



**DIOCESE OF JOLIET  
TARGETED  
RESTRUCTURING  
PROCESS  
PARISH MEETING #1**

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# Goals for Today's Session

- Pray and reflect on our Mission as Church
- Understand the Targeted Restructuring Process
- Review, reflect upon and respond to Key Data



Opening  
Prayer

# Role: Catholic Leadership Institute

1

FACILITATE  
CONVERSATION

2

GATHER AND  
SUMMARIZE  
FEEDBACK

3

SEEK/PROVIDE  
CLARITY FROM  
DIOCESE

4

PROVIDE  
PERSPECTIVE  
FROM THE  
LARGER  
CHURCH

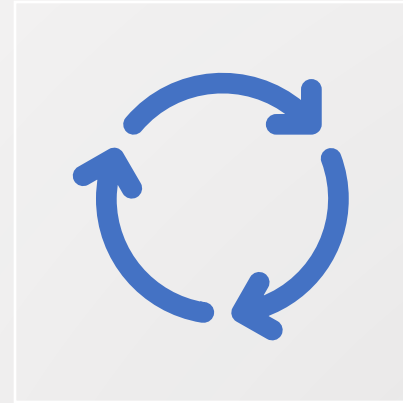
# Parish Session Objectives

## Parish Session 1



Present data that reflects the current diocese, deanery and parish reality; get feedback on the data presented.

## Parish Session 2



Present draft scenarios for restructuring; get feedback on the draft scenarios.



## The Mission of the Church

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.*

*(Matt 28:19-20)*

# The Church's Mission is to Evangelize

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Who fulfills the mission to evangelize?

- Holy, healthy and happy priests
- Competent and committed pastoral and administrative staff
- People of God actively worshiping, partaking of the sacraments, and participating in the life of their parish.
- Lay people who are empowered and equipped to share the Good News

The Diocese of Joliet has been incredibly blessed with all of these since its establishment in 1948.





# Evangelization in this Time

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Over the past several decades, the US Church (including the Diocese of Joliet) has declined in all of these. They are all interconnected, and if one area is weak, it weakens them all.

- A drastic reduction in the number of priests.
- Difficulty in recruiting and maintaining parish staff and volunteers.
- Shrinking numbers of worshippers and participation in the sacramental life of the Church.
- The last piece- the empowered and equipped laity who can go out into the world and share the Good News- is especially critical in the times we find ourselves: a post-Christendom world.

# From Bishop Hicks

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- When I was installed as the bishop of the Diocese of Joliet two years ago, I was immediately inundated with statistics of too few pastors to cover too many parishes, especially as we project the numbers into the near future. I was also confronted with declining Mass attendance and budgetary issues, all exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Why, then, am I leading us into this targeted restructuring? It is because most of us want to see a Church that is focused on the mission of Jesus Christ and not on the preservation of our buildings. As missionary disciples, we should all desire a Church that is thriving, growing and following the Gospel. In other words, everything we do as a Church needs to be about the salvation of souls.

# From Bishop Hicks, cont'd

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- At the end of the day, I do not want us to be viewed as a diocese that buried its head in the sand or kicked the can down the road.
- Instead, with deep faith in God, we need to prune some of the structural branches, so that our Church can continue to produce great fruit.

# God Takes Care of His Church

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- In 2000+ years, the Church has undergone many changes and crises, yet it has survived.
- Right now, we are in a period of great change in the culture of the West.
- The Diocese of Joliet is undergoing change. One cannot ignore the practicalities such as fewer priests and seminarians, fewer sacraments being celebrated, decreased Sunday collections, decreased Mass attendance, and buildings that require substantial financial resources to maintain. These issues must be addressed.

# God Takes Care of His Church

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- Bishop Hicks is charged with the care and stewardship of the entire diocese-not just for today, but for the future.
- This is an opportunity for the diocese to emerge stronger and more robust for future generations.

# The Desired Outcome of Restructuring

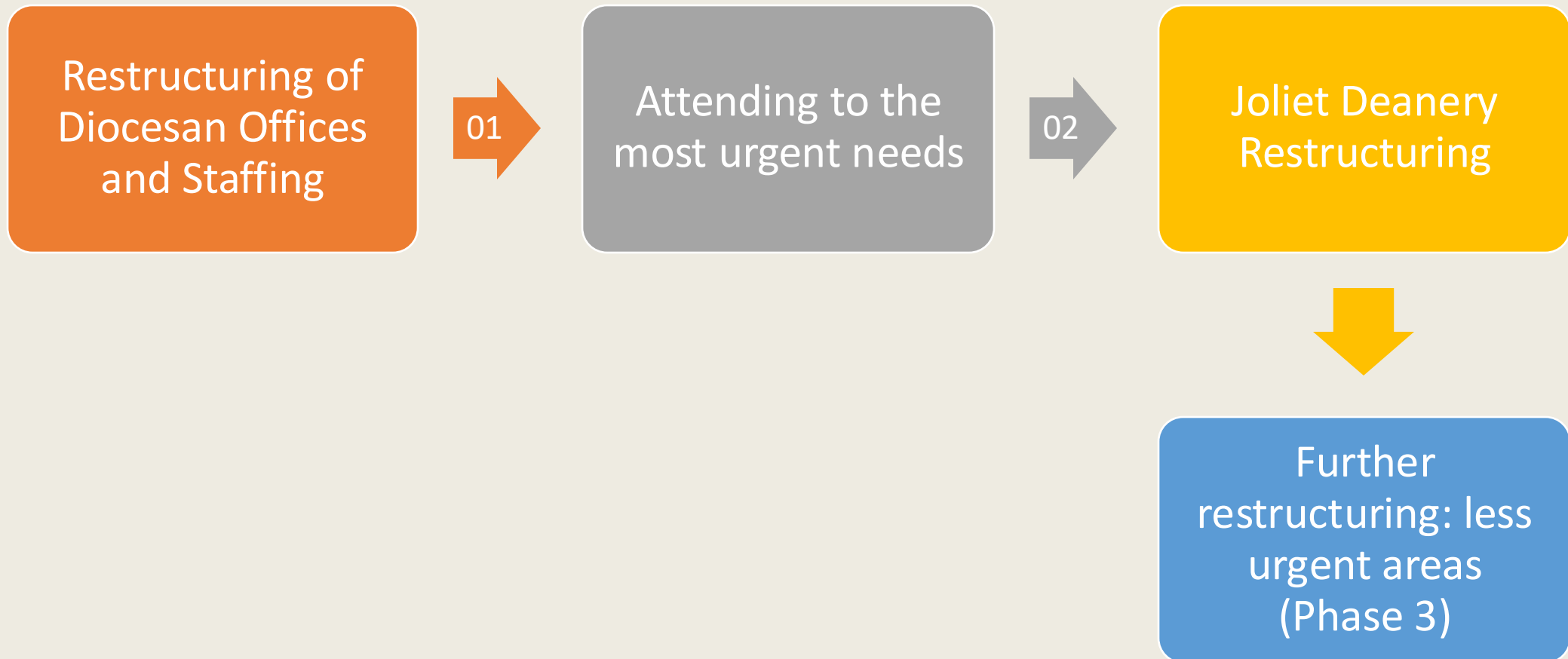
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- The objective of this restructuring is to position the church in Joliet for the evangelization required by this apostolic time.
- “It will allow us to refocus on our mission as disciples of Jesus and spread His good news through service to the poor, the homeless, the unborn, the fallen away Catholics, the lost sheep, and so many others who are searching for answers and yearning for the love and peace that only Jesus can provide.” Bishop Ronald Hicks.



# Targeted Restructuring Process

# Overview of the Targeted Restructuring Process- Diocese-Wide







# Overview of the Targeted Restructuring Process

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Summer 2024

Diocese compiles preliminary data/TRC meets with Bishop Hicks/consultation with Deans/List of Parishes to be included in process is created.

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August-October 2024

Data shared with KPLs and Parishioners.

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September-October 2024

Diocese completes draft scenarios of future deanery configuration

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October-November 2024

Draft scenarios presented to KPLs and feedback is solicited

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November-December 2024

Feedback is reviewed by the Targeted Restructuring Committee and recommendations made to Bishop Hicks

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January 2025

Bishop Hicks announces his decisions regarding restructuring.

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July 2025

Changes go into effect.

# Roles: Targeted Restructuring Committee

## Clergy

- Most Rev. Ronald Hicks, Bishop
- Very Rev. Richard Smith, Vicar General
- Rev. Dennis Spies, Vicar for Clergy
- Very Rev. Greg Podwysocki, Judicial Vicar
- Very Rev. Dan Bachner
- Very Rev. Gregor Gorsic
- Very Rev. Chris Groh
- Very Rev. Doug Hauber
- Very Rev. Jason Stone
- Very Rev. Tom Paul
- Very Rev. Bill Dewan
- Very Rev. Matthew Pratscher
- Very Rev. John Sponder

## Lay Members

- David Salvato, Chancellor
- Maureen Harton, Former Director of Implementation
- Mark Janus, Former Director of Parish Finances
- Mary Ann McLean, General Counsel
- Christopher Nye, Director of Buildings & Properties
- Dr. Jim Quaid, Superintendent of Schools
- Nikki Kanzia, Associate Superintendent of Schools
- Justin Reyes, Director of Catechesis & Evangelization
- Brian Schroeder, Chief Financial Officer
- Jeff May, Consultant (retired diocesan employee)

# Restructuring Roles- Primary and Support Parishes

**Primary:** These parishes could participate in a merger with other parishes, an amalgamation with other parishes, or could be designated as an oratory, mission or chapel.

**Support:** These parishes could receive other parishes in an amalgamation, could take on a parish that becomes an oratory, mission or chapel or could be in a position to offer spiritual support to parishioners from neighboring parishes.

# Phase 3 Groupings

## South Will-Grundy: East

- St. Boniface: Monee
- St. Paul the Apostle: Peotone
- St. Liborius: Steger
- St. Mary: Park Forest

## South Will-Grundy: West

- St. Lawrence: South Wilmington/St. Lawrence O'Toole Chapel: Essex/ St. Mary Mission: Reddick
- Sacred Heart: Kinsman
- Assumption: Coal City
- Immaculate Conception: Braidwood
- St. Patrick Wilton Center: Manhattan
- St. Rose of Lima: Wilmington

# Phase 3 Groupings

## East DuPage

- Ascension of our Lord: Oakbrook Terrace
- St. Alexander: Villa Park
- St. John the Apostle: Villa Park
- Christ the King: Lombard
- St. Pius X: Lombard \*
- Sacred Heart: Lombard \*

## South DuPage

- Christ the Servant: Woodbridge
- Our Lady of Peace: Darien \*
- St. Scholastica: Woodridge \*

\* Indicates a support role

# Phase 3 Groupings

## West DuPage

- St. Luke: Carol Stream
- St. Mark: Wheaton
- Corpus Christi: Carol Stream \*
- Resurrection: Wayne \*
- St. Isidore: Bloomingdale \*
- St. Michael: Wheaton\*
- St. Daniel: Wheaton \*

\* Indicates a support role.



## Targeted Restructuring Initiative: Key Considerations

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Considerations that are prioritized throughout the restructuring process include:

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1) the number of priests available to serve as pastors as well as the age and health of current pastors;

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2) the availability of qualified professionals such as business managers, DRE's, musicians, etc. willing to work for the Church;

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3) the best use of existing parish facilities and resources; and

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4) the minimization of costs to parishes to fully staff and maintain their facilities.

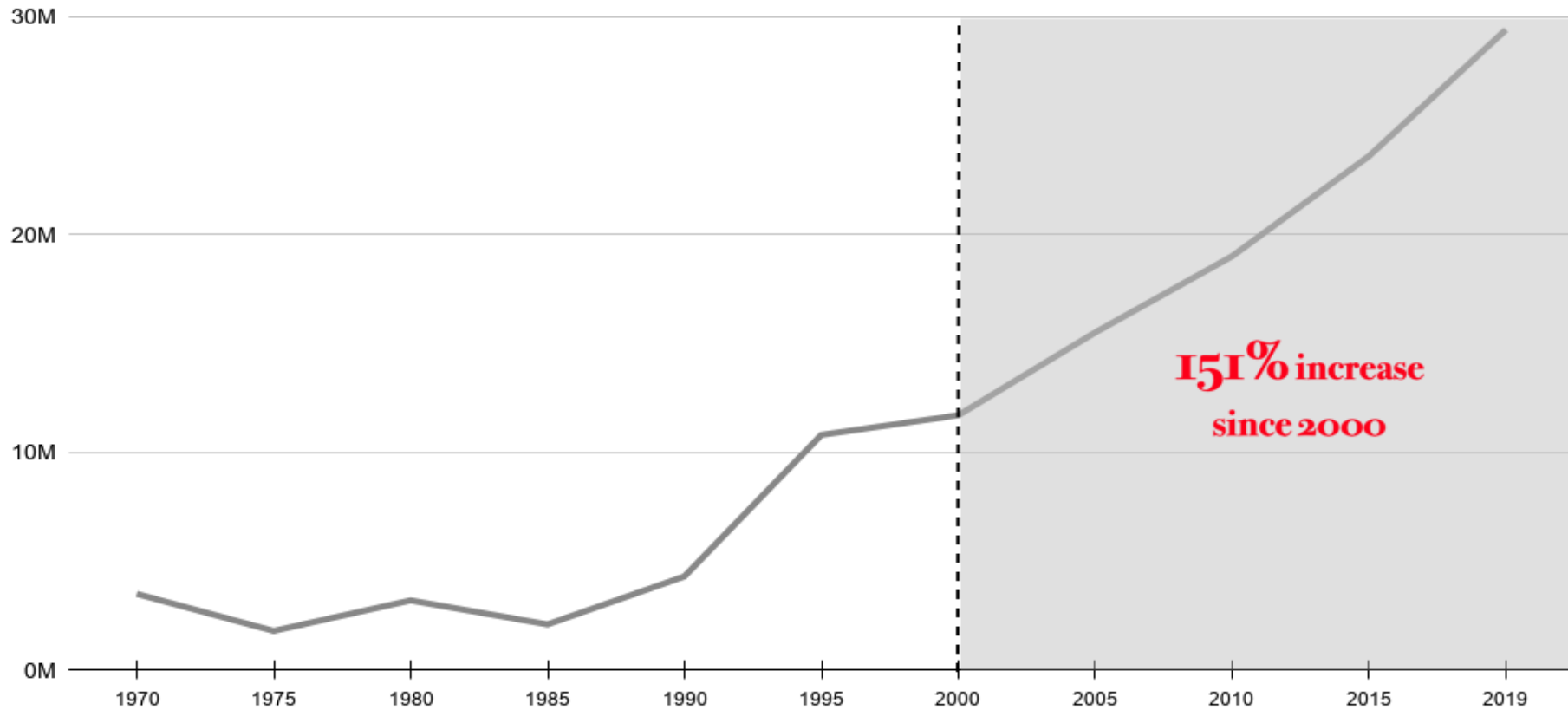
# **The Current Reality**





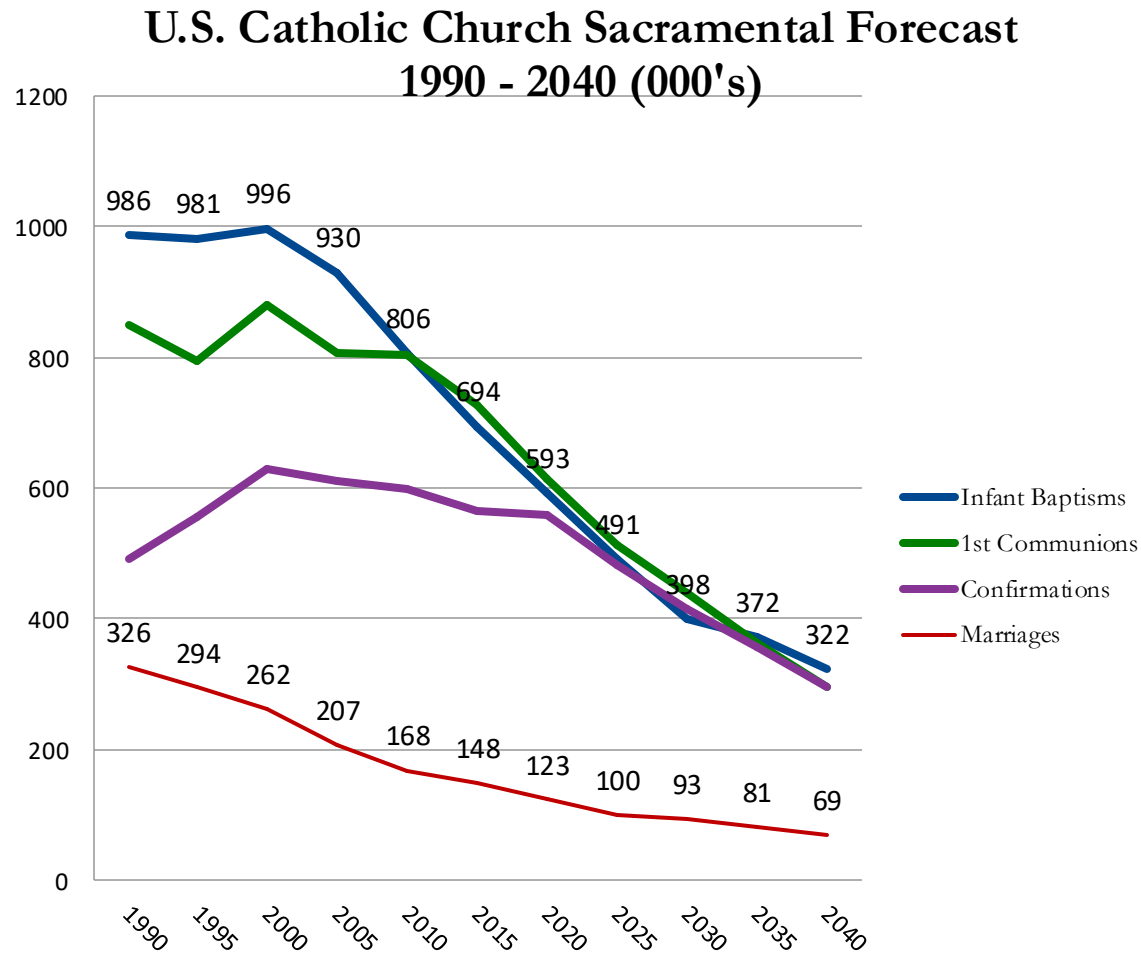
# Former Catholics Up

Number of Former Catholics in the United States  
1970-2019



Source: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate

# The people shortage is greater than the priest shortage



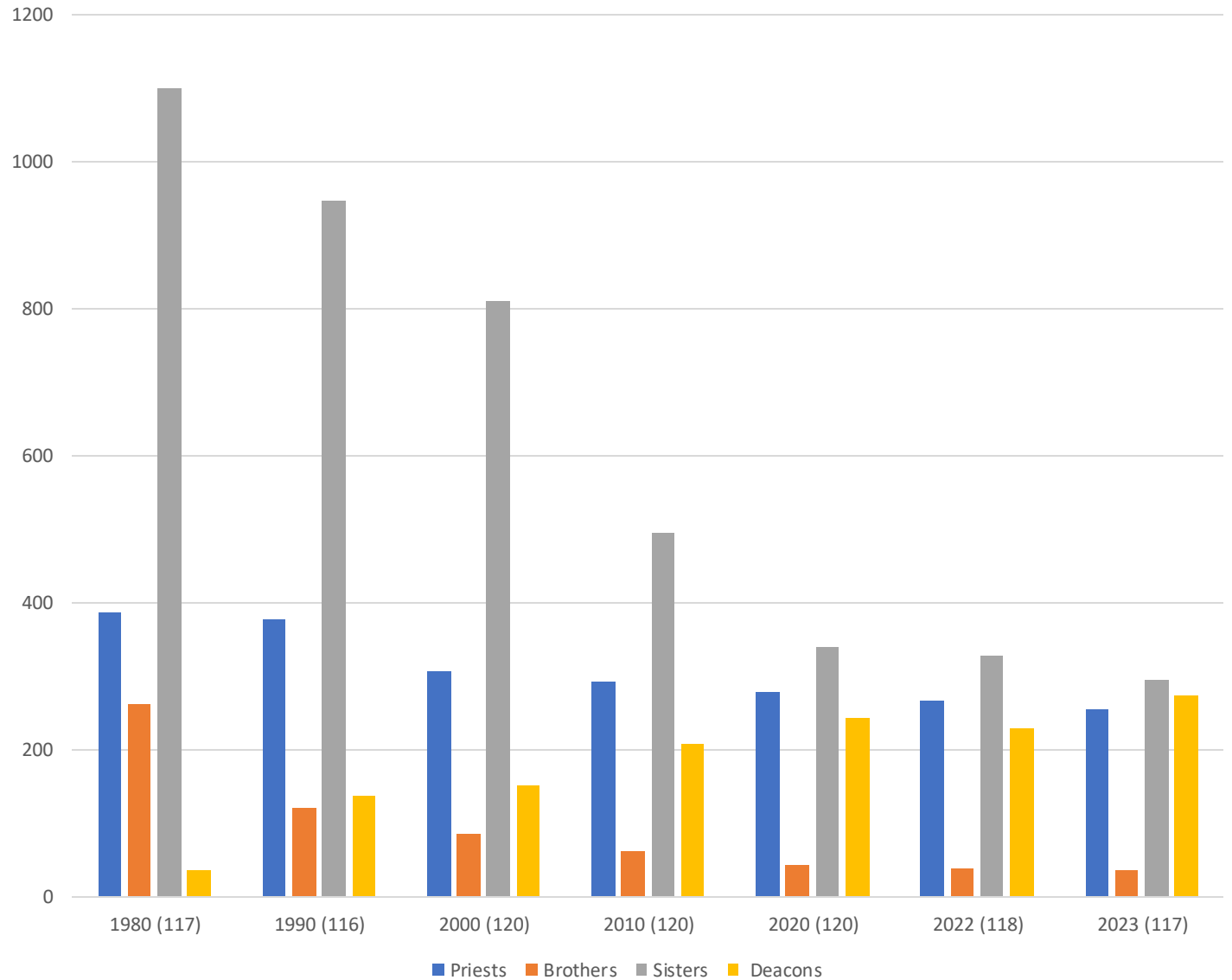
- Catholic marriages are down 55% since 1990
- 1 in 5 children baptized do not receive 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion.
- 2 in 5 children baptized do not receive Confirmation.
- 85% of children confirmed stop practicing their faith by age 21.

SOURCES:  
CARA,  
Pew Research Center

# Religious in the Diocese of Joliet (1980-2023)

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Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of parishes included in the diocese for a given year.



# Priests And Seminarians-2024 Data

## Current Data

- Total number of diocesan priests: **155**
- Total number of active diocesan priests ages 65-69: **14**
- Total number of active diocesan priests ages 70+: **7**
- Since 2021, **18** diocesan priests have died.
- There are currently **27** men in seminary formation; an over 80% loss since 1970.
  - Expecting 2 ordinations in 2025; perhaps 4-5 in 2026.

## Trends

- Between 2022 and 2024 we experienced a loss of **12.4%** in the number of active diocesan priests (22 priests)
- **24%** fewer active diocesan priests today than in 1970
- **66.3%** fewer order priests today than in 1970

# Parish Data Points

Parish snapshot

# Parish Data Points

Mass Counts

# Parish Data Points

Sacraments

# Parish Data Points

Parish Offertory and  
Facilities assessments  
(where available)



# Parish Data Points

Demographic data

# Next Steps



KPLs will compile your feedback into one parish report



KPLs will meet to debrief the parish sessions and identify common feedback points and questions



The Targeted Restructuring Committee will receive the feedback from these sessions and take under consideration as they draft the restructuring scenarios.



You will meet again in October-November to view the draft scenarios and provide your feedback.

Questions?

# DIOCESE OF JOLIET



Small group conversation about the data presented and feedback collected.





## **Prayer After the Meeting:**

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the time we have shared today, for the voices that have spoken, and for the ears that have listened. As we leave this meeting, help us to carry forward a spirit of hope and trust in your will. Though the path ahead may be challenging, may we be reminded that you are always with us, guiding us and sustaining us. Strengthen our faith as we journey through this process and keep us united as one family in Christ. Help us to remain focused on the mission of your Church, and may we continue to support one another in love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.