



Der Pastorale Weg im Bistum Mainz
Infolyer 03, September 2020
„Pfarrei neu denken. Vielfältige Orte der Kirche vernetzen sich“
Übersetzung Englisch

Re-thinking parishes **various church locations form networks**

LARGER PARISHES – NECESSITY AND OPPORTUNITY

In the context of the pastoral process in our diocese, we will form larger parishes. This is necessary, because our church will have less members and has to manage its resources effectively.

The church can be alive and sustainable if we re-think our definition of parish. We need to acknowledge with an open mind the variety of church spaces and bring them together as an inter- connected community.

The new parish will be a communion of local congregations (the previous parish congregation and congregations of non-native German speakers) and other church spaces, such as institutions of the Caritas, Catholic nurseries and schools, care homes and senior residences, hospitals and telephone counselling services. They will work together in a network.

The formation of larger parishes is therefore not just a necessity, but also an opportunity: the church remains local, close to and with the people. In doing so, church strengthens the community and becomes more colourful and varied.



“In the contemporary structural transformation of our church, we need both: Local congregations that offer a sense of belonging and are not restrictive, and larger pastoral entities as spaces of openness that enable new approaches, but without becoming spaces of distance. (...) Thus, we may not just keep the church as the centre of our communities, but can expand it beyond our previous concepts – at least beyond the borders of our traditional parish congregation.”

(Christian Bauer, pastoral theologian, Innsbruck)

THE PARISH OF THE FUTURE IS COLOURFUL

Faith is alive in many different congregations and in various groups, institutions, initiatives and associations. Thus, we experience a colourful accumulation of active spaces in our communities that offer various points of contacts for children, young people, and adults in different walks of life and age groups. Summer camps and pensioner groups, church services for infants and family prayer groups, hospitals and counselling services – this is where we share life and faith.



TOGETHER INSTEAD OF CO-EXISTENCE

Our future parishes in the diocese of Mainz will be networks that connect those spaces of faith.

Church life unfurls in various forms. Every congregation and every church space fulfils a unique and special task for people. The common mission is to convey the love of God through our actions and words.

Our goal is a close-knit and stable net that holds people, particularly during the difficult situations that life brings.



TWOFOLD CHALLENGE

On the one hand, we need to enable a living church community locally. We find proximity and belonging in congregations and other church spaces.

? Thereby we ask, what can we carry out locally?

On the other hand, we also need cooperation and networks. Not everything can or should be done locally.

? What might become better, more efficient and more varied when we work together?

MANY OPPORTUNITIES

Cooperation in larger parishes offers many opportunities:

- Congregations and church spaces can still enable community in faith locally.
- However, often, it is nicer if larger groups of several congregations and/or church spaces attend services or other church activities.
- Not every congregation or community needs to fulfil the same tasks. Through cooperation, they might cater to different targets or groups in different places.
- People have different interests and passions. A bigger entity may encourage a larger variety of offers.

BEYOND OUR OWN STEEPLE

Wherever we have common needs and goals, cooperation and community strengthens us. Networking makes sense and is successful if we achieve something together rather than alone.

Networking happens on three levels and on all three levels, there is room for improvement.



1. SEVERAL CONGREGATIONS WORK TOGETHER IN A PARISH



The individual congregations work together to complement their services. Pastoral care workers, church councils and groups work together with the leading priest. The identity of the parish is determined through a shared vision. Joint services are carried out together. The congregation is active and creative locally.

2. CONGREGATIONS AND OTHER CHURCH SPACES FORM A NETWORK

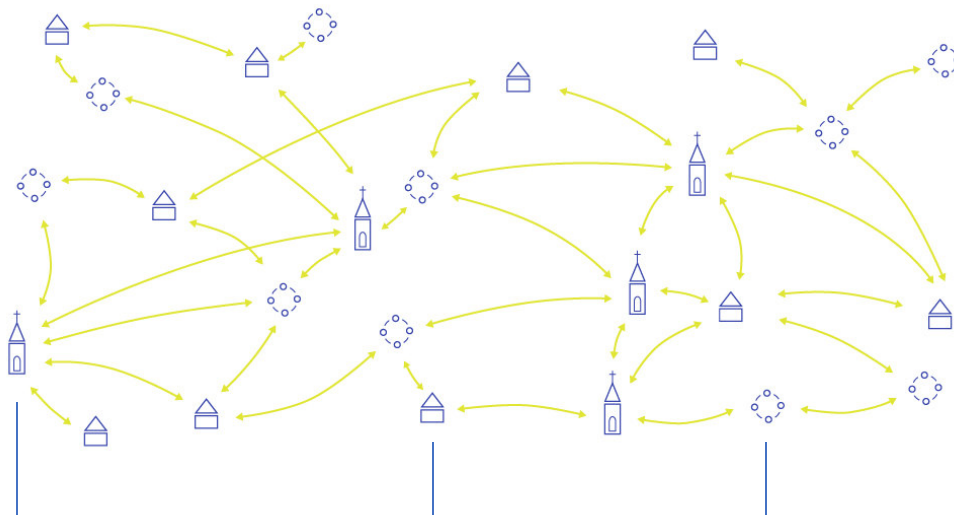


The pastoral field of a parish is not just comprised of the local congregations, but of many different church spaces. It becomes exciting when congregations and other Catholic institutions, organisations and groups (as well as Protestant and other Christian congregations) can discover ways to support each other and create new possibilities. Throughout this, one question motivates us; how can we as a church be there for and with the people?

3. STRENGTHENING NETWORKS IN OUR SOCIETY



Many individuals, groups, organisations and institutions are committed to issues that we share. We will be looking for further and stronger connection and cooperation, and together with our partners, we stand for justice, peace and the protection of the creation.



1 Congregation (former parish congregation or congregation of non-native German speakers)

2 Church spaces, e.g. Catholic nurseries, Catholic public libraries, Caritas counselling services, Catholic care homes, religious associations, religious orders, pastoral care in hospitals, Protestant congregations, food banks

3 Partners for cooperation in civic society, e.g. fire brigade, refugee initiatives, public nurseries, youth centres, communal politics, and non-government organisations on local levels



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