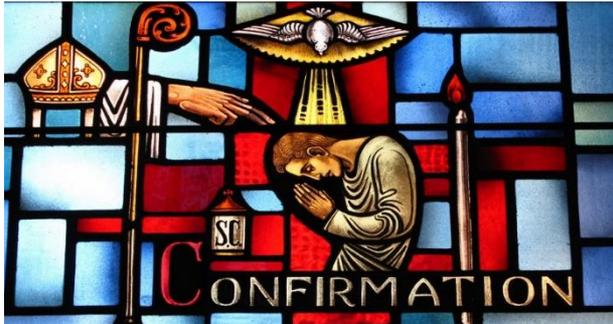
Culture **is more secular**,  
**ambivalent** to faith, **dissuades**  
people to live out their faith, and  
**undermines** religion as avenue  
for spiritual life



# A decline in faith life



Mass attendance in our archdiocese has decreased by 27% over the past 20 years



Across the U.S., 2 in 5 children baptized are not confirmed



85% of children confirmed stop practicing their faith by age 21

# Our Response

Called by Jesus Christ, we are

- Making disciples
- Building communities
- Inspiring witness



# Overall goal for groupings

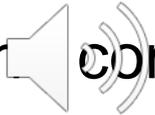
Build a renewed, vital, and sustainable Catholic presence for the good of all people in the collective communities within the grouping.

- What do we need to change structurally, given resource realities?
- How can we be more effective through collaboration?



# Outcomes for Grouping Session Meetings

The goal of these Discernment and Decisions Meetings is to provide the Cardinal and his team with relevant feedback regarding:

1. The concrete needs of the  community/communities
2. How we have and have not addressed them
3. The potential for the Church to impact the communities
4. Opportunities for growth, especially through collaboration between parishes

# Why renew?





Our model of  
parish life was  
built for a different  
time.

# Current parish model makes implicit assumptions that no longer hold

## Christendom age

- Culture is supportive of faith
- Family formation & practice is strong
- Parishioners already knitted together through ethnic or neighborhood ties



## New missionary age

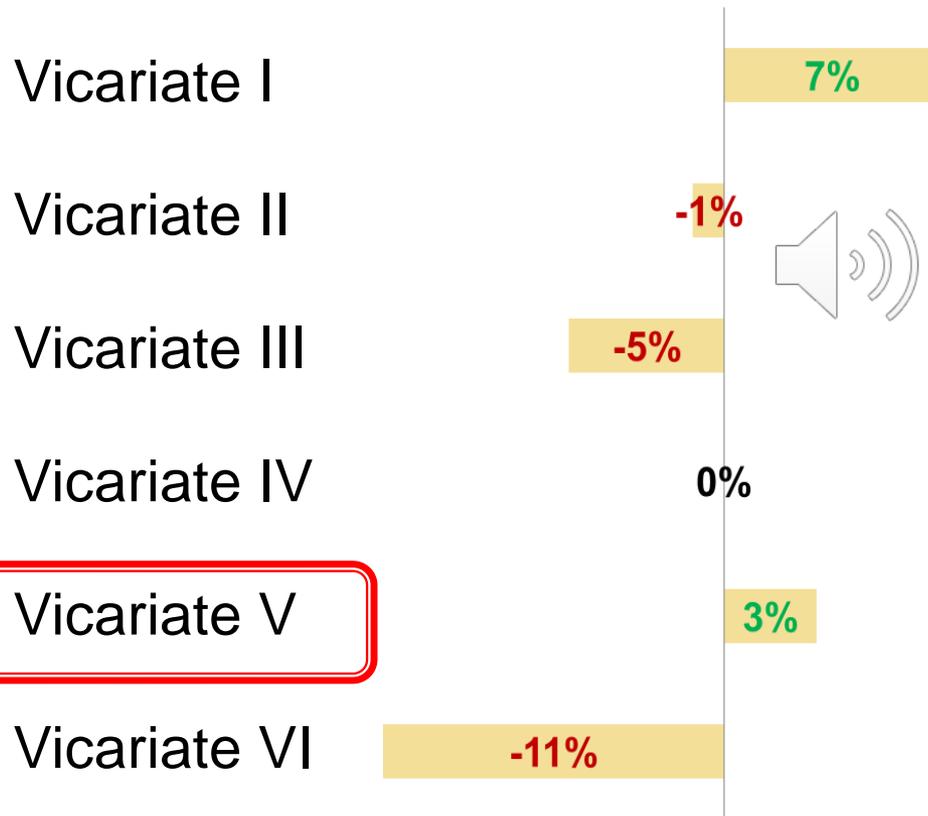
- Secular culture
- Weak family formation
- Crisis of social capital

New parish model needed for new missionary age

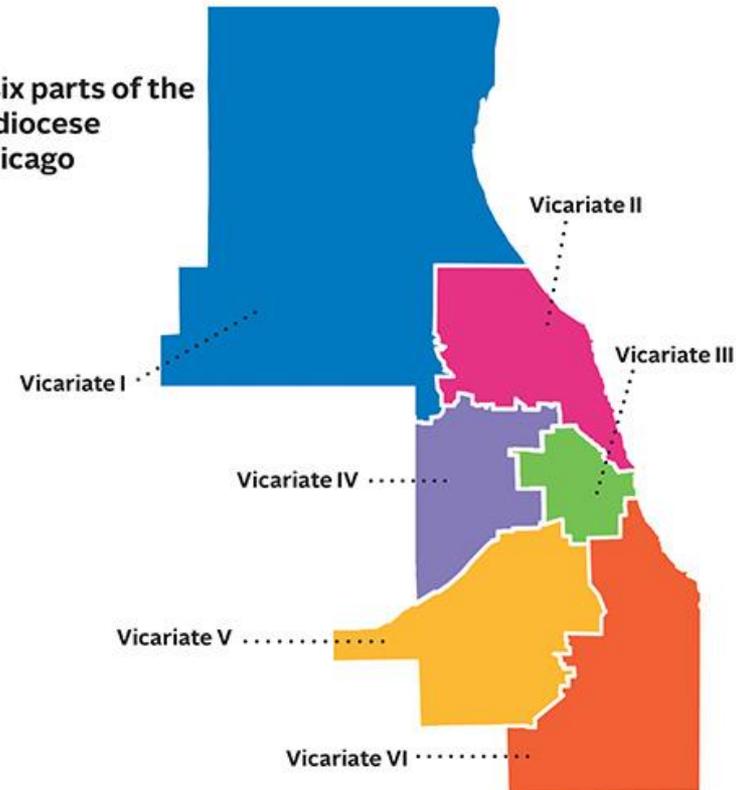


# Population Shift

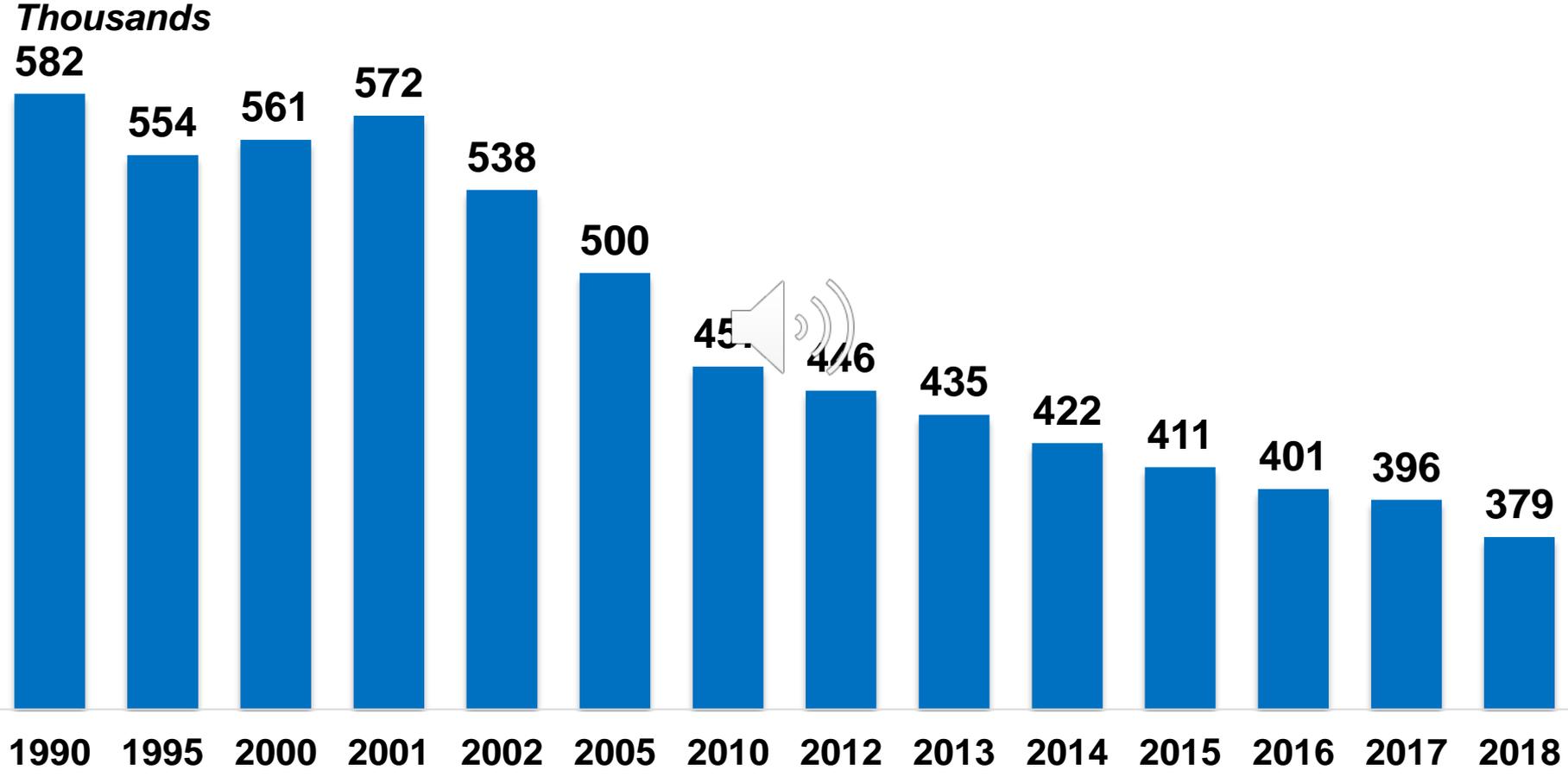
Percent change by vicariate, 2000 to 2014



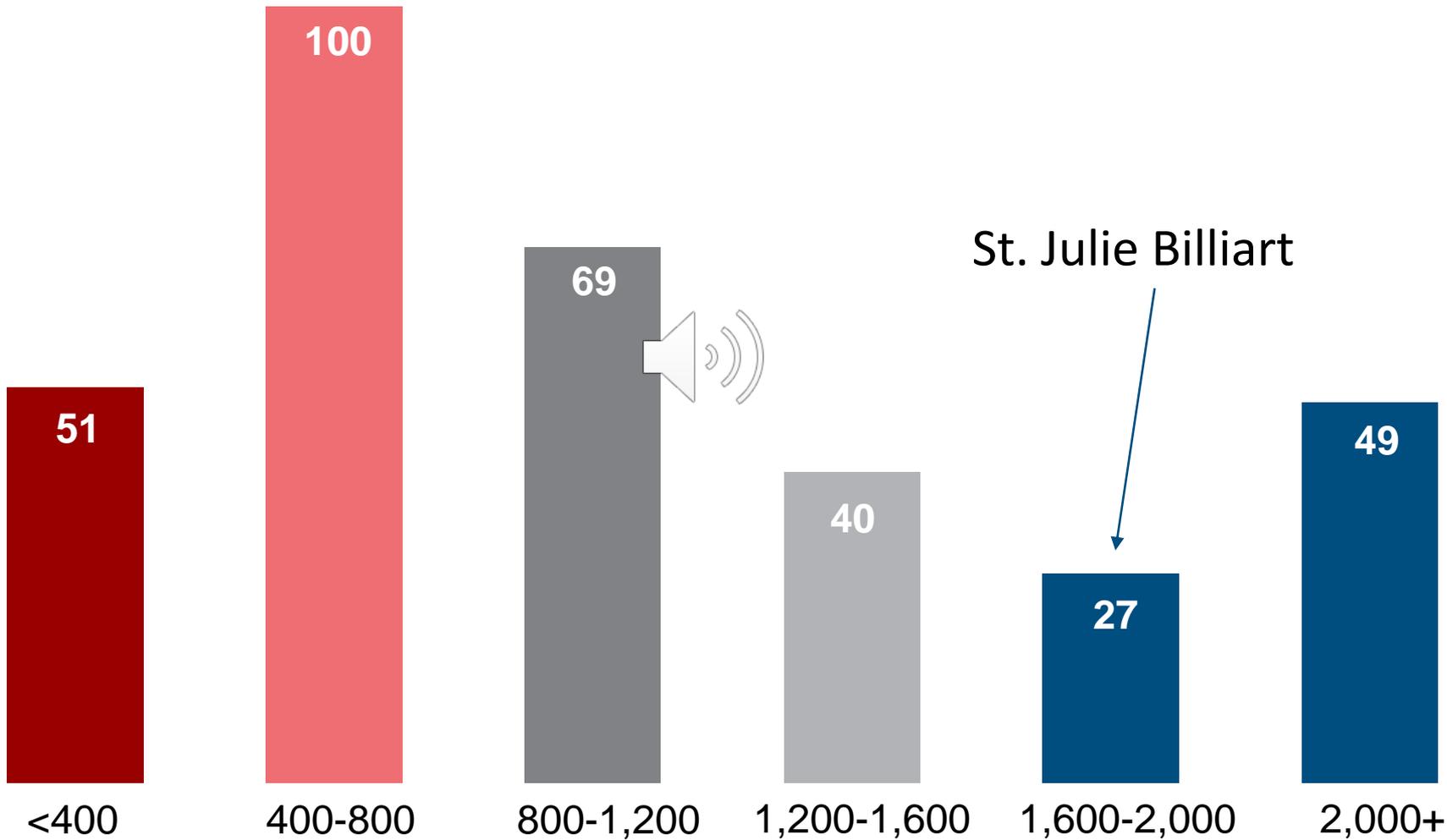
The six parts of the Archdiocese of Chicago



# Mass attendance (October Count) has declined significantly

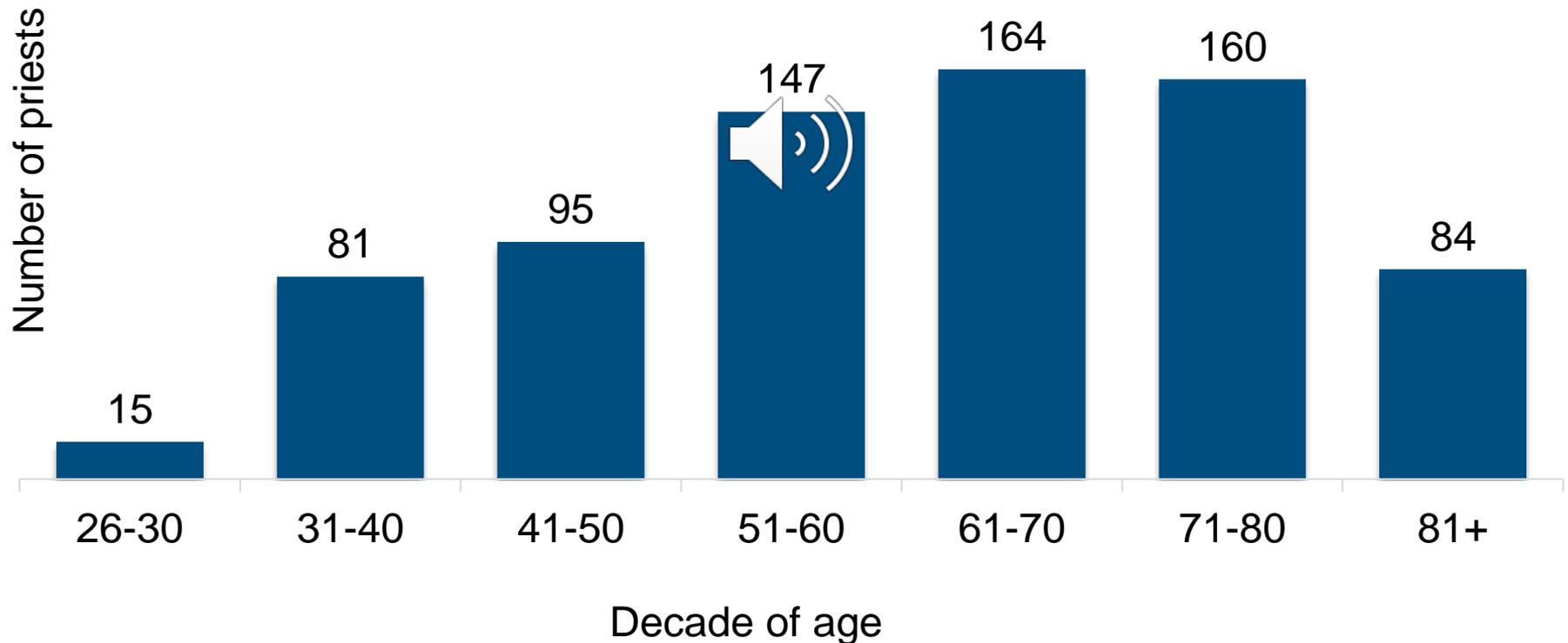


# Parishes by October Count



# Nearly 200 priests to retire soon

Archdiocesan priests by age, 2019





Invest in ministry to make disciples.



Invest in people to build community.



 Invest in ways that inspire witness.

Together, as One, Local Church.

# Renewal: three layers

*Behold, I make all things new. (Rev. 21,5)*

In this sense, renewal is conversion—a turning towards God.

1. **Personal renewal.** God  doesn't just call the Church; he calls each one of us.
2. **Cultural renewal.** We are asked to be intentional around what we value collectively.
3. **Structural renewal.** What structures can help us to continue our cultural and personal renewal?

# Questions???



# ***Making Disciples, Building Communities, Inspiring Witness***

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Keeping before us our mission imperatives, we answer the questions:

- *What are **current strengths** within our grouping?*
- *What are **challenges that present opportunities** to unite resources and minister in renewed ways?*



# Our Parish Grouping



*Our Lady of the Woods Parish*

**St. Elizabeth Seton Church**  
9300 W. 167th Street Orland Hills, IL 60487



St. Michael Parish



**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH**

**ST. STEPHEN DEACON AND MARTYR**  
**Tinley Park, IL**



**SAINT GEORGE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**TINLEY PARK, ILLINOIS**



# Our grouping's strengths and challenges

## *Our Grouping's Strengths:*

- *There is a great sense of stewardship and generosity among the members of our parishes.*
- *Many parishes identified a  spirit of welcoming as a strength.*
- *Many of our facilities are in very good condition.*
- *The number of active ministries speaks to the involvement of our parishioners.*



# Our grouping's strengths and challenges

## *Our Grouping's Challenges/opportunities*

- *A number of parishes highlighted the need to strengthen our youth engagement and attendance.*
- *Many of our engaged parishioners and volunteers are maxed out, and we struggle to recruit new help.*
- *The pandemic has pushed us to streaming platforms in ways we never imagined. Yet, we have a great opportunity for potential engagement through technology.*
- *The size of our communities gives us a great opportunity to develop strong small groups.*



# St. Julie - Strengths

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- Welcoming, Generous Community
- Music Ministry
- Community Outreach
- Volunteer Base
- Faith Formation Program
- Variety of Prayer Styles
- Structure of our Church Buildings
- Opportunity for Shared Ministries
- Opportunity for Growth



# St. Julie - Challenges

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- Financial (Expenses vs. Revenue)
- Maintenance vs. Mission mode
- Post COVID reality - What will it look like?
- Engaging young people, creating sense of belonging
- Faith formation at all levels (youth, parents, etc.)
- Increasing parental involvement
- Supporting all ministries



# Questions or Comments

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## Strengths and Challenges



# Renew My Church Prayer

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*Lord Jesus, you speak to us today,  
as you spoke to holy men and women who  
have gone before us.  
In every age and in our own time, you call to us  
and say: Renew My Church.*



# Renew My Church Prayer

*Pour out the gift of your Holy Spirit upon us,  
and so enable us to hear you clearly  
to listen to each other attentively, to imagine our  
future boldly  
to discern your direction wisely, to persevere in  
your holy will courageously  
to stay together in charity, to surrender our own  
plans readily  
to embrace the greater good, to hand on your gifts  
to future generations.*



# Renew My Church Prayer

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*May we remain in the holy company of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the apostles, and all the saints. May their example and presence inspire us with patient confidence in the work of your grace.*

*We ask this of you who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen*



Thank you!

