

Naming Guidelines



Each Family of Parishes can give itself a name, which can be a unifying activity. As early as Phase 1, but perhaps even further along in the planning process, leaders of the Family of Parishes can engage parishioners in a creative process of developing a name for the Family. (Ideally it's something more creative and inspiring than "NW-37"!). A Family should also be looking ahead to an eventual name for the parish.

The following guidance may be helpful in naming a **Family of Parishes**:

- The name the Family takes doesn't HAVE to be the eventual name of the canonical parish, but it could. You could try an interim name now, and in a few years from now, change it when coming together as a new canonical parish.
- The name of the Family does NOT have to follow the same canonical constraints as that of a church (saint, mystery of the Lord, title of the BVM, etc.). It certainly could, but it could also be a "geographic name" (e.g. "Uptown Catholic", "Preble County Catholic, "Catholic Petersburg"). And then the churches (which will retain their existing names in perpetuity) can be referred to as "St. John Church of Catholic Hamilton".
- The name of the Family should probably NOT be identical to the name of one of the existing parishes or churches...this could be quite divisive...
- Archbishop does NOT need to approve the Family name. (He will need to approve the eventual new canonical parish name.)
- Please send the name of your Family when it is final to the Chancellor's Office (chancellor@catholicaoc.org) so that it is on record. Also, when communicating with the Pastoral Center, you might find it helpful to include the number-letter designation especially in the beginning.

Looking ahead to naming a **new canonical parish**:

Looking to the future, many have asked questions about the requirements for naming parishes with the idea that the name selected for a Family of Parishes at this time would one day be the name of a new canonical parish.

(over →)

- In the document *De Patronis constituendis* (Sacra Congregatio Pro Culto Divino, 19 March 1973, n. 3) parishes are identified as places for which a heavenly patron can be chosen. The following are identified as possible patrons: the Blessed Virgin Mary, under some title already accepted into the sacred liturgy, the Angels, and the Saints. A “Blessed” may only be chosen as a patron with an indult granted by the Apostolic See. The three Divine Persons are always excluded from possible patrons, because the patron is to be the principal intercessor for the people of the place before the Divine Persons themselves (cf. *ibid.*, n.4).
- There should be only one principal patron. However, when two or more saints are inscribed in the Roman Calendar together, they may together be chosen as the principal patrons (e.g. Saints Basil and Gregory or Saints Martha, Mary, and Lazarus of Bethany) (cf. *ibid.*, n. 5).
- The diocesan bishop must approve the selection of a heavenly patron for a parish (cf. *ibid.*, n. 7).
- **Parishes traditionally are named according to their patron or patroness or according to the title of the parochial church, and this is the practice which will be followed when a new canonical parish is formed.** (e.g. Saint Mary Magdalene Parish).
- It is important to note that requirements for the title of a church are more broad than those for patrons. The title of a church may be: “either the Most Holy Trinity; or our Lord Jesus Christ invoked according to a mystery of his life or a title already introduced into the Sacred Liturgy; or the Holy Spirit; or the Blessed Virgin Mary, likewise invoked according to some appellation already accepted in the Sacred Liturgy; or the Holy Angels; or, finally, a Saint inscribed in the Roman Martyrology or in an Appendix to it duly approved; but not a Blessed, without an indult of the Apostolic See. A church should have one title only, except in the case of Saints who are inscribed together in the Calendar” (*The Order of the Dedication of a Church*, n. 4).
- As a reminder, the titles of churches do not change once they are dedicated, except with an indult from the Apostolic See (canon 1218, *CIC 1983*). The process of merging parishes or creating a new parish does not change the title of already existing churches.



BEACONS of LIGHT
**PASTORAL
 PLANNING**
 PATHWAY

Questions about these points can be addressed with the Chancellor, Reverend Jason Williams, J.C.L. (chancellor@catholicaoc.org).