

Pastoral Planning

Central Region

Bellaire | Boyne City | Boyne Falls | East Jordan | Elmira | Fife Lake | Gaylord | Grayling |
Kalkaska | Lewiston | Mancelona | Mio | Praga | Vanderbilt



DIOCESE
— *of* —
GAYLORD

Welcome



DIOCESE
of
GAYLORD

Diocese of Gaylord Mission

To proclaim the saving message of God's love and invite missionary disciples to share the word of hope and charity to a troubled world.



2009 Pastoral Planning Report



DIOCESE OF GAYLORD

PARISH AND PERSONNEL TASK FORCE

September 5, 2007 – April 2, 2009

FINAL REPORT

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Submitted to:

Bishop Patrick R. Cooney
April 27, 2009



Criteria of Decision Making

The criteria included:

1. Does the recommendation provide access to sacramental care in the area?
2. Does the recommendation represent a reasonable workload for our priests?
3. Does the recommendation support current and/or shared programming?
4. Does the recommendation support other ministries in the affected locations?
5. Is the recommendation cost effective?
6. Is the option viable in the long term?
7. Is there consensus of the entire Task Force for the recommendation?



Collaborative Ministry of All Believers

Throughout the consultative process undertaken by the Task Force, priests indicated a desire to spend the majority of their time in the ministry to which they were called – that is, preaching, teaching, providing sacramental care, and other direct ministry to the People of God – and less time on the administrative tasks of parish life. The same sentiment was also expressed by many lay people at various gatherings. The Task Force recognizes that pastoring a parish is more than just providing sacraments but also involves taking an active role in the total life and ministry of the parish and helping parishioners grow in their own faith development so that every Catholic may more fully live the Gospel in their daily lives as an example to the world. The laity also clearly indicated a desire and willingness to take a more active role in the ministries and governance of their parishes if provided the opportunity and proper guidance. Though the Church maintains a hierarchical structure, the Holy Scriptures and many Church documents support shared responsibility and the need for collaborative ministry among all the faithful—those called through the Sacraments of Initiation as well as those called through the Sacrament of Holy Orders—to carry on the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Parish Clustering

In many areas the Task Force is recommending additional clusters of parishes be created. The Task Force was instructed to plan for the long-term future of the Diocese and feels very strongly that, if adopted, sufficient time and support should be given to allow the collaborative ministries to develop and grow in the various areas. It has been recognized that over the course of history, clusters of parishes have been established and then broken apart before they had time to develop or even after they were working well. This has occurred both because additional clergy became available to serve in an area or a priest newly assigned to an area chose not to continue in a collaborative ministry style. While the Task Force hopes such “cluster-busting” will be avoided, certainly additional clergy should be welcomed to work collaboratively in the ministries of the cluster under the direction of the Pastor.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Mass Scheduling

Parishioners must be willing to sacrifice “Masses of convenience” and be willing to compromise and adjust Mass times in order to serve the common good of the wider community. Because the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life, we must first strive toward well executed, spirit-filled liturgies with appropriate parish liturgical ministers. We must also protect the health and well being of the priests and ensure they have adequate time to greet parishioners before and after Masses, along with suitable time for travel between parishes.

Task Force recommendations are based on the premise that, to the greatest extent possible, priests should not be required to regularly celebrate more than three Masses each weekend. It is understood that additional Masses may be allowed, or even necessary, in certain unusual circumstances. The Task Force recommends following existing guidelines of the universal Church with regard to the number of Masses allowed on Sundays and other days.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Parish Councils

In order to promote further collaboration and communication, as well as to reduce the amount of administrative work for clergy in multi-parish models, guidelines should be developed to assist parishes in moving from separate pastoral and finance councils to a model where there is one pastoral and finance council with representation from all parishes in the cluster.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Implementation of Recommendations

The Task Force recommends an implementation committee and a process for transition should be established to assist parishes and leadership as changes are carried out. Assistance in dealing with personnel concerns, financial issues and stewardship, training and formation, along with the spiritual, psychological and grieving issues due to experiencing change, should all be available, particularly if a parish is going to be closed, merged, clustered or without weekend Mass. It is recognized that substantial expertise in each of these areas exists within the Diocesan staff and existing structures. Additional qualified individuals also exist in most areas of the diocese who would likely volunteer in this important ministry. Further, transition processes have existed in this diocese in the past and other dioceses have also recently completed similar restructuring processes. The experience of the Task Force with local individuals as well as those from other dioceses is that substantial assistance and models for implementation of changes already exist and everyone has been graciously willing to share ideas, materials and experiences for the benefit of all. It would not be necessary to create brand new models or processes, but instead to carefully review and adapt existing models and processes to fit the Diocese of Gaylord.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Existing Leadership

As stated in the Introduction, the Diocese of Gaylord has been blessed with retired, extern and religious order priests as well as Pastoral Administrators/Parish Life Coordinators who faithfully serve and care for the people of our diocese. In areas where these individuals currently have assignments, the Task Force recommends the Bishop and Assignment Board evaluate how these individuals might be best utilized, particularly during the transition process. It may be that a retired, extern, religious order priest or Pastoral Administrator/Parish Life Coordinator successfully serving a parish should remain in that position in order to assist parishioners in the transition as well as to allow time for new structures to be put in place or for newly assigned Pastors to get acclimated to the area. In all cases, however, in order to remain in their current position, these individuals must be willing to work collaboratively toward a successful transition.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Deacons

It is apparent that confusion exists among a number of faithful of the diocese as to the appropriate role of ordained deacons in the Church and within the Diocese of Gaylord. Additional education to provide more clarity regarding the role and ministry of deacons in this diocese should be made available. Further, there is significant support for reinstating the Deacon Formation Program in the Diocese of Gaylord and for expanding the ministries of deacons as deemed appropriate by the universal Church and in accordance with their particular gifts and training.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Sunday Celebrations in Absence of a Priest

A significant number of parishioners requested the Bishop reconsider the possibility of including distribution of Holy Communion during Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest. The Task Force recommends further education take place to explain the appropriate occasions for utilizing this rite of the Church as well as the rationale for the Bishop's decision not to offer Holy Communion during the Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Catholic Schools

The Task Force **strongly supports continued accessibility to Catholic School education in the Diocese of Gaylord.** In 2008, the Diocese hired a full-time Superintendent for Catholic Schools. The Superintendent is charged with responsibility for the operation of schools as well as working collaboratively to ensure academic excellence and faith formation are maintained in our Catholic schools. With the assignment of the new Superintendent, the time constraints for completion of the Final Report and a desire to have additional expertise on the committee with regard to education, the **Task Force did not complete a thorough review of Catholic schools.** Therefore, the Task Force has made few specific recommendations regarding Catholic schools in this document. However, the Task Force does recommend that a committee with appropriate expertise and vision be appointed to work with the diocesan Superintendent as well as school and parish leadership to develop recommendations to maintain Catholic school education in this diocese. Further, the Task Force **recommends that all parishes in the vicinity of a Catholic school work together to provide a measure of support to the school** which may include a commitment of both human and financial resources. Finally, the Task Force **recommends the possibility for providing diocesan-wide support for all Catholic schools** should continue to be explored and encouraged.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Evangelization

Many parishioners expressed a desire for assistance in the area of evangelization and for particular outreach to youth, young adults and families. The diocese is requested to continue, and even expand, opportunities which will assist parishes with the development of programming and ministry in these areas.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Continued Long-Range Planning

The recommendations of the Parish and Personnel Task Force are made based upon history, current circumstances and future projections. Because change is inevitable, the Task Force recommends that a similar committee be appointed every five years to review implementation progress. Their goal should also be to review, research and provide updated recommendations reflective of the facts and circumstances of the time as well as to look forward into the future.



Common Themes

1. The Church should allow married clergy.
2. The Church should allow women clergy.
3. The Diocese should recruit more foreign clergy.
4. Prayer services with the distribution Holy Communion should be permitted.
5. The laity should be allowed to take on some of the pastoral and administrative functions of the parish, thus allowing priests to have more time for sacramental duties.
6. There is universal concern about the workload of the clergy in today's Church.
7. Parishes and parishioners need continued formation and expanded assistance from the Diocese to minister effectively.
8. Efforts to promote vocations, particularly to priestly ministry, must be expanded at all levels.
9. Parishioners are willing to accept additional responsibility for local parish administration and ministries, but need and desire guidance as to what to do and the appropriate processes and methods to do so.
10. There is significant fear surrounding possible parish closings.
11. Many parishes, and parishioners, are experiencing financial difficulty. There is a lack of understanding about why Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) targets continue to increase and how those targets are determined.



GAYLORD AREA

Specific Recommendations

St. Luke | St. Mary | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Mary | St. Mary Cathedral | Holy Redeemer |
St. Thomas Aquinas | Jesus the Good Shepherd | St. Augustine

#1: St. Mary (Grayling) should be added to the existing cluster of St. Mary Cathedral (Gaylord), St. Thomas Aquinas (Elmira), and Holy Redeemer (Vanderbilt). Two priests should be assigned to this cluster with one being named Rector of St. Mary Cathedral as well as Pastor of St. Mary (Grayling), St. Thomas Aquinas and Holy Redeemer. The other priest should be assigned as a Parochial Vicar for the cluster. The Pastor must be experienced, able to work collaboratively and able to introduce and motivate parishioners to special ministries. The area seems to be an ideal training ground for a newer priest, although perhaps not as a first assignment, because of the Catholic school, two hospitals, jail and prison ministry, military base, etc. In the longer term, if necessary, weekend Masses at the smaller parishes of Holy Redeemer or St. Thomas Aquinas may need to be discontinued, but the parishes should be maintained as long as a sustainable faith community exists in each location.



GAYLORD AREA

Specific Recommendations

St. Luke | St. Mary | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Mary | St. Mary Cathedral | Holy Redeemer |
St. Thomas Aquinas | Jesus the Good Shepherd | St. Augustine

#2: The cluster of St. Mary (Mio) and St. Francis (Lewiston) should be expanded to include Jesus the Good Shepherd (Atlanta) and St. Augustine (Hillman). One Pastor should be assigned to this cluster. No weekend Masses should be held at Jesus the Good Shepherd, but the parish should be maintained as long as a sustainable faith community exists in Atlanta. There appear to be significant seasonal population shifts in Mio and Lewiston which may require additional priestly ministry be made available for the summer months.

#3: It is recommended that St. Luke (Bellaire) be a stand-alone parish at this time with one Pastor assigned. It is suitable for an older priest nearing retirement.



PETOSKEY AREA

Specific Recommendations

Holy Childhood | St. Francis Xavier | St. Francis Solanus | St. Mary of the Assumption | St. Matthew
St. Augustine | St. Joseph | St. John Nepomucene | Holy Cross | Holy Cross | St. Nicholas

#1: St. Francis Solanus (Bay Shore) and **St. John Nepomucene (Praga)** should be closed (formally suppressed) with the process completed no later than September.

#2: **St. Matthew (Boyne City), St. Augustine (Boyne Falls) and St. Joseph (East Jordan)** should be clustered with one Pastor and a qualified Pastoral Associate assigned.

#3: All parishes in the area should be encouraged to work collaboratively to ensure the continuation of quality Catholic school education in the region.



TRAVERSE CITY AREA

Specific Recommendations

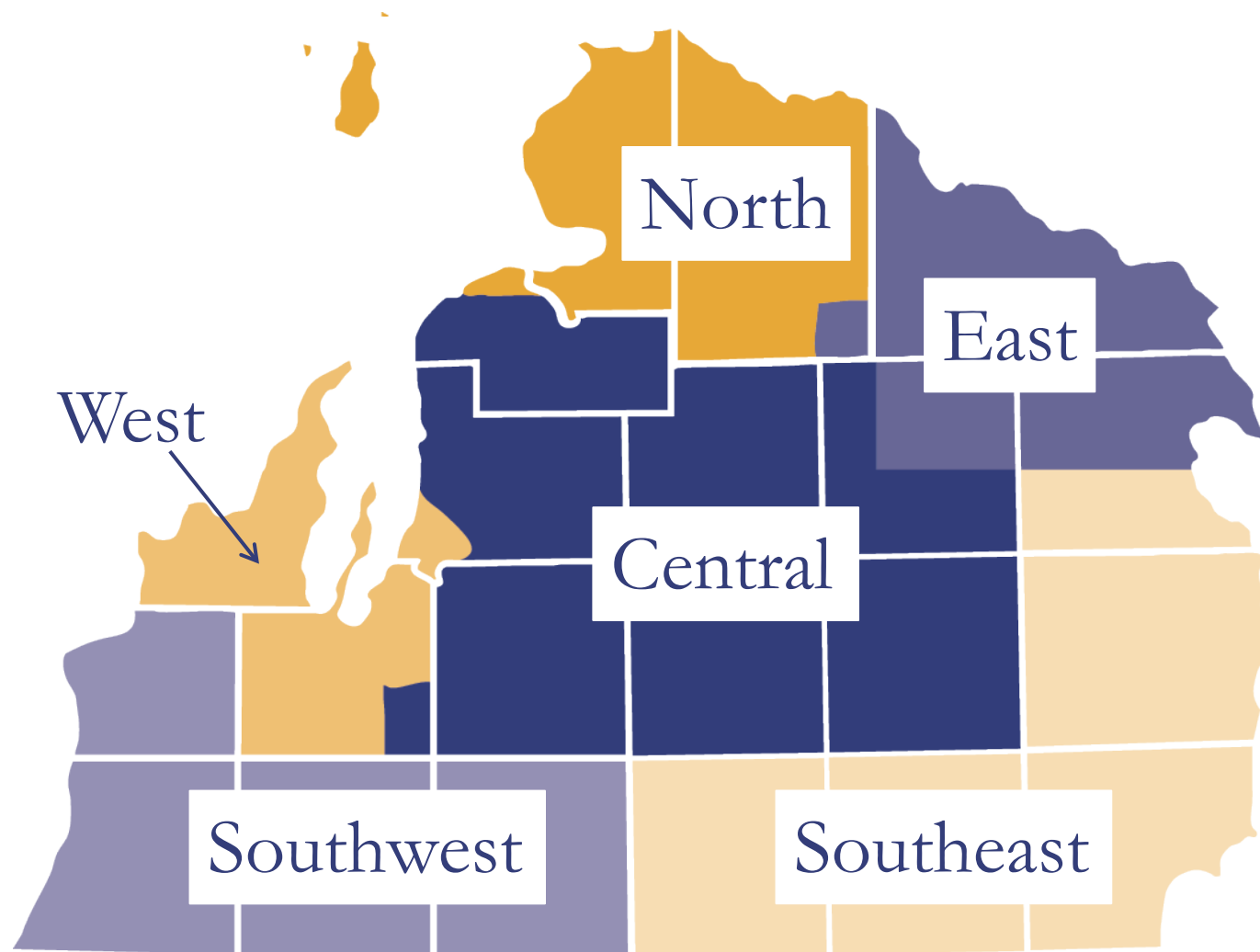
Christ the King | Holy Rosary | Sacred Heart | St. Phillip Neri | St. Aloysius | The Woods | St. Anthony of Padua | St. Rita-St. Joseph | St. Gertrude | St. Michael the Archangel | Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha | St. Wenceslaus | St. Mary St. Mary | St. Joseph | Immaculate Conception | St. Francis of Assisi | St. Patrick

#1: St. Anthony (Mancelona), St. Mary of the Woods (Kalkaska) and **St. Aloysius (Fife Lake)** should be clustered with one Pastor assigned. Parishes should work collaboratively to share resources, programming and ministries. The Task Force recognizes the importance of the outreach ministry of the parishioners in Mancelona to the community and recommends it be continued, and perhaps even expanded, as part of the ministry of the cluster.



Diocese of Gaylord

6 Vicariates

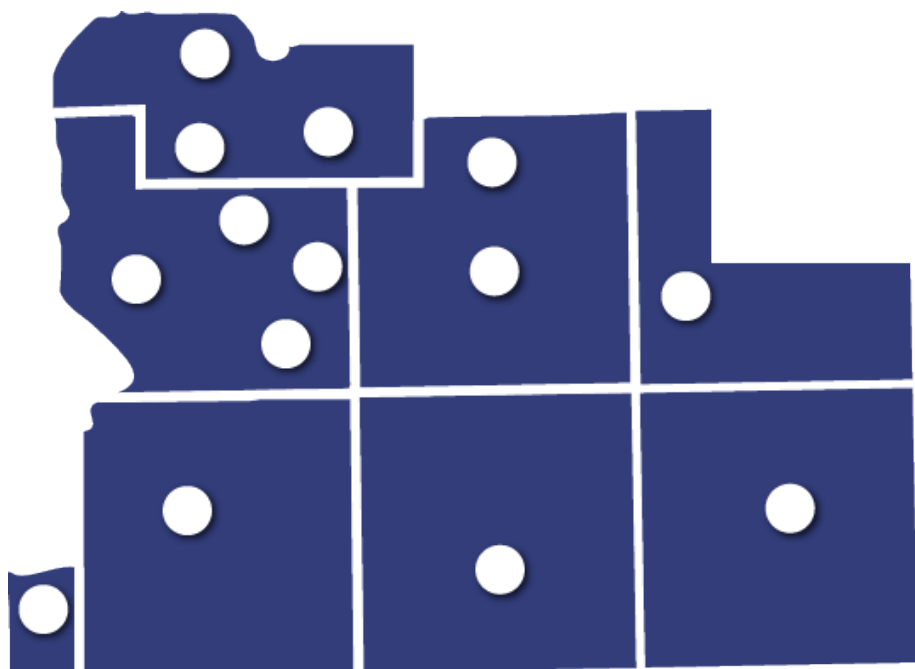


Central Vicariate

1. St. Mary Cathedral, Gaylord
2. Holy Redeemer, Vanderbilt
3. St. Francis of Assisi, Lewiston
4. St. Mary, Mio
5. St. Mary, Grayling
6. St. Aloysius, Fife Lake
7. St. Mary of the Woods, Kalkaska
8. St. Anthony of Padua, Mancelona
9. St. Thomas Aquinas, Elmira
10. St. Luke the Evangelist, Bellaire
11. St. John Nepomucene, Praga
12. St. Joseph, East Jordan
13. St. Augustine, Boyne Falls
14. St. Matthew, Boyne City



Central Vicariate

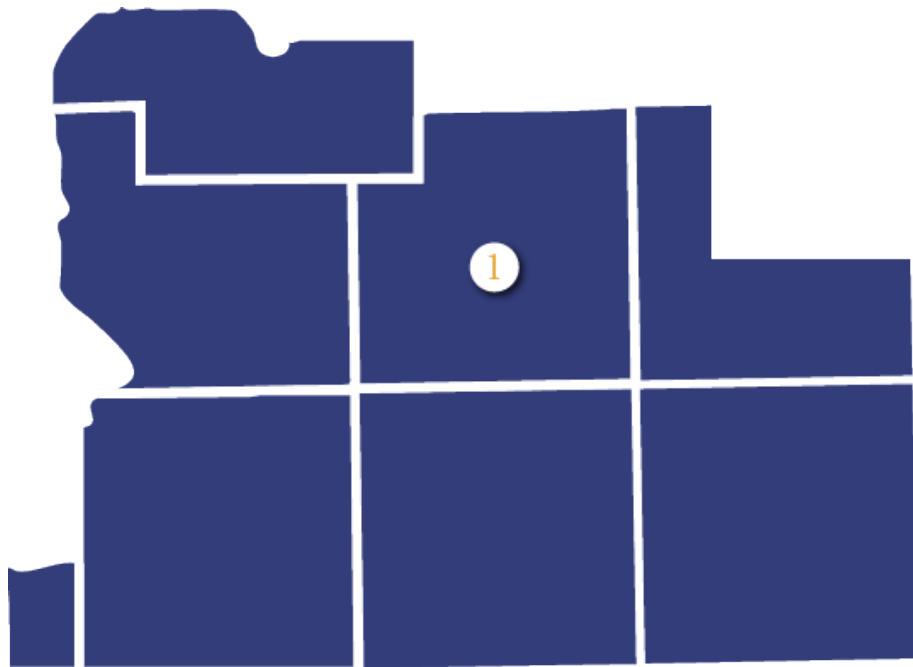


Vicariate Profile					
Name:			CENTRAL VICARIATE		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	3375	↓	3177	5148	4853
Baptisms	80	↓	72	137	236
Marriages	38	↓	34	45	74
Deaths	162	↑	126	137	152
^Funerals					



1. St. Mary Cathedral, Gaylord

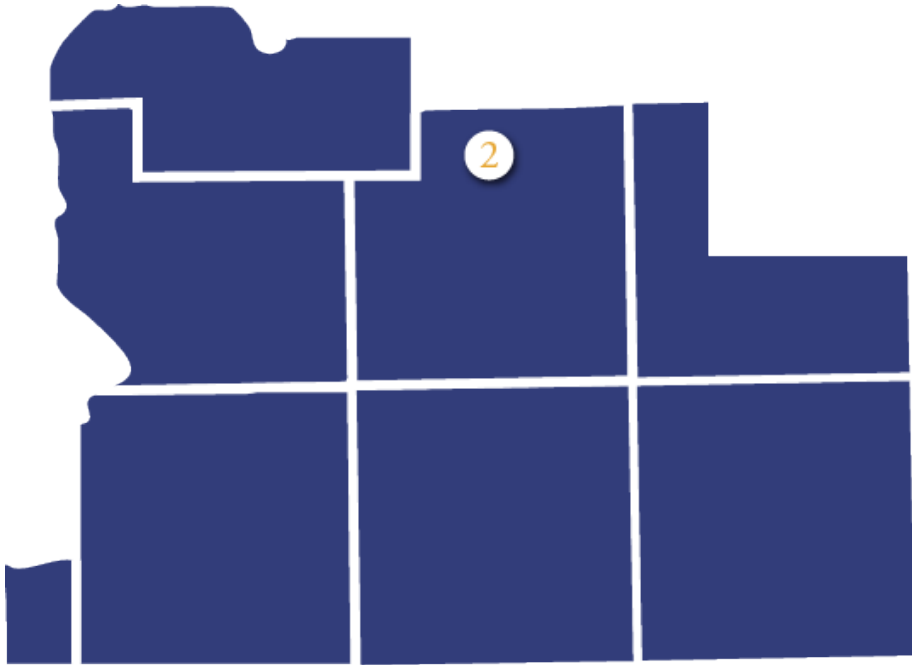
Central Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Mary, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel			City:	Gaylord
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	1005	↓	964	2069	1800
Baptisms	24	↓	23	52	72
Marriages	8	↓	6	11	25
Deaths	43	↑	32	52	37
	^Funerals				



2. Holy Redeemer, Vanderbilt



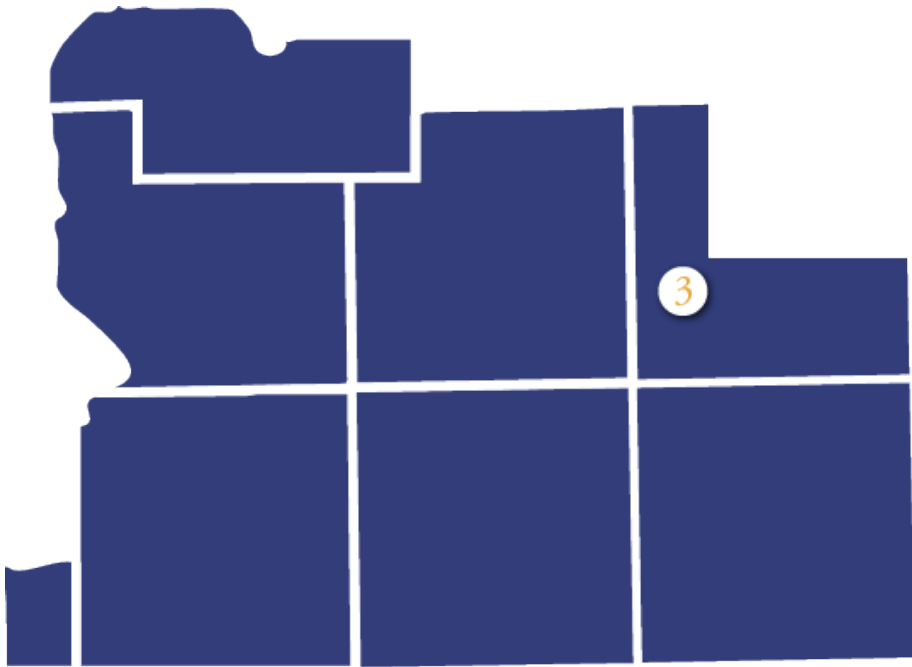
Central Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name:	Holy Redeemer			City:	Vanderbilt
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	102	↑	94	106	98
Baptisms	3	↓	3	7	7
Marriages	1	↓	0	5	2
Deaths	7	↑	3	3	2
^Funerals					



3. St. Francis of Assisi, Lewiston

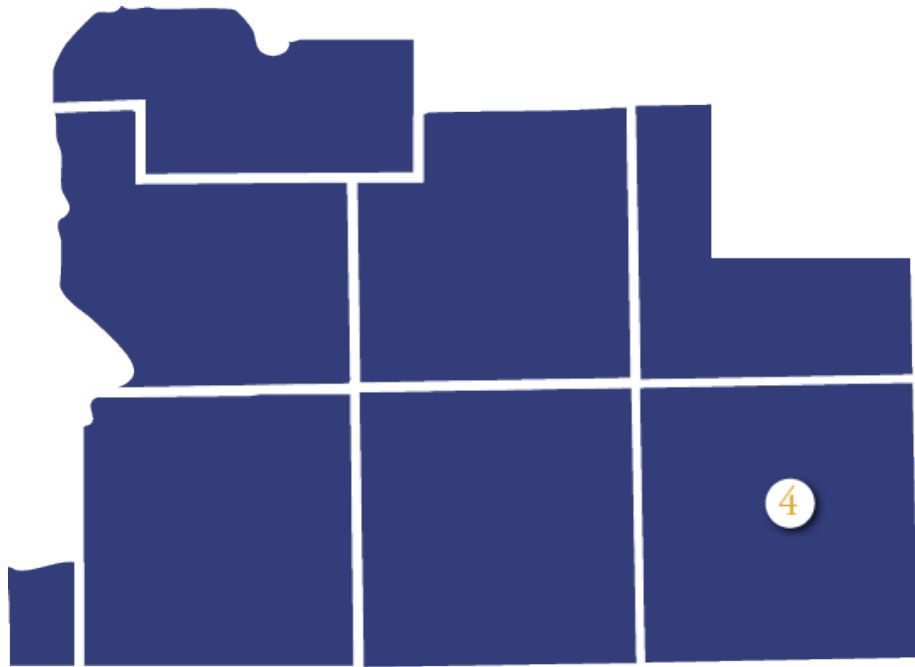
Central Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Francis of Assisi			City:	Lewiston
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	218	↓	215	309	320
Baptisms	3	↓	1	1	6
Marriages	1	↓	0	4	2
Deaths	11	↑	10	8	8
^Funerals					



4. St. Mary, Mio



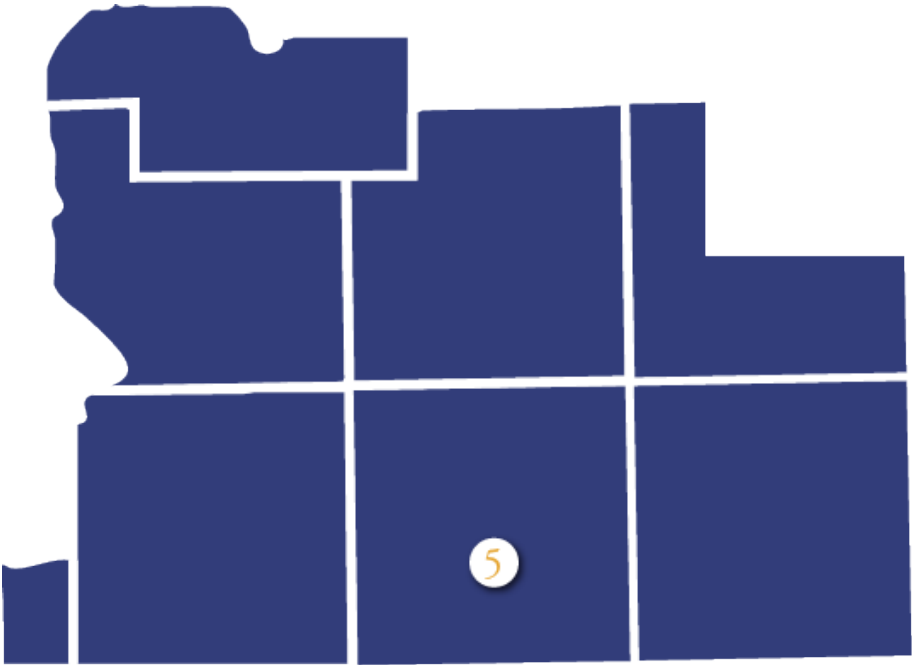
Central Vicariate

Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Mary			City:	Mio
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	159	↓	159	262	227
Baptisms	3	↓	3	0	4
Marriages	0	—	0	0	0
Deaths	9	↑	11	7	7
^Funerals					



5. St. Mary, Grayling

Central Vicariate

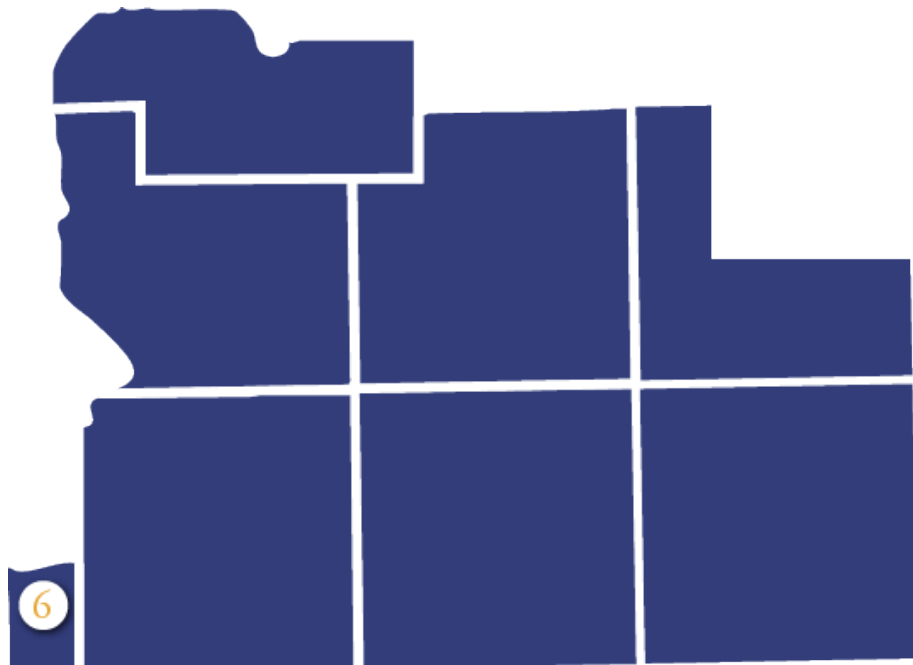


Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Mary		City: Grayling			
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	177	↓	172	387	480
Baptisms	3	↓	0	5	31
Marriages	1	↓	4	1	3
Deaths	15	↓	5	20	21
^Funerals					



6. St. Aloysius, Fife Lake

Central Vicariate

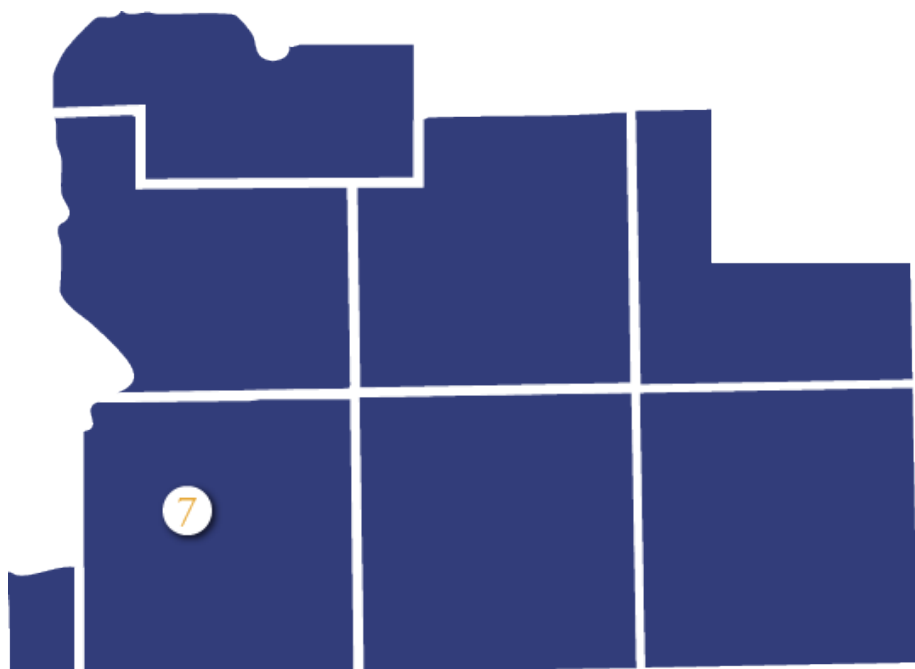


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Aloysius			City:	Fife Lake
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	139	↑	91	93	100
Baptisms	1	↓	1	2	9
Marriages	1	▬	1	2	1
Deaths	5	↑	3	1	4
^Funerals					



7. St. Mary of the Woods, Kalkaska

Central Vicariate

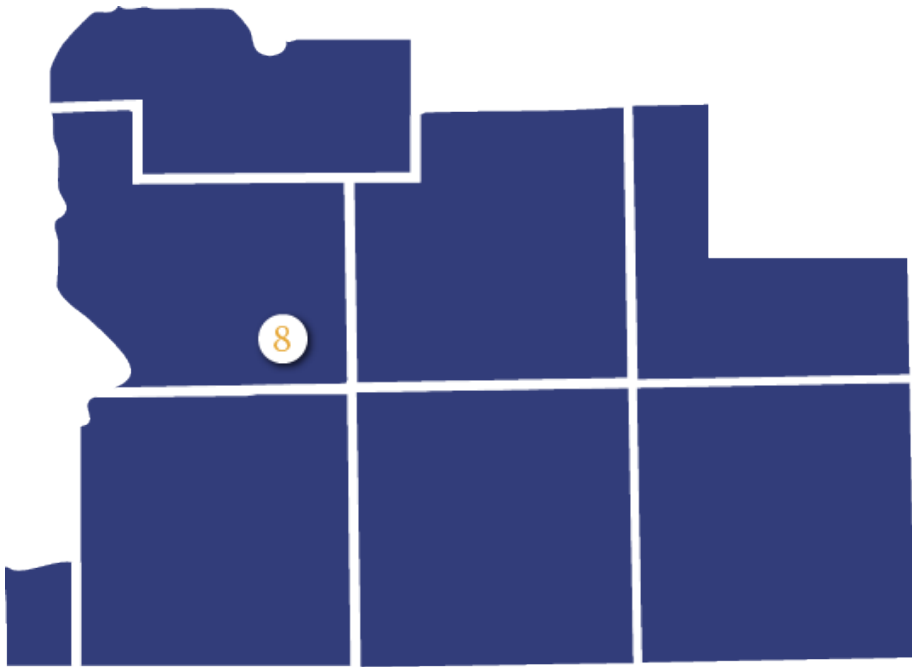


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Mary of the Woods			City:	Kalkaska
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	210	↓	187	192	300
Baptisms	7	↓	7	9	30
Marriages	3	↓	2	1	6
Deaths	11	↓	9	3	15
^Funerals					



8. St. Anthony of Padua, Mancelona

Central Vicariate

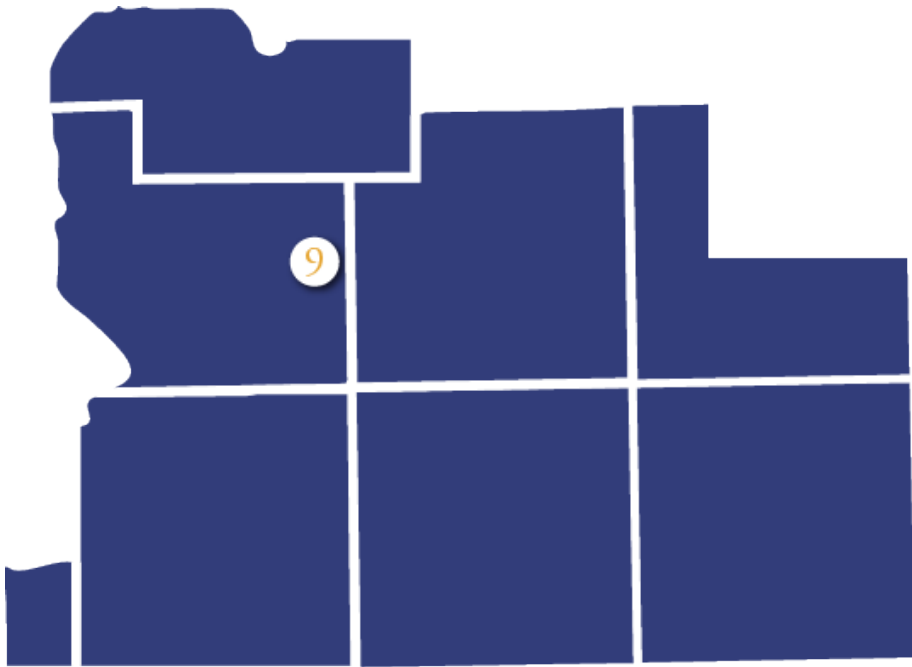


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Anthony of Padua			City:	Mancelona
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	62	↓	59	144	133
Baptisms	3	↓	0	2	5
Marriages	1	↑	1	1	0
Deaths	4	↓	4	5	7
^Funerals					



9. St. Thomas Aquinas, Elmira

Central Vicariate

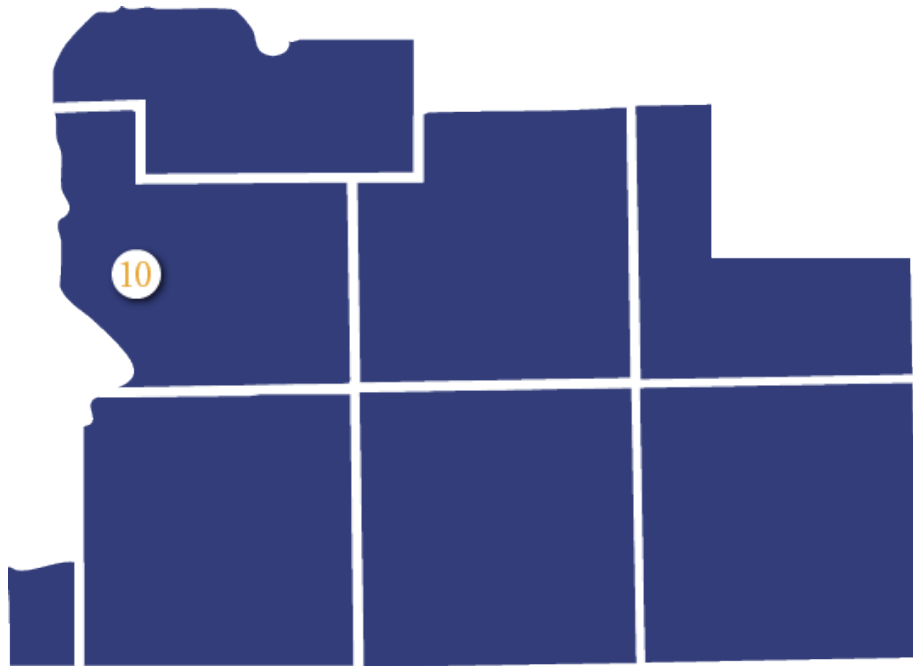


Parish Profile					
Name:	Saint Thomas Aquinas			City:	Elmira
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	68	↓	62	65	86
Baptisms	3	↑	1	4	2
Marriages	2	↓	3	2	10
Deaths	2	↑	2	2	0
^Funerals					



10. St. Luke the Evangelist, Bellaire

Central Vicariate

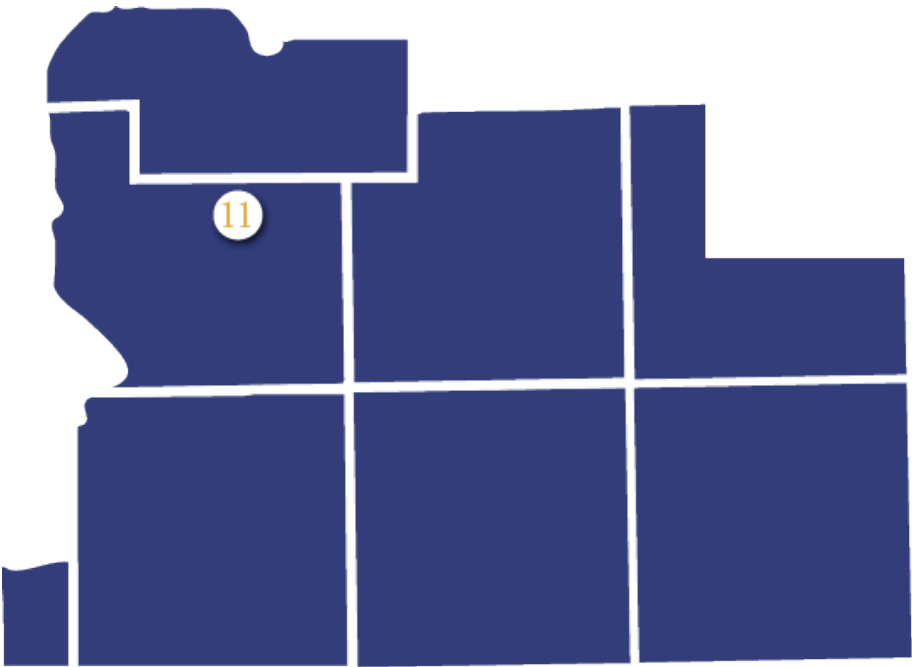


Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Luke the Evangelist			City: Bellaire		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	159	↓	175	315	254
Baptisms	5	↑	5	11	4
Marriages	0	↓	0	2	1
Deaths	10	↑	7	9	5
^Funerals					



11. St. John Nepomucene, Praga

Central Vicariate

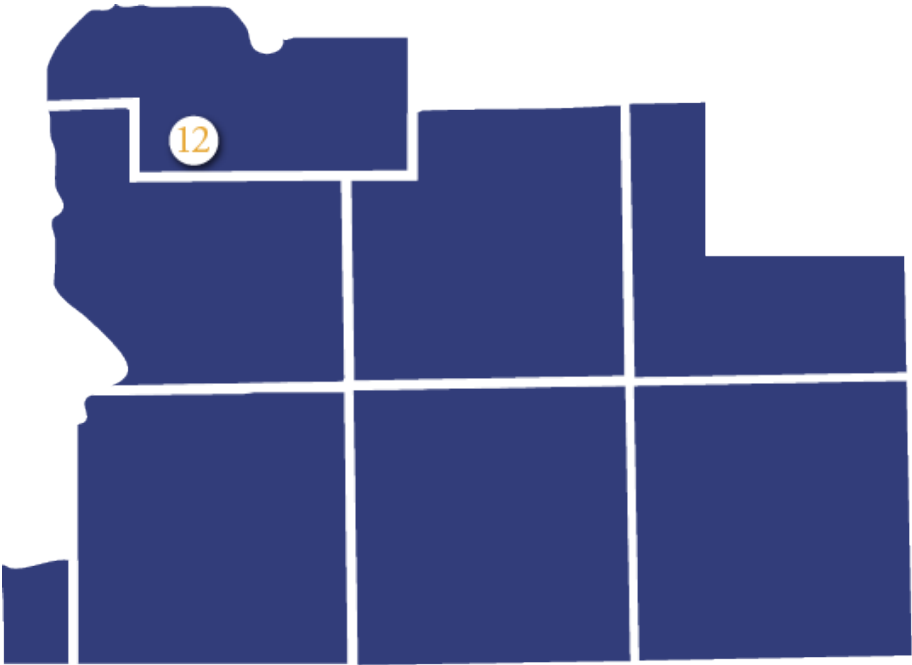


Parish Profile					
Name: Saint John Nepomucene			City: Praga		
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	0	↓	10	28	39
Baptisms	0	↓	0	1	1
Marriages	0	↓	0	1	3
Deaths	0	↓	1	0	2
^Funerals					



12. St. Joseph, East Jordan

Central Vicariate

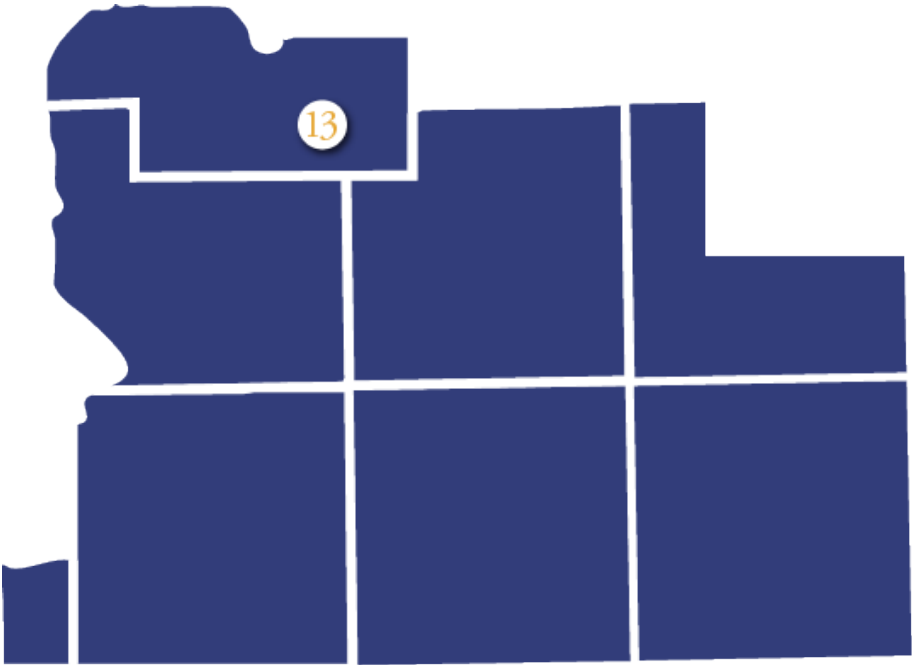


Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Joseph		City: East Jordan			
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	139	↑	146	149	103
Baptisms	3	↓	2	11	25
Marriages	2	↑	0	5	1
Deaths	12	—	11	5	12
^Funerals					



13. St. Augustine, Boyne Falls

Central Vicariate

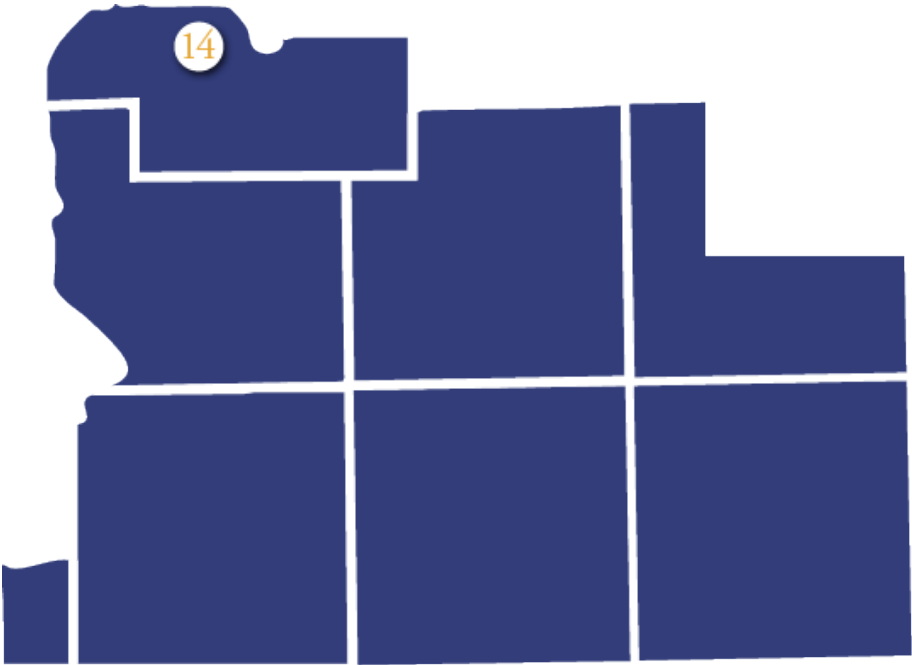


Parish Profile					
Name: Saint Augustine		City: Boyne Falls			
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	177	↓	154	200	178
Baptisms	1	↓	0	4	8
Marriages	1	↓	0	2	3
Deaths	6	↑	5	3	4
^Funerals					



14. St. Matthew, Boyne City

Central Vicariate



Parish Profile					
Name:		Saint Matthew		City: Boyne City	
	2025 Survey	Trending*	2024 OCD	2005 OCD	1995 OCD
Households	460	↑	389	419	363
Baptisms	11	↓	10	11	15
Marriages	3	↓	0	3	8
Deaths	17	↑	16	12	14
^Funerals					



Questions



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