Cincinnati Archbishops John McNicholas and Karl Alter were seen as great builders and developers of beautiful church and educational edifices in the archdiocese. The next three Cincinnati ordinaries—Archbishops Paul F. Leibold, Joseph L. Bernardin, and Daniel E. Pilarczyk—were largely consolidators. The parish building process was reversed during the post-Vatican II era. In the period 1969 to 1996 the local church saw fewer churches built than was true in any previous twenty-seven-year period in the history of the archdiocese. Experiencing an unprecedented number of church closings and mergers, the laity and parish organizations assumed myriad tasks in the day-to-day activities of the church, and the local church witnessed increasing Mass attendance and enrollment in Catholic schools, and involvement in social programs.

Leibold, a native of Dayton, was the first of the triumvirate to succeed Alter as archbishop. Born on December 22, 1914, he was reared and spent his priestly life in the archdiocese. Leibold attended Dayton’s Holy Trinity elementary school, Chaminade high school, and the University of Dayton for two years. He completed his studies for the priesthood at St. Gregory and Mount St. Mary’s of the West Seminaries in Cincinnati, and was ordained on May 18, 1940, by McNicholas. He was with the chancery, located above St. Louis Church at Eighth and Walnut Streets in Cincinnati, from 1942 until his appointment to the Evansville see in April 1966. He served under Alter for sixteen years as chancellor and then as auxiliary bishop. When he became archbishop of Cincinnati on July 23, 1969, the fifty-five-year-old Leibold had a reputation as both a warm-hearted, approachable pastor and a hard worker. Though an efficient administrator, the humble Leibold was not in the
mold of his two immediate predecessors, Alter and McNicholas, who had been exceptional churchmen and national spokesmen for the hierarchy.

During his tenure Leibold helped give vigor to the Priests' Senate, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC), and the parish councils. The priests, religious, and laity increasingly shared congregational responsibility for the local church's mission. In December 1969 the Senate of Priests, composed of forty priests, dissolved itself to make way for a smaller and entirely elected senate of twenty-five priests, auxiliary bishop, and vicars general. Leibold was hopeful that the reduced number of priest-senators "would enable the senate to act more efficiently." The new structure provided for more adequate representation. Ten members of the new senate represented the diocesan clergy, another ten the deaneries of the archdiocese, and the remaining five were elected by religious communities of priests, with the Franciscan, Jesuit, Marianist, and Precious Blood communities electing one each of their members. The archdiocese, moreover, found the seventy-member Pastoral Council too large for effective action. In the spring of 1970 the Council
adopted a restructuring plan that reduced its membership to forty. During his brief tenure Leibold also emphasized the importance of parish councils. Since their beginning in 1967 there were by the end of Leibold’s term in 1972 more than two hundred parish councils in the archdiocese. In October 1970 the new archdiocesan Sisters’ Advisory Council (SAC) was formed. More than six hundred sisters from the archdiocese voted to accept the group’s constitution at the sessions held in Dayton and in Cincinnati. Developed from the old Archdiocesan Vocation Endeavor (AVE), which was officially dissolved in 1969, SAC served as a voice for the more than 2,000 sisters in the archdiocese. The new organization complemented the Archdiocesan Council of the Laity (ACL) and the Priests’ Senate.¹

In the aftermath of Vatican II the archdiocese also had interest in a reforming synod, the last one having been held in 1954. On May 3, 1970, at the first assembly of the Council of the Laity, Leibold launched the archdiocese’s sixth synod and, in the process, gave new impetus to collegiality. About 1,200 to 1,400 priests, religious, and lay men and women were present at the ACL assembly that day, and heard the archbishop outlining his plans for the proposed synod. The synod, which did not convene until 1971, was preceded at every stage of the proceedings by a period of thorough discussion by members of the clergy, religious, and laity. It became a great educational experience for the more than one hundred persons who from June to September 1970 drafted the documents. The eleven commissions consisted of fifty-five priests, twenty-four sisters, four brothers, and sixty lay members. The priests of the archdiocese and the members of the Priests’ Senate, the Pastoral Council, the ACL, and the Sisters’ Advisory Council then evaluated the documents in November. From January to March 1971 more than 16,000 parishioners in the archdiocese reacted to the documents in ten parish “speak up” sessions. Whereas only a few lay persons had participated in the 1954 synod, the laity in 1970 and 1971 took an unprecedented role in shaping the synod’s agenda as well as at the synod itself. On May 16, 1971, more than three thousand elected delegates voted on the final drafts of the documents at the Cincinnati Convention Exposition Center.²

The synod, with Father John L. Cavanaugh as coordinator, developed a set of guidelines for the archdiocese in full accordance with the spirit and teachings of the constitutions, decrees, and declarations of the Second Vatican Council. The eleven commissions, with a vicar at the head of each, provided some restructuring of the diocese. The archdiocesan Bureau of Information continued in operation until 1971 when the local church called for a new Archdiocesan Communications Office with a full-time director and staff. The appointment of a layman, Daniel J. Kane, as vicar for communications represented a departure from tradition. The document on laity
stressed the role of the parish, deanery, regional, and pastoral councils as structures in which the laity could best exercise leadership in the local church. Lay men and women were to share in community decision-making. They were to be not just advisors, but parties “at interest, sharing in both decision and responsibility.” In January 1972, in compliance with the guidelines of the sixth synod, the chancery issued in the Catholic Telegraph the first public annual financial report of the archdiocese.¹

The synod’s document on religious also called on the archdiocese “to involve religious in the decision-making processes of the diocese.” They were “not merely hired servants,” the document read, “but collaborators in the vineyard of the Lord.” In May 1974 the new thirty-six-member Archdiocesan Council of Religious was launched. Comprised of nine priests, four brothers, and twenty-three sisters, the Council advised the archbishop and the Commission of the Religious on the needs and priorities of the apostolic ministries. That same month the newly formed SAC dissolved itself in order to participate in the broader concept of the Council of Religious. In the 1980s the archbishop and approximately one thousand men and women religious met twice at one of four locations over a month’s time to discuss the future state of religious life. One of the biggest challenges facing all the religious orders in the post-Vatican church was taking care of their aged members. In 1975 the archdiocese pledged $3 million to help pay retirement costs of nineteen religious communities of women whose members had worked in schools or institutions of the archdiocese. In the 1980s Archbishop Pilarczyk along with other U.S. bishops launched ten annual appeals to help religious orders meet their retirement debts.¹

In 1971 Byzantine Rite Archbishop Nicholas T. Elko was named the seventh auxiliary bishop of Cincinnati, the first Eastern rite bishop to serve as an auxiliary bishop in a Roman rite diocese. Six months later Elko took up residence in Dayton to coordinate the work of Dayton area diocesan offices, including a new Dayton branch of the archdiocesan chancery. The move was part of a plan, in response to the recommendation of the synod of 1971, to provide for the special interests of the local church in the northern part of the province. The Dayton area already had independent offices of Catholic Charities, Catholic youth, the Catholic Telegraph, social action, and Catholic education. In 1972 there were thirty-five Catholic parishes in Montgomery County, a Catholic university, two Catholic hospitals, two homes for the aged, two retreat centers, an orphanage, five high schools, a home for women, and a motherhouse for women religious. To the east, west, and north of Dayton in an eleven-county area, there were seventy more parishes together with hospitals, high schools, and other institutions. Leibold was hopeful that with all these offices in Dayton the voice of the church would
“be heard much more clearly” in the area. But this experiment did not prove to be totally successful. Having an archbishop stationed in Dayton and serving as vicar general created another level of bureaucracy between the clergy, religious, and laity in the Dayton area and the chancery in Cincinnati. In April 1985 Pope John Paul II accepted Archbishop Elko’s resignation.5

After serving almost three years as head of the Cincinnati archdiocese, Paul Leibold, at the age of fifty-seven years, suffered a stroke and died on June 1, 1972. Though his tenure was too short to engender a significant growth in the local church, he was instrumental in revitalizing the Priests’ Senate, the APC, and the parish councils and in launching the sixth synod. He was succeeded on November 21 by Joseph Bernardin, general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB). Bernardin was born in Columbus, South Carolina, on April 2, 1928, to Italian immigrant parents. Following studies at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, he was ordained in 1952 to the priesthood for the diocese of Charleston and later served as parish priest and chancellor. In 1966 he was named auxiliary bishop
of Atlanta, vicar general, and rector of the cathedral. Two years later he became general secretary of the NCCB. At the age of forty-four the new Cincinnati ordinary was the youngest archbishop in the United States. More polished and cosmopolitan than Leibold, Bernardin served from 1974 to 1977 as NCCB president. In 1974, 1977, and 1980 his fellow bishops appointed him one of four American delegates to the World Synod of Bishops in Rome. On July 10, 1982, Bernardin was appointed archbishop of Chicago. About seven months later he was named to the College of Cardinals.5

At the beginning of Bernardin’s second year as archbishop of Cincinnati, the process of electing deans, who visited all the churches and schools of his deanery, took place for the first time. The election helped get the people more fully involved in the life of the local church. First to be elected by representatives of all the people in his deanery was Father Bernard H. Bruening, pastor of St. Francis de Sales Church in Cincinnati. In the spring of 1974 the Pastoral Council helped establish an archdiocesan secretariat to help keep the lines of communication open both to and from the deaneries and to provide services to the restructured deanery councils. By the early 1990s the archdiocese established St. Andrew deanery, its eleventh deanery. The St. Francis de Sales and St. Martin deaneries had gotten too large geographically and represented a wide diversity of socioeconomic elements. The two deaneries were rearranged to make them smaller, more coherent, and efficient.6

During his tenure Bernardin also helped revitalize and reorganize the archdiocese. A year after he established a planning and research office, Bernardin in 1975 introduced a new archdiocesan-wide program to promote increased financial support for parish operations. Rather than substantially increase the assessments of the parishes to meet the growing needs of the local church, the archdiocese decided to raise more money by sponsoring an annual drive. At the time Cincinnati was one of the few dioceses in the country that did not have a development fund campaign. One of the goals of the Archbishop’s Fund drive, conducted for the first time in the spring of 1976, was to provide adequate funds for retired priests and religious of the archdiocese. In the fall of that year the Clergy Relief Union of the Cincinnati archdiocese, after fifty-six years of service, was dissolved. Most of the funds paid out by the union had been for sick benefits, as few priests had retired. The phasing out of the union began in 1972 when U.S. Internal Revenue Service rulings prevented it from continuing as a retirement and sick-benefit agency for the clergy. In 1978 Bernardin also approved budget cuts of more than $250,000 for offices and agencies of the archdiocese to offset deficits caused by inflation and increasing demands for services. Six new departments of Community, Educational, Executive, Financial, Pastoral, and Personnel services were established, each department headed by a director reporting to the archbishop.8
Following Bernardin’s appointment to Chicago in July 1982, the forty-eight-year-old Daniel E. Pilarczyk, who had served as administrator of the archdiocese since August, was named archbishop of Cincinnati on November 2, 1982. He was the ninth individual and third native son to serve as leader of the local church. Born in Dayton on August 12, 1934, he attended Our Lady of Mercy and St. Anthony elementary schools and Sacred Heart Latin School in Dayton and then enrolled in St. Gregory Seminary high school. After graduating from the high school Pilarczyk stayed at St. Gregory’s for two years of college, until he matriculated in the Roman College of the Propagation of the Faith in 1953. He was ordained in Rome in 1959 and later earned a doctorate degree in sacred theology. Upon his return to Cincinnati in 1961 he was named assistant chancellor and served as an assistant pastor of St. Louis Church. In 1963 Alter appointed him to the St. Gregory Seminary faculty to teach Latin and Greek. Five years later he became rector, the youngest in the history of the seminary. One of his major interests is classical languages and civilization, and he received a master’s degree in classics from Xavier University in 1965 and a doctorate in the same field from the University of Cincinnati in 1969. In 1974 he left his seminary post to become the vicar for education. In December of that year he was named the archdiocese’s second auxiliary bishop.

Pilarczyk is known for his dry wit, drive, intelligence, and cautious temperament. Devoted to education, evangelization, and priestly vocations, he is a prolific writer and preacher. He has published books on the church’s social teachings, sacramental life, and scripture. Though in the summer of 1988 the fifty-three-year-old archbishop suffered a ruptured aneurysm while on vacation in Tennessee, he successfully underwent brain surgery. The following year his episcopal colleagues elected the fully recovered ordinary president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Catholic Conference. In the spring of 1991 Pilarczyk was also elected to head the Episcopal Board of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

RELIGIOUS GROWTH

On January 15, 1970, Catholics in the Cincinnati archdiocese could begin fulfilling their Sunday and holy day obligation by attending Mass the preceding evening. Though most of the pastors cited convenience of the parishioners as the main reason in the request for permission, a few cited the fact that a number of workers on Sundays could more readily attend a Saturday Mass. The pope had granted permission to make the privilege available to parish churches. Within a week seventy-six parishes, close to a third of the parishes in the archdiocese, exercised the new option. No parish was to have more than one
Saturday liturgy for the Sunday obligation. Moreover, some people thought an evening Mass would help bring back many of the young people who had been "gradually slipping away" from the Sunday Mass attendance. In the spring of 1981 the archdiocese also issued new guidelines for parish Mass schedules. In hopes of consolidating liturgies, pastors were advised to examine any Mass that utilized less than 50 percent of a church's seating capacity. By the end of the decade Pilarczyk granted permission to those in the archdiocese who longed for an older style of liturgical observance for regular celebrations of the Tridentine Mass, the eucharistic liturgy celebrated in Latin.\footnote{11}

Statistics taken from a head count of persons attending weekend Masses in October of each year showed that from the late 1960s through the 1980s Mass attendance continually declined in the archdiocese. Before Vatican II many people felt they were committing a "grave sin" if they missed Mass, whereas by the 1980s that belief was less prevalent, reflecting a change in attitude among the laity toward serious sin. The fear of hell was largely gone. Many Catholics no longer spoke the theological language of their parents and grandparents. Other reasons for missing Mass varied from being dissatisfied with liturgy and the quality of preaching to the "erroneous" assumption, Pilarczyk noted, that "if you don't get anything out of Mass, it's okay not to go." In the summer of 1980 three priests of St. William Church at Price Hill in Cincinnati celebrated liturgies outdoors in twenty-two parish neighborhoods in an effort to help rekindle their religious faith as well as their family solidarity. Notwithstanding the decline in Mass attendance, Catholics were still more regular in their attendance at church than the members of other denominations. Also, most practicing Catholics received communion on a regular basis.\footnote{12}

Specialized programs for growth in holiness also arose in the archdiocese. In the 1970s some parishes began sponsoring parent sacramental preparation classes to help adults teach their children as they prepared them for the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Penance. Courses were also available to prepare new parents for baptism given to their infants. Among other programs were the continuation of the Cursillo, parish renewal programs, prayer groups, spiritual groups, and various types of retreats. The archdiocese built upon the Marriage Encounter program, a worldwide movement that aimed at the spiritual renewal of married couples, and helped strengthen programs of marriage preparation and marriage support. Through the archdiocesan Marriage Tribunal it also helped facilitate the annulment process, the formal declaration that a marriage was null and void from the beginning. In 1979 Sister Marilyn Gohs became the first woman to serve on the Tribunal. Four years later the archdiocese appointed the first lay woman to serve as a canon lawyer on it. In January 1976 the Pastoral Council
established a Task Force on Evangelization. The following month at the annual Mass for the area’s fifty-seven prayer groups Bernardin extended an invitation to members of Greater Cincinnati charismatic groups to join him “as active partners in the Church’s evangelizing mission.” He also made a special plea to priests and religious “to be involved in the activities of the charismatics.” By the late 1980s the archdiocese launched an evangelization program, with a full-time evangelization coordinator, designed to bring people back to weekly liturgies.13

By this time it appeared that the decline in Mass attendance had bottomed out. Since 1960 there had been a decrease of almost 100,000 people attending Mass in the archdiocese. By 1989 the decline in Mass attendance in the local church was a mere 0.2 percent from 1988. In light of the 1.3 percent decrease in attendance from 1987 to 1988 and the 2.8 percent the year before that, the negligible decline in 1989 appeared indicative of a break in the more than twenty-year trend. Whereas nationally in 1991 not quite 27 percent of Catholics attended Mass, figures showed that about 44 percent of Catholics in the archdiocese were going to church. Though the numbers were disappointing, the archdiocese did better than most large dioceses in the country where attendance was around 30 percent. Along with Milwaukee, Cincinnati appeared to be the top ranking big-city diocese in Mass attendance. In the 1990s a number of parishes in the archdiocese began a “Come Home” project for inactive Catholics. The plan stemmed from a national plan for Catholic evangelization developed by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.14

Following Vatican II lay participation at Mass also increased. In February 1970 the pope authorized Leibold to give laymen the privilege of distributing communion at Mass. On March 22 in St. Peter in Chains Cathedral, more than 150 men and women from fifty parishes were commissioned to serve as eucharistic ministers, lay people with the privilege of distributing communion. The option of receiving communion under both species—bread and wine—was introduced in parishes within the archdiocese on the first Sunday of Lent, March 4, 1979. Until that time Catholics had been receiving communion under both species only on special occasions.15

In the fall of 1974 fifty men enrolled in the archdiocesan permanent deacon program, with Father John L. Rea as director. Candidates ranged in age from thirty to over sixty-five. Within five years, fifty-seven men were ordained deacons. Besides assisting at the Eucharist and reading the Gospel, permanent deacons preached, baptized, blessed and assisted at weddings, administered last rites, officiated at funeral and burial services, and presided at prayer services. In 1989 the archdiocesan diaconate program was revamped. It now required candidates to complete a two-year certificate or
master's degree program in lay pastoral ministry at the Athenaeum of Ohio, in addition to a two-year diaconate formation program. By this time there were more than one hundred deacons who served in the archdiocese. The diaconate reflected a change in the use of the word "ministry."\textsuperscript{16}

In the fall of 1975 the archdiocese also launched the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program (LPMP). Under the direction of Ellen Frankenberg, an Ursuline Sister, the program was designed to train lay pastoral ministers for service in the local church. Its program of studies, which could be completed in two to three years, was an outgrowth of a pilot lay ministry program begun through the interest of Father Robert J. Hater, director of religious education. In the fall of 1978 the archdiocese commissioned six women as its first official lay ministers. Sensing that lay ministry was "the way of the future," Hater called the occasion "a milestone" in the archdiocese. The six women, already engaged in a variety of ministries in the community, were representative of lay ministers to serve in the future. The following year seven additional lay women and one layman were commissioned. Bernardin, who regarded the LPMP as "one of the most exciting and creative programs in the archdiocese," praised the lay ministers as "partners . . . in proclaiming Jesus and His message to the world."\textsuperscript{17}

In October 1978 the Pastoral Council supported the recommendation of the Task Force on the Future of Lay Organization that the Archdiocesan Council of the Laity, at one time considered a national model of lay activity, be discontinued. By eliminating separate lay organizational structures, the Task Force and the APC called "for increased commitment to making parish, regional and pastoral councils more effective instruments of collaborative effort within the Church." Though some people expressed reservations over the discontinuance of the ACL, by a vote of seventeen to five the APC approved it. One explanation for the decline of the ACL was the creation since the 1971 synod of new channels for lay participation in the life of the local church.\textsuperscript{18}

In the wake of Vatican II, lay Catholics have differed only marginally from American society at large. The encyclical \textit{Humanae Vitae} (1968), which prohibited artificial contraception, did little to change the minds of most Catholic women. Though conservative bishops at the NCCB espoused the hard line on premarital sex, abortion, homosexuality, and divorce, there were growing differences between official church teachings and the beliefs and practices of ordinary Catholics. In the 1970s the archdiocese helped the Couple to Couple League (CCL), founded in 1971 by John and Sheila Kippley, get organized on a full-time basis. The purpose of the CCL was to provide adequate instruction in natural family planning. Couples were trained to teach other couples the practice of spacing pregnancies according to the
informed awareness of a woman’s fertility. In 1978 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops endorsed CCL. Four years later the archdiocesan Family Life Office initiated a five-year plan to promote and implement natural family planning programs throughout the archdiocese. By the 1990s it was estimated that approximately 90 percent of the American Catholic laity rejected the church’s teaching on birth control. Evidence suggested that Catholics practiced birth control pretty much like the Protestants did.19

A few weeks after the Supreme Court legalized abortion on January 22, 1973, the archdiocese called for an all-out, positive campaign to counteract its effects. On May 6, 1973, approximately seven thousand people jammed Cincinnati’s Fountain Square for a pro-life rally sponsored by Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky Right-to-Life groups. Young and old, babies in strollers, students, parents with grade-schoolers, grandparents, priests, and women religious participated in the rally. Two years later Archbishop Bernardin and thousands of people, carrying signs and balloons, again thronged Fountain Square for the Rally for Life. Bernardin described the pro-life rallies as an effort to give “public witness to community opposition to abortion” and to demonstrate concern for “the sanctity of all human life.” In the spring of 1976 Bernardin, as president of NCCB, also testified before the House subcommittee considering constitutional amendments to restrict abortion. “[I]t is not religious doctrine we wish to see enacted into law,” he said, “it is respect for human dignity and human rights—specifically, the right to life itself.” Though concerned for the poor and the underprivileged, he did not see abortion as the solution to their plight. “If we wish to eradicate poverty,” he said, “let us destroy the causes of poverty—not destroy the life of the poor and defenseless unborn child.”20

Both Bernardin and Pilarczyk also maintained that the church had a proper responsibility in public affairs. In the wake of Vatican II and the social unrest of the sixties the general topic of religion’s role in the political process replaced the old debates over religious liberty and separation of church and state. The two local ordinaries argued that Catholics should address such issues as abortion, wars, and equity in the economy. In May 1976 Bernardin distributed guidelines, drawn up by the executive committee of the APC, to parishes. Not wanting to form a religious voting bloc nor direct persons on how they should vote, the guidelines urged parishioners to participate in the political process and to examine the positions of the candidates on the full range of issues. The guidelines also emphasized that the church had not only a right but also an obligation to speak to the moral dimension of political issues.21

When Ohio Attorney General Anthony Celebrezze, a Catholic candidate for governor in 1990, backed pro-abortion supporters, Pilarczyk, the new
president of the NCCB, joined the other Ohio bishops in issuing a statement criticizing Celebrezze. The statement questioned the integrity and sincerity of individuals who claimed to accept Catholic Church teaching but refused to endorse the church’s position against abortion. Pilarczyk denied the allegation that he and his episcopal colleagues were trying to tell politicians what to do. “What we’re saying,” he said, “is that there are Catholic teachings that have social consequences. If you say you accept the teaching then it seems to us you have to accept the social consequences as well.”

During the past twenty years pro-life vigils and Operation Rescues affirmed the strength of the antiabortion stand in the archdiocese. By the mid-1980s Birtzright had helped more than ten thousand women confronted with unwanted pregnancies. At a rally at the Montgomery County Courthouse Square in January 1987, Pilarczyk warned the crowd that society was on a “slippery slope” of disregard for human dignity. That year the archbishop also joined the other Ohio bishops in condemning capital punishment. No “human life, no matter how wretched or how miserable, no matter how sinful or how lacking in love,” Pilarczyk said, “is without value.” In vain, the Ohio bishops asked the governor to use his authority to commute death sentences. Three years later Pilarczyk accompanied area pro-life advocates to the April Rally for Life ’90 in Washington, D.C. Though archdiocesan officials endorsed pro-life processions and rallies, they disapproved of any illegal activities. When arsonists in 1985 set fire to two Cincinnati abortion clinics, Pilarczyk and his staff condemned the use of violence. They also disapproved of the tactics of Operation Rescue when they blocked entrances of local abortion clinics in order to prevent patients from going inside.

As Catholics embraced America’s central values of individualism, materialism, and pluralism, they became more actively involved in the mainstream of society. They appropriated values of the American culture and “Catholicized” them in the process. On most political issues that divided American liberals and conservatives, namely welfare, aid to the homeless, gun control, and equal rights for women, minorities, and homosexuals, rank-and-file Catholics were more liberal than Protestants. In comparison to non-Catholics more recent data also showed that Catholics had slightly fewer children, divorced at slightly lower rates, and were less likely to remarry after divorce. Until the middle of the twentieth century, Catholics in the archdiocese had been predominantly a low-status, working-class population. Though by 1900 Irish and German Catholics had begun to move into higher-status occupations, the depression slowed down upward mobility. The prosperity of the post–World War II period helped Catholics move up in their socioeconomic status.

As Catholics became more a part of mainstream America, there was also a more positive attitude between Catholics and Protestants. In March 1970
the Ohio Catholic dioceses of Cincinnati, Columbus, Toledo, and Youngstown joined the Ohio Council of Churches, which up to then had included only Protestant groups. Two months later Leibold and Monsignor Robert J. Sherry, chairman of the Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission, headed a delegation of priests, religious, and lay people from the archdiocese at the Ohio Festival of Ecumenical Witness in Columbus. In the 1970s the local church also participated in the Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati (MARCC) and in the Dayton Metropolitan Churches United. During his administration Bernardin spoke at several interfaith services in the Cincinnati area. He often emphasized the need to make “the scandal of separation, mistrust and conflict” among denominational churches yield to “mutual love, trust and cooperation.” On January 21, 1973, Bernardin joined Dr. Billy Graham, Protestant evangelist, and Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin from Los Angeles in an ecumenical prayer service at the White House as part of President Nixon's inaugural program. In the spring of 1975 the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council endorsed and promoted pulpit exchange activities. Parishioners witnessed the exchange of pulpits for the reading of scripture or preaching of a homily between a Roman Catholic minister and a minister of another Christian tradition or of the Jewish faith during the liturgical service of the respective churches. In 1980 Catholics and Lutherans joined hands in the spirit of reconciliation and unity at the Lutheran-Roman Catholic convocation at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral. Eight years later the archdiocese participated in the city’s two hundredth birthday with an ecumenical service at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral. These interfaith events led to greater appreciation for each church’s distinctive forms of worship. This attitude "brought an end," as one contemporary historian aptly put it, “to the long cold war of hostility and suspicion.”

In the post-Vatican II period archdiocesan authorities also affirmed the church’s position on homosexuality. Arguing that a homosexual orientation was usually not the fault of the individual, Bernardin thought that such an orientation in itself was not sinful. But homosexual acts “are in themselves seriously wrong,” he wrote, “for they are not in accord with the purposes of human sexuality, and are consequently contrary to the will of God.” Though critical of homosexual acts, Bernardin urged Catholics to show compassion for the homosexual, just as the church attempted to show pastoral concern for everyone else. In the summer of 1987 Pilarczyk informed Cincinnati’s Dignity chapter, one of two chapters of homosexual Catholics in the archdiocese, that it could no longer meet on Catholic church property if it opposed church teaching on homosexuality. Pilarczyk’s action was in keeping with the 1986 Vatican statement that called homosexuality “a disordered sexual inclination.” Rome urged bishops not to support organizations that
did not clearly support church teaching on the matter. When the Cincinnati City Council considered passing gay rights legislation in 1992, however, Pilarczyk made it clear that the archdiocese strongly affirmed "the rights of and dignity of every human person and the obligation of everyone to respect and protect these rights." Like most of his episcopal colleagues, Pilarczyk distinguished between homosexual orientations and homosexual activities.26

Since the 1960s hundreds of priests nationally were identified as child sexual abusers. In the spring of 1991 Father George Cooley, a priest of the archdiocese, pleaded guilty to charges of sexually abusing two children while serving as associate pastor of Guardian Angels parish. He was sentenced to ninety days in jail, fined $4,000, and ordered to perform four hundred hours of community service. That summer Pilarczyk went to the parishioners of Guardian Angels to apologize and pray with them. "I am sorry and ashamed that this has happened in our local church," he said. In the fall of 1992 the archdiocese came out with a forty-five-page "Decree On Child Abuse," laying out its policies and procedures to prevent and react to all forms of child abuse committed by clergy and lay employees or volunteers of the local church. The church's pedophilia scandal came to a head in November 1993 when a former seminarian accused Chicago's Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, and Cincinnati's former archbishop, of sexually abusing him decades before at St. Gregory Seminary. The following March the plaintiff admitted he had been confused and mistaken about Bernardin's involvement and dropped the lawsuit against him. Cleared of the charge, Bernardin then forgave and befriended his accuser publicly. This act of forgiveness received much national attention. Nevertheless, because of the pedophilia scandals the image of the clergy had suffered as a consequence of the shameful acts of a few. Catholics may be well advised to remember Archbishop Elder's admonition to his flock a century earlier to worry less "at the bad examples of some few unworthy priests" and be grateful "at the sight of the great army of faithful and hard-working priests."27

PARISHES

Shortly after his installation Archbishop Pilarczyk gave top priority to local parishes. In February 1983 he embarked on the first leg of what he called his "little project," a four-year journey in which he visited more than 250 parishes in the archdiocese. The parish visitation program, which began at St. Aloysius parish in Bridgetown, west of Cincinnati, and concluded in December 1986 at St. Matthias's in Forest Park, northwest of the city, was an opportunity for the archbishop to learn about the parish and what went on in the parishioners' "faith life." In the process parishioners shared with him
their thoughts, hopes, and dreams for their parishes. In his visits Pilarczyk met with the pastors and their staffs, school personnel, religious educators, students, and parish councils. Upon completion of the parish visitation program in 1987, the archbishop for the next four years visited the schools and institutions not included in his earlier rounds of travel. He had private pastoral meetings with each archdiocesan priest either at his office in Cincinnati or at the rectories of Immaculate Conception parish in Dayton or Holy Angels parish in Sidney. Reminiscent of the pioneer visitation tours of Cincinnati’s first two ordinaries, Edward Dominic Fenwick and John Baptist Purcell, Pilarczyk by 1990 had traveled approximately 100,000 miles in his car to meet face-to-face with his people.28

The one pervasive element among the parishes of the post–Vatican II archdiocese was diversity in size and scope. The size of the parishes varied from Sunday Mass attendance of several thousand to fewer than one hundred. Whereas many of the parishes had just one priest as well as a limited range of services, some were staffed by a sizable group of professional ministers and
had extensive and highly organized social and recreational programs. The
diverse and myriad parish activities clearly revealed that much of the life of
the local church was not focused in the central office in downtown Cincin-
nati, but rather in the parishes. "The parish is," Pilarczyk wrote in 1983, "the
main delivery system of the Church's product." It was where the Christian
community expressed itself most clearly, where the people worshipped
together and received the sacraments.20

Parish councils, which had become the parishes' central administrative
unit, helped make collegiality real in the parishes. Pilarczyk noted in his
account of his visits that "practically everywhere there was a sense of owner-
ship, a sense of real participation in the direction of the parish." Some parishes-
ioners felt, as one woman put it, that they were "not just in the audience any
more." Bottom up approaches with much lay participation began relaxing
the centralized administrative style of the early 1960s. There were more
informal discussions among clergy and laity, more participation in jointly
planned ecumenical services, and greater collaboration in community serv-
ice. As lay ministries increased, lay persons played important roles in nearly
all areas of church life. Worship, evangelization, protection of the unborn,
care for the elderly, and help for the faithful in time of illness, job loss, and
marital difficulty, among others, received added attention by voluntary
parish groups. Parish renewal programs, like RENEW, also helped develop
the spiritual life of Catholics at the local level.20

At the same time that the local church placed a great deal of emphasis on
parish activities, Pilarczyk reminded the faithful in the 1990s that the basic
unit of Catholicity was not the parish but the local church as a whole. "In the
past," he wrote, "we looked on parishes as a planetary system, each parish in
its own orbit with hardly any contact with the neighboring planets. Now we
are beginning to see that if we maintain that approach much longer, we are
going to be in big trouble because the individual, distinct planets simply do
not have enough resources to survive on their own." Most parishes lacked the
necessary financial and academic means to produce books and programs for
liturgy or catechetics as well as provide for the training of religion teachers
and other lay ministers that they needed in the post–Vatican II church. The
diocese could more readily accommodate the fullness of church life.
Through the local bishop, priests and deacons were ordained, and the dio-
cese officially certified church teaching. From the earliest days of the local
church there had been a kind of ongoing tension between parishes and the
diocese. "This tension," Pilarczyk argued, "manifests itself in the natural ten-
dency of Catholics to look out for the needs of their parish first and to think
of the needs of the diocese second." But "the bishop," he insisted, "must look
first to the well-being of the whole local church even if this means that he
must make demands on the parishes which are not always appreciated by everybody in the parish.”

A year after Pilarczyk began his parish visitation program he established the “For the Harvest” Task Force to help prepare for the shortage of priests in the future. Seeing no signs of an imminent reversal in the decline of priests, the archdiocese saw the need for more trained and professional lay ministers and for more collaboration among parishes to manage in the absence of a pastor. The “For the Harvest” program, its title taken from scripture, was a massive effort to involve members of individual parishes throughout the archdiocese. Father Robert Schmitz, archdiocesan director of research and planning, coordinated the project. Lay leaders reviewed staffing and liturgical scheduling, speculated on the resources and church personnel that would be available in 2000, and established committees for interparish cooperation. By the spring of 1986 approximately 86 percent of all parishes in the archdiocese had “harvested” information about the future of Catholic ministries at the parish level. Each deanery eventually issued a report as part of the process. At the same time that it attempted to deal with the problem of the shortage of priests, “For the Harvest” also looked at ministry as a whole in parishes. It eventually called for small parishes to share pastors.

Though there was in the 1980s an encouraging, but slight, increase in the number of ordinations and seminarians, the annual decline in the number of priests in the archdiocese nevertheless continued. In June 1980 the four-year college seminary of the archdiocese closed. St. Gregory’s in Mount Washington was one of 241 seminaries nationally that closed their doors between 1964 and 1984. During that time the number of seminarians in the country preparing for the priesthood dropped from 47,500 to about 20,000. Declining enrollments and rising costs were the primary factors that contributed to the closing of St. Gregory’s. In its heyday total enrollment was approximately six times what it was in 1980. In 1978 there were sixty-five students as compared with 175 in 1970 and 370 before Vatican II.

In September 1981 the Athenaeum of Ohio, made up of Mount St. Mary’s of the West Seminary and the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program, moved from Norwood to Beechmont Avenue in Mount Washington and occupied the former site of St. Gregory Seminary. In addition to preparing candidates for the priesthood, it became necessary to use the seminary facilities and resources to prepare others for the diverse ministries in the archdiocese. The new thecolate provided the basic academic program for the formation of the permanent deacons. In the spring of 1980 St. Francis Seminary, operated by the Franciscans since 1858 for high school boys preparing to join the order, also closed. When the seminary observed its centennial in 1958 there were 144 boys enrolled; in 1980 there were 69. The following year St.
Leonard College in Dayton, which had served the Franciscan friars as their school of theology for priesthood candidates since 1958, also closed.4

By 1990 the number of full-time priests in the archdiocese had dropped to 287, down from 339 in 1985 and 435 in 1968. In its 1991 report on “Plunge to Scarcity” the archdiocesan office of planning and research projected a decrease in archdiocesan priests of nearly 50 percent by 2005. As in the formative years of the diocese, when there was scarcely one priest for every two thousand Catholics in Cincinnati in 1843, there was a pressing need for priests. The new archdiocesan report expected to see the average number of Catholics served by each archdiocesan priest to double. The average number of Catholics per priest was projected to increase from 1,650 in 1990 to 3,310 in 2005. Whereas at midcentury there had been one priest for every eight hundred Catholics, in some parishes in the 1990s the ratio was as high as three to four thousand people to a priest and in a few the ratio was as low as two to three hundred people per priest. The 1991 report also predicted that by the end of 2005 there would be 145 active diocesan priests, down forty-eight percent from the 279 serving at the end of 1990. “Of course there is a priest shortage if we look on the ‘50s and ‘60s as the norm,” Pilarczyk wrote. “But if we look on those years . . . as an atypical abundance of ordained ministers, then we are simply reverting to a more normal proportion of priests to lay people. . . . God’s grace,” he continued, “never left us. I’m not sure what we’ve been experiencing is a decline, but rather a going back to the proportions we once had in this country.”8

In 1980 the Official Catholic Directory listed 398 active priests, 1,890 religious sisters, 272 religious brothers, 256 parishes, and 149 schools to serve 505,666 Catholics in the archdiocese. When the archdiocese celebrated its 175th anniversary in 1996, there were 242 active priests, 1,471 sisters, 179 brothers, 237 parishes, and 140 schools to serve the 545,300 Catholics. The archdiocese was now one of six dioceses in Ohio, in contrast to when it originally encompassed the entire state. Moreover, the Catholic population in the archdiocese in 1996 was two and a half times greater than what it had been in the whole United States at the time of Bishop Edward Fenwick’s installation in 1821. Vocations, which had continued to decline in the 1980s, did not keep pace with the numbers who retired, died, or resigned from the active ministry. In the post–Vatican II period more than eighty men in the Cincinnati archdiocese left the priesthood. For the first time in its history the local church, like the national church, suffered a substantial loss of religious membership. The need for vocations to the priesthood and religious orders remained acute.9

As the active religious ministry declined, church-closings, mergers, and the scaled down use of some church buildings in the archdiocese became more
frequent. The number of consolidations since Alter’s administration included five closings in the 1950s, ten in the 1960s, ten in the 1970s, and six along with more than a dozen mergers in the 1980s through the mid-1990s. Among the many reasons for the consolidations were a shortage of clergy, a parish’s inability—because of insufficient resources—to minister adequately, and population shifts. In late August 1969 St. John the Baptist Church, a landmark of Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine area since 1845, closed its doors. The closing coincided almost to the day with the anniversary of the founding of the parish 125 years earlier. For many years St. John’s was the largest parish in the archdiocese, but the movement of people to the suburbs since the end of the Second World War had left it with only small numbers of regular parishioners. These parishioners became part of St. Francis Seraph parish, one block south of St. John’s. The following year Sacred Italian parish on Broadway in downtown Cincinnati merged with Sacred Heart parish in Camp Washington. In 1968 the Broadway parish had celebrated the 75th anniversary of the building of the church. Having but a few remaining parishioners within its boundaries, the parish served as the spiritual and social center of Catholics of Italian origin in the archdiocese. By the 1990s two national parishes remained in the archdiocese: St. Adalbert’s for the Polish congregation and Holy Cross parish for the Lithuanian congregation, both in Dayton. Community of Christian Service (1970) in Dayton and Community of Hope (1971) in Cincinnati, nonterritorial parishes founded by hundreds of people generally frustrated with the style of worship then available, also closed in 1977 and 1989, respectively.

In some instances the archdiocese took over churches previously run by religious orders. Because of the small number of Camboni missionaries in 1992 St. Michael Church in lower Price Hill in Cincinnati was once again turned over to the archdiocese. It shared a pastor with Holy Family parish. Once a thriving parish of German immigrants in the nineteenth century, St. Michael’s had become a small and poor inner-city parish in an urban Appalachian neighborhood. From the merger of Cincinnati’s St. Monica and St. George parishes the St. Monica–St. George Parish Newman Center in Clifton Heights was established in 1993. The following year St. Elizabeth, St. Matthew, and Sts. Peter and Paul parishes in Norwood merged into Holy Trinity parish. Two years before the formation of Holy Trinity, the archdiocese’s newest parish in its 175-year-history, St. Mary’s of 13th and Clay Streets in Cincinnati, the oldest Catholic church building in the archdiocese, observed its 150th anniversary. In June 1996 the 125-year-long Passionist presence in Mount Adams ended when the congregation returned pastoral care of the Holy Cross-Immaculata parish to the archdiocese.

The closings and mergers were not, Pilarczyk wrote, “without pain and frustration.” At times it met considerable resistance. In November 1987 St.
Joseph parish in the Hamilton Deanery rejected plans to merge with the three larger Hamilton parishes, St. Veronica's, St. Stephen's, and St. Mary's. In the fall of 1986 665 Catholics were registered in St. Joseph parish. The others had between 1,200 and 1,600 parishioners each. Archdiocesan guidelines stipulated that parishes had to remain financially solvent and ministerially complete, and they had to have seven hundred registered Catholics or a weekend Mass attendance of 350 in order to retain a full-time pastor. The chancery was prepared to go ahead with the merger without St. Joseph's, whose parish council had begun making plans to be a priestless parish. The parish was to be served by a noncleric pastoral administrator, who would perform all the duties currently done by a priest except for the sacraments. Money was not an issue in the merger, as all four parishes were financially stable; the concern was of maintaining a quality ministry. "We can't deny realities," Pilarczyk said, "and the realities are that in 1965 we had over four hundred active priests in our archdiocese."

A year later a bitter dispute broke out between the three Hamilton parishes—St. Mary's, St. Stephen's, and St. Veronica's—and the chancery. More than 1,400 petitioners asked authorities in Rome to stop the merger of the three parishes and the planned renovation of the 135-year-old St. Stephen Church. They rallied in a futile effort. The three parishes were directed by the chancery to combine under the name of St. Julie Billiart and use the larger St. Stephen Church. "Consolidations," the archbishop argued, "are a way of strengthening our parishes. It's not a sign of disease or weakness." In February 1989 Vatican officials upheld Pilarczyk's decision to renovate St. Stephen Church as part of the merger of the three parishes.

In 1987 the archdiocese suggested that St. Bonaventure and San Antonio Di Padova parishes in South Fairmount merge because there were not enough priests to staff both Franciscan-run parishes. Located less than a mile from each other, the parishes could no longer support full-time pastors. After over a year's deliberations the two parish councils were still deadlocked on which church to close. Finally in 1989 San Antonio Church on Queen City Avenue became a chapel of St. Bonaventure Church. Though closings and mergers became more frequent, by 1996 the archdiocese had also seen over a twenty-five year period nine new parishes established.

In 1990 preparation for the archdiocesan Ministry 2000 program began. Developed by the office of planning and research in collaboration with the respective deaneries of the archdiocese, the program developed a plan to carry out the ministry of the local church in the year 2000 and beyond. Each deanery's task force considered the declining number of priests, parish finances, resources, the underutilization of church facilities, and various parish needs. By the year 1996 a lay pastoral administrator or associate assisted the pastor in
76 of the 237 parishes in the archdiocese. Close to a third of the parishes now shared pastors or had only part-time pastors. One-priest parishes were the norm and only a handful of the larger parishes had two priests. A growing concern among some Catholics was whether priestless parishes would become a fact of life in the local church.

Though the pre-Vatican II parish was a vital center of Catholic life, in the post-Vatican II period it became more and more removed from the immigrant experience and took on new functions. The Second Vatican Council had called for a revitalization of people’s commitment to God and to the church. “Before Vatican II,” Pilarczyk observed, “we had a church of rules and regulations. But Vatican II shook many people up concerning their whole commitment to the church; being a Catholic was a lot more demanding than we had thought before.” In his judgment, Vatican II had opened doors and “made the church alive. It changed ideas about the church, the world, revelation. It jarred us out of our complacency. And that’s all good.” The parish was no longer just a geographic gathering of people, where weddings, funerals, or baptisms were performed. Parishes were expected to provide a wide range of services, “and a tiny little parish,” Pilarczyk said, “can’t do that.” The archbishop saw the need for greater cooperation and clustering and the sharing of priests, ministries, and resources among parishes. “We have to accustom ourselves to new levels of collaboration,” he wrote, “simply because that seems to be the way in which the Lord wants the church to work.”

By the 1990s the so-called “people in the pew” performed a myriad of tasks in the parish. A new style of collegial governance emerged. The laity were deeply involved in practically all aspects of church life. In the wake of the shrinking numbers of priests and religious there developed more opportunities for collaboration in ministry and more lay people took on leadership roles in the local church. Even though there were fewer priests, people were “better ministered to,” Pilarczyk thought, “than they were” in the 1960s. The lack of vocations contributed to a greater use of lay men and women in schools and institutions. In his 1987 report on Vocations to the pope Pilarczyk had written that what Catholics “are experiencing is a broadening of the concept of church vocation and church ministry, a concept which formerly included only priests and Religious, but which now includes lay persons in an ever increasing number of capacities different from those in which they served previously.”

Lay persons served the church as business managers, pastoral ministers, youth ministers, liturgy planners, musicians, religious education directors, teachers, and school principals. The lay minister could be found behind the lectern reading the Scriptures, distributing communion at the altar, and in the rectory balancing the parish’s books. Lay persons, moreover, worked on
finance and school committees, mentored engaged couples, organized youth ministries, prepared liturgies, headed capital fund drives, staffed parish offices, provided pre-sacramental instructions, ran prayer groups, drove the elderly to medical appointments, and attended to the bereaved, converts, and the sick in their parishes. Moreover, they helped oversee religious education, ran parish music programs, organized CCD classes, became engaged in social justice activities, provided support to single parents and widowed persons, and coached parish sports teams. In a number of parishes the Legion of Mary members made welcome, new baby, and friendship calls, visited the sick at hospitals and rest homes, took the parish census, and promoted membership in the Apostleship of Prayer.\textsuperscript{35}

Overall, there appeared to be a deeper spirituality on the part of priests and laity through parish renewal and prayer. With the increasing collaboration in the local church's ministry, priests no longer had to attend personally to every single task in their parishes. They "are freer," Pilarczyk said, "to focus their energies on specifically priestly activities such as preaching, liturgical celebration and leadership of the Christian community." Notwithstanding this able lay assistance, data showed that priests generally still worked long hours and had stressful jobs. In some cases the increased number of parish meetings increased the workload of the parish priests. In the summer of 1982 the Senate of Priests approved a policy that provided sabbatical opportunities for eight priests each year. The recipient was given an extended period of time, not to exceed three months, to engage in an activity for his own renewal. Men who had been priests for more than seven years were eligible for sabbaticals.\textsuperscript{46}

To assist the priests in their ministry, the archdiocese during Pilarczyk's administration sponsored four priests' convocations. In June 1984 more than 350 active priests and a few retired priests met at a resort at French Lick, Indiana, for a four-day session. They convened again at the same site six years later. They met to reflect on the meaning of priesthood in the recent church and in their lives and to discuss their hopes and concerns for the future. It marked the first time the entire archdiocesan presbyterate convened in nearly 150 years. The first recorded meeting of all the priests of the diocese was when Purcell had convened a three-day meeting in 1837. For almost 100 years, 1870 to 1965, there was virtually no change in the priesthood. According to Pilarczyk as a "servant of the people" the post-Vatican II priest was now seen as living and acting more in the midst of the people, rather than the "cultic figure" of old. Shortly after the 1984 French Lick meeting Pilarczyk established an archdiocesan priests' task force. After more than two years of study and discussion, the task force recommended higher pay and greater liberty for the clergy. Priests' salaries at the time were the
lowest of the six dioceses in Ohio. By the 1990s there was also greater tolerance with regard to priestly dress, residence outside rectories, and to the kinds of work that the priests might do. They generally had more to say about their assignments. In 1992 the archdiocese sold a one-hundred-acre portion of Gate of Heaven Cemetery for $10,850,000. Proceeds went to the archdiocesan fund for infirm and retired priests. In October 1994 the priests of the archdiocese convened for the fourth time at Incarnation parish in Dayton to discuss their concerns for the future of their vocation.47

Before Vatican II the parish staff almost always consisted of the pastor, who held the job for most of his lifetime, his housekeeper, a groundskeeper, and perhaps a secretary. The workers were usually volunteers who were in their retirement years. In the post-Vatican II archdiocese of Cincinnati local pastor assignments were for six years, often renewable for one more term. Though by the summer of 1982 retirement from administrative duties at the age of seventy was no longer mandatory for priests of the archdiocese, any priest who wished to retire from administrative responsibilities at that age was permitted to do so. With the increasing shortage of clergy and religious, educated lay professionals ran the school, catechumate, CCD, and adult religious education. A manager with business expertise oversaw the finances of the parish. The secretary was generally computer literate. By the 1990s more than ninety percent of the individuals working in the central offices of the archdiocese were lay; about half a century earlier there were three lay employees.48

EDUCATION

The twentieth-century emphasis on organization and specialization helped strengthen the move toward the centralization of schools in the archdiocese. In accordance with the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council, in August 1970 Leibold created the new position of Vicar for Catholic Education and appointed Monsignor William J. Franer, who had been for twenty-three years an assistant superintendent of schools, to the post. About two years after Bernardin’s installation in 1972, Daniel Pilarczyk, rector of St. Gregory Seminary, became vicar for education. In February 1977 a new Archdiocesan Commission on Education was activated at a meeting in Holy Trinity school in Dayton, replacing the archdiocesan Board of Education. The reorganization, which helped implement the plan of the Post-Synodal Task Force on Education, provided the means for maximum participation and a broader sharing of responsibility in the educational mission of the local church. The archdiocesan commission now had fourteen voting members, including eight lay persons.49
By the 1960s Catholic education began facing serious problems. Mounting costs and population shifts posed new problems for parish schools. After more than a hundred years of sustained growth in the diocese, attendance at Catholic elementary schools began to decline. It was caused in part by the declining birthrate. Furthermore, the continued droughts in religious vocations and the fact that many religious were leaving education for other ministries intensified the problem. The schools faced rising payroll costs as lay teachers replaced sisters and other religious in the classroom. As a consequence, a number of parochial schools and institutions across the country were forced to close or merge. Though in the face of the new problems some people began to question the value of a parochial school education, church authorities remained committed to Catholic education. Throughout the history of the archdiocese Cincinnati ordinaries, clergy, religious, and laity have been ardent champions of Catholic schools, always emphasizing the right to establish schools that provided the religious instruction they deemed essential to the children’s formation.

Shortly after his installation, Pilarczyk renewed the archdiocese’s commitment to Catholic education. He took issue with the argument that Catholics should forget about Catholic schools and teach their children some other way. “[W]e have not found,” he wrote, “any more effective way in which to foster and strengthen the faith and Church commitment of young people than the Catholic school. To the extent that we can measure religious attitudes, we know that Catholic schools are effective educational instruments. They cannot be written off or disregarded because of the difficulties they entail.” Sister of Charity Kathryn Ann Connelly, director of educational services and the first woman to serve as superintendent of schools in the archdiocese, reminded the faithful in the 1990s that the “future of our church . . . and our communities is in the heads and hearts and hand of our young people.” Connelly was appointed superintendent in 1983. Though in the past few decades the schools were staffed for the most part by lay persons, they were “still Catholic schools,” Pilarczyk wrote, “. . . [a]nd they are still operating.” Local Catholics had come to accept and believe, as did Monsignor Carl Ryan in 1954 in anticipation of the need for more lay teachers, that the “chief mark of a Catholic school is not the religious garb of its teachers but the Christian spirit that permeates the entire program.”

The decline of clergy and religious, increased costs, lower birthrates, and geographical mobility contributed to the decline of Catholic primary and secondary schools. The enrollment dropped from 90,492 in 177 Catholic schools in 1969 to 51,408 in 136 schools in 1989, a decrease of 56 percent. What helped prevent steeper decline in enrollment in the elementary schools was the fact that many parish schools had restored grade one in their programs. Though
the first grade had been dropped in virtually all parish schools in 1964, in
1970 the archdiocesan Board of Education adopted a policy of allowing
parish schools to reestablish grade one if conditions warranted it and to
charge tuition if necessary. In the fall of that year forty schools enrolled
pupils in the first grade, four charging tuition. Two years later fifteen more
first grades were restored.51

Largely because of the academic success, religious curriculum, and disci-
pline in the parochial schools, by the late-1980s enrollment in Catholic ele-
mentary and secondary schools in the archdiocese began a modest and
gradual upward trend that continued through the mid-1990s. This was con-
sistent with the national trend. Total enrollment in the 136 Catholic schools
in the archdiocese in 1996 was 55,352 compared to 51,408 in 1989, an increase
of 0.77 percent. Cincinnati had the tenth largest system of Catholic schools in
the United States. As a result of consolidations and closings, the number of
Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the archdiocese dropped from
146 and 31 in 1969 to 114 and 22, respectively, in 1996. In the 1990s an esti-
ated 43.4 percent of Catholic children in grades one through twelve attend-
ed Catholic schools. Whereas approximately 70,000 students attended
Catholic schools in the early 1970s as compared to 55,000 in the 1990s, there
were now fewer children than there used to be. Using baptismal records, the
chancery estimated in 1990 that the Catholic schools served 43.7 percent of
Catholic students available in 1990 compared with approximately 40.5 per-
cent in the early 1970s. In the 1992–1993 school year, 45.4 percent of the
potential population of Catholic children were in Catholic schools with 31.2
percent in religious education programs. In contrast, in the 1974–1975 school
year, when these statistics first were recorded, 40.5 percent of the children
were in Catholic schools and 21.6 percent in religious education classes. In
spite of the overall decrease in Ohio’s school-aged population, Catholic
schools educated nearly 10 percent of the state’s children in 1989–1990, the
same percentage as in 1980.52

Throughout this period Catholic schools in the United States continued to
face financial problems. The cost of educating a child in the Catholic school
system rose. The Supreme Court ruling in 1977 that states could pay for cer-
tain textbooks and such auxiliary services as standardized testing, diagnostic
testing, and therapeutic and remedial services for nonpublic school students
was of some help. Elementary tuition statewide increased from an average of
$242 in 1980 to $667 in 1990, a hike of 175 percent. In the high schools, the
average increase was 120 percent, from $873 to $1,922. In 1992 the Arch-
diocesan Pastoral Council approved the concept of need-based tuition aid for
Catholic parish schools instead of the cost-based tuition or parish subsidies.
The goal was to reduce significantly the parish tuition aid. The increased
need for lay teachers and higher salaries had put a strain on parish finances. The archdiocesan school office often urged parishes to bring teachers' salaries up to within 15 percent of local public school lay teachers. More and more tuition aid based on need was awarded to families. To facilitate the need-based tuition policy, Pilarczyk had issued a decree in December 1991 allowing endowments for educational purposes to be established in parishes. Two months earlier the archdiocese had also initiated a mandatory Stewardship Sunday to help increase the amount of money Catholics donated to their parishes. The additional revenue would help pay for increasing costs in the parishes and for those incurred by the archdiocese. Archdiocesan income came from three sources—parish assessments; bequests, investments, and interest; and the annual archbishop's fund drive. In the face of an operating deficit of more than $500,000 in 1991, the archdiocese that year increased the parish assessment rate of 4.2 percent of total adjusted gross income, which was the lowest among the Ohio dioceses and one of the lowest in the nation, to 5.7 percent.91

As it dealt with recurring financial problems, the archdiocese also addressed racial and districting issues. In January 1975 the Archdiocesan Board of Education called on parish boards of education, school principals, and pastors to "refuse admission" to students applying to enter Catholic schools for the purpose of avoiding desegregation either in a public school district or in another Catholic school. In response to the federal court mandate for Dayton to desegregate its public schools, in June 1976 nearly one hundred parishes, denominational organizations, and communities in Dayton signed an "Interfaith Affirmation" to help assure the peaceful desegregation of Dayton Catholic schools. Several Catholic groups and local priests pledged their assistance to the various boards of education "in removing economic segregation in the school and community." In his homily in Holy Trinity Church in Dayton in 1976, Bishop Pilarczyk, then vicar for education, offered the faithful what he called "a brief theology of the hot potato. Every once in a while God throws us a hot potato," he said. "We don't always know what kind of potato it will be. We don't always know when it's coming. We don't always know whether it's going to be a really hot potato or a not-so-hot potato. But we do know that if we handle it with the strength and peace that Christ has given us, nobody's going to get burned." As busing for the purpose of desegregating Dayton's public schools began that fall, Archbishop Bernardin asked for prayer and a positive outlook. A year later the local church, under the guidance of such individuals as Father Egbert Figaro, a black priest and pastor of Dayton's St. James parish, also urged Catholics in Springfield to respond positively to the desegregation of the city's public schools.94
In the summer of 1978 the archdiocese faced a desegregation suit. The Cincinnati Board of Education took the question of funding auxiliary services at St. Mary School in Hyde Park into federal court. Two years earlier the public school board had voted to stop channeling state aid to St. Mary’s pupils on the grounds that the board’s defense in an upcoming desegregation suit might be jeopardized. The suit stemmed from the 1976 closing of Holy Cross Parish School in Mount Adams. Fifty-two of its pupils enrolled in St. Mary’s. Because they chose the Hyde Park school, which was predominantly white, over the closer but predominantly black St. Francis de Sales parish school in Walnut Hills, they were accused of segregation. Subsequent examination by the State Department of Education, Franklin County Court of Appeals, and the Ohio Supreme Court showed that the parents of the children of St. Mary’s had no segregation intent. In 1979 the U.S. District Court ruled that the Cincinnati Board of Education acted unconstitutionally in cutting off state funds.55

In January 1979 the archdiocesan Social Action Commission issued a working paper on Catholic school desegregation, urging that steps be taken “to eradicate any semblance of racism, tokenism or patronism” in the schools. It charged that Catholic schools in the archdiocese were “‘de facto’ segregated because of housing patterns and official and unofficial action that have resulted in further segregation rather than integration.” Though progress had been made to admit more black students and teachers into the schools, the archdiocesan Commission on Education admitted that much more had to be done. Since the early 1970s there also had been more archdiocesan funding for black students in the inner-city schools. A subsidy of $400,000, called TA-132 funds, named for the paragraph in the synod 1971 document on temporal affairs, was established for the core area schools in Cincinnati. By the end of the decade there was more integration in the schools and a new annual scholarship fund for needy high school students was established in the archdiocese. During Pilarsczyk’s administration the archdiocese joined other dioceses in Ohio in providing greater support to Catholic schools that served the poor and blacks in disadvantaged urban and rural areas.56

An issue that also caused some commotion in parts of the archdiocese had to do with high school districting. In the aftermath of Vatican II, the local, territorial nature of the parish, developed a half-century earlier during Moeller’s tenure, was less rigidly observed. The synod of 1971 gave Catholics in Cincinnati the ability to register at the parish of their choosing no matter where they resided, provided that the pastor of the parish they wished to join was willing to accept their membership. Though the option was intended chiefly for liturgical reasons, there were parents who registered at a parish for other reasons, such as sending their children to a parish’s designated high school. As
a consequence, high school districting became a persistent headache for archdiocesan officials. It often placed the pastors in the middle between parents, who registered at a tributary parish of the high school that they wanted their children to attend, and the archdiocese. In the late 1970s and 1980s there were several requests from parishes to alter their high school assignments. Racial and socioeconomic class prejudice or affiliation with a strong high school sports program was often seen as the “real” reason behind the arguments.57

The controversy resulted in the creation of a special task force in 1982 to streamline policies and possibly redraw district lines that determined the tributary parishes for high schools. Since the early years of McNicholas’s administration, when he had set up the system of high schools in Cincinnati and Dayton, sanctions had existed for crossing district lines to attend high school. Over the years those sanctions changed. The rules drawn up in 1951 still applied in the 1980s. Parishes were obligated to contribute $100 per student attending a Catholic secondary school, parochial or private, to the archdiocesan Equalization Fund. Though the pastor could withhold the parish contribution when a student opted to attend a school in another district, the choice was rarely exercised. Parents of the child were expected to pay the difference in tuition, and the student could not participate in interscholastic sports as long as the child attended the school. In 1986 the Commission on Education passed a new policy. It declared that students who wished to play sports for Catholic high schools in the archdiocese would have to live within the school’s district regardless of their parish affiliations. Unaffected were open enrollment policies for minority students in the Dayton area. Those policies allowed black students to enroll in any school in Dayton. Opponents of high school districting often cited open enrollment policies in such dioceses as Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago as a way to solve boundary problems. Students in those communities could attend any high school within their diocese.58

SOCIAL ISSUES

Throughout the history of the archdiocese clergy, religious, and lay persons responded to the needs of the changing church and society. For 175 years thousands of clergy and religious devoted their lives to the service of others. They conducted schools, orphanages, and hospitals and worked with immigrants, the poor, and handicapped. In 1996 women religious from forty-one orders and men religious from twelve orders continued the tradition and made ample contributions to the religious life of the archdiocese. They were engaged in parish ministry, elementary, secondary, adult and university-level education, health-care administration, spiritual direction, counseling, retreat work, and ministry to the young, the elderly, and the sick. There were eleven
changed their respective names to Catholic Social Services. Father James Garland, a native of Wilmington, Ohio, and director of Dayton Catholic Charities, became the archdiocesan director. In 1984 he was named bishop and vicar general of Cincinnati. Catholic Social Services included child care institutions, residence institutions, neighborhood service centers, and such volunteer organizations as Catholic Big Brothers, Ladies of Charity, and St. Vincent de Paul Society. In the 1990s social services in the archdiocese consisted of Catholic Social Services of Southwestern Ohio, of Butler and Warren Counties, of Springfield, and of Miami Valley. Though these agencies received funds from the archbishop’s annual fund drive, the majority of their funding came from the local Community Chest and from local, state, and federal grants.63

Throughout this period Catholics attended to the needs of various groups of people. In 1978 the Brothers of Christian Service had established Villa Maria, a group home for men who were mentally handicapped. Two years later the Catholic Federation for the Mentally Retarded sponsored the Connelly Home for mentally disabled women. In 1992 the two homes merged and formed a new corporate entity, Catholic Residential Services of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Each year the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the agencies in Catholics United for the Poor (CUP) fed, sheltered, and clothed thousands of needy people. By 1981 St. Vincent de Paul also began taking in women in its efforts to address the dire material needs of families and persons in the community. CUP agencies included Tender Mercies, which provided Over-the-Rhine residences for men and women with a history of mental illness; Bethany House of Hospitality, a Mount Auburn temporary shelter for homeless women and children; Our Daily Bread, a breakfast kitchen in Over-the-Rhine; and Over-the-Rhine Kitchen, a hot-lunch cafeteria. These agencies provided shelter to more than five hundred homeless families, supplied space for six thousand nights’ rest for street people, and served more than thirty thousand breakfasts and hot lunches. In 1987 lay and religious representatives of the archdiocese successfully joined in a drive to start a home in Cincinnati for persons suffering from AIDS. Three years later the Home Builders Association, with about $300,000 in donated supplies and labor, built a two-story, sixteen-unit shelter, called Pleasant House, for the homeless in Over-the-Rhine. Pleasant House was operated and owned by Tender Mercies. By the 1990s Catholic health facilities expanded their services at outreach clinics and social agencies emphasized transitional housing and employment for the homeless.64

By the early 1970s the archdiocese began supporting mission work among the Spanish-speaking. Bernardin celebrated a field Mass in Spanish in Darke County each year during the tomato harvest season for migrant agricultural
workers and Hispanic American families. As early as the 1950s, when thousands of migrant workers began coming to the region, local organizations sponsored programs for migrants and the Springfield Deanery Council of Catholic Men visited the camps. A Sister of Charity, Pauline Apodaca, worked among the resident and transient Hispanic people. In 1977 the archdiocese opened a center for the Spanish-Speaking Apostolate at Cranberry Prairie in southern Mercer County. It served all the Spanish-speaking in the archdiocese but especially the more than 1,700 Hispanic people living in Mercer and Darke Counties. In the 1990s the archdiocesan Catholic Hispanic Community of Greater Cincinnati attended to the more than 10,000 Hispanic Catholics. Other lay communities and related organizations in the archdiocese in 1996 were the Caritas Christi Secular Institute, Marianist Voluntary Service Communities, New Jerusalem Community, St. Andrew Kim Korean Catholic Society, St. Leonard Faith Community, Secular Franciscans, and the Vietnamese Catholic Community.

During Leibold’s tenure black Catholics called for more participation in decision making. In 1970 the Black Lay Catholic Caucus of the archdiocese, awarded a grant of $14,000 by the Department of Social Action, was formed. To help provide more opportunities for blacks, the archdiocese opened the office of the Black Secretariat in 1977. As blacks acquired a larger voice in the local church, evangelical-style revivals became a more popular form of evangelization in black Catholic parishes. Under the guidance of Father Clarence J. Rivers, the first black diocesan priest in Cincinnati, the sound of African drums, a one hundred-voice choir, and applause filled St. Peter in Chains Cathedral on May 22, 1977, at the “Soulful Worship” program of music, liturgy, and black culture. The mood was one of celebration and worship as more than 850 Catholics, black and white, gathered at the special liturgy. By the 1980s there was more recognition of African American culture, gospel music, and African American Catholic style liturgies.

As efforts were made to address some of the concerns and interests of black Catholics, there were recurrent allegations of racism in the local church. In the summer of 1981 seventy-five pastors and parish leaders from the Cincinnati area met with Bernardin in the undercroft of St. Peter in Chains Cathedral to voice their concerns. Some angrily charged that the Catholic Church was a predominantly white institution that was insensitive to the needs of poor blacks and other minorities and treated them as “second class citizens.” Arguing that local racist parishioners did not realize how much their racism was contrary to the teachings of the church, they urged Bernardin to say more on the issues of poverty and racism in the community. “We want to walk together with you so we can be proud we are working with the poor,” a sister in pastoral ministry said. That was a sad evening for
Bernardin, as some of the unjustified attacks zeroed in on him personally. In February 1982 Bernardin’s essay on “The Heresy of Racism,” published in the Catholic Telegraph, cogently argued that racism was “in fundamental contradiction to some of the most basic doctrines of Christianity.”

In the mid-1980s the archdiocese formed a committee to supplement its long-range planning project, “For the Harvest,” to help identify the specific concerns of the eight thousand or so black Catholics in the archdiocese. After months of planning and hearings, black Catholics in the fall of 1987 adopted a pastoral plan, called “Heritage, Unity and Responsibility.” Its goals were to increase black leadership at the parish level, support the role of the black ministry, develop liturgy relevant to black culture, and increase evangelization efforts in the black community. Local black Catholics also helped establish an office of African American Catholic Ministries that replaced the Black Secretariat. In 1988 Pilarczyk appointed Eugene Cash as its first director.

The following year a conflict erupted over the African American Catholic Ministries. Eugene Cash, head of the organization, died suddenly and Joyce Smith, who had replaced him in late spring, resigned in August because of conflicts with her supervisor in the office of Community Services. A group of black lay people, religious, and fifteen parish pastors from integrated and predominantly black parishes urged Pilarczyk to reinstate the former director. They also recommended that he implement the pastoral plan and place the African American Catholic Ministries under the Pastoral Services Department, the same office that oversaw Hispanic ministry, interfaith relations, and evangelization, among other ministries. In late August about thirty people picketed at the archdiocesan headquarters, demanding the reinstatement of Joyce Smith. The picketing continued for several weeks. On September 13 there were also prayer vigils in Cincinnati and Dayton. For some time Pilarczyk, his staff, and members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council had been of the opinion that the appointment of officers and departments’ needs needed to be reviewed. In December George C. Findley, a parishioner at Dayton’s Assumption parish and member of the archdiocesan Black Catholic Advisory Board, was named director of the Office of African American Catholic Ministries. The office was also moved to the Pastoral Services Department.

In the spring of 1990 the APC and Pilarczyk established a task force to explore further means to counter racism in the archdiocese. They were hopeful that the task force would help broaden the focus of the archdiocesan pastoral plan of “Heritage, Unity and Responsibility.” “Racism is a sin and we know that,” Pilarczyk said. Father George Jacquemin, pastor of St. Anthony, an integrated parish in the Madisonville area in eastern Cincinnati and
chairman of the Priests Council's peace and justice committee, informed the APC that there was considerable racism in the archdiocese. "We feel it's important," he said, "to look at the issue straight in the eye." Three years later the archdiocese launched a new antiracism program. "In One Body, the Archdiocesan Program to Dismantle Racism," with Ruth Richmond as project director, was developed to help local Catholics grow in awareness and understanding of themselves and of other cultures and ethnic groups. By promoting dialogue among the races archdiocesan officials hoped to challenge and help change attitudes that perpetuated racism. "It is important for us to start this venture at this time," Father William Cross, pastor of St. Andrew Church in Avondale and the first black diocesan pastor in the history of the archdiocese, said, in order "to make the church authentically Catholic. We have to be constantly working." The first phase of the "In One Body" Program involved central office directors, parish leaders, school administrators, and priests. Phase Two took the project to the parish level. By the end of 1994 ninety-six parishes had participated in the two-year program.70

In April 1994 Bishop Carl K. Moeddel of Cincinnati was named chairperson of a task force to deal with the problems of racism in the city. The previous June, Moeddel, a native of Cincinnati and pastor of St. James of the Valley Church at Wyoming, had been named auxiliary bishop for Cincinnati. He succeeded James Garland who, in 1992, had been appointed bishop of Marquette, Michigan. Moeddel became the ninth ordinary to serve the Cincinnati archdiocese as an auxiliary. In 1995 the local church, through the Office of African American Catholic Ministries, established the program, African American Ministry Empowered and Nurtured (AMEN). The pilot project involved a curriculum to integrate the contributions and needs of the African American experience within the context of the larger church. To help foster spiritual growth, the program included courses in discipleship, Old Testament, pastoral communications, church, liturgy, and prayer. In June local church leaders representing various faiths, including Moeddel, sponsored the Racial Harmony Conference at the Alfred E. Sabin Convention Center.71

CONCLUSION

The history of the archdiocese of Cincinnati is a success story. It successfully built and maintained parishes and churches, established a network of schools from kindergarten through college, and founded a system of charitable agencies and institutions. Its history over 175 years, including the relationship of Catholics to society, has been one of constant change and
adaptation. Moreover, the role of the laity within the church and the community changed from time to time as did the amount of authority and influence wielded by the religious, parish pastors, and church ordinaries.

In its first sixty years the diocese, led by its ordinaries, Fenwick and Purcell, grew at an astonishing rate, becoming a significant force in the community's religious life. It developed from a scattered missionary diocese into an influential archdiocese. As it evangelized the non-Catholics and Native Americans and converted people to Catholicism, it integrated the massive influx of Catholic immigrants. As it dealt with a dominant Protestant culture, it also developed a unique Catholic identity. Though sensitive to American culture and always supportive of the republican ideas of freedom, equality, separation of church and state, and religious liberty, the archdiocese of Cincinnati remained true to its Catholic origins. Catholic schools and other organizations, though mindful of their relationship with society, separated themselves from the public schools and non-Catholic institutions. Committed to transmitting the faith to succeeding generations, Catholics chose to develop their own specific structures and policies. Furthermore, at the same time that there was a gradual strengthening of the papacy in the second half of the nineteenth century, episcopal and clerical authority also grew. Though in its early years, especially because of the shortage of clergy, the diocese was dependent upon lay leadership, gradually the role of the laity in the management and administration of church affairs waned. As it sought more uniformity the ordinary's authority in religion, finances, and education increased and the priests became more involved in the operation of the parishes.

During its bureaucratizing phase at the end of the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth centuries, the archdiocese of Cincinnati, under the leadership of Archbishops Elder and Moeller, became more centralized. Developing more formal channels of episcopal administration, it systematized its inner workings. As the church leaders tightened their authority and more and more power shifted from the parish to the chancery, parishes and charities were brought more directly under the archbishop's supervision. By the end of Moeller's term in 1925, Catholics in the archdiocese accepted the hierarchical concept of the church. There was also increasing influence by officials in Rome. In the wake of the first Vatican Council's declaration on the authority of the church, Elder and Moeller sought to balance diocesan rule and authority from Rome. Skeptical and resentful of too much papal interference, they felt that the future of the American church rested upon being granted more autonomy. Advocating more home rule, the Cincinnati ordinaries argued that American Catholics should embrace the principles of the new culture and bring the Catholic faith to its fullest realization in the
archdiocese. In the process they promoted more mainlining of Catholics, especially immigrants, into American society. Moreover, as the archdiocese became more theologically conservative and implemented church teachings in the archdiocese, it became increasingly more responsive to American labor and social problems.

From the mid-1920s to the 1960s Cincinnati Catholics became even more assertive on social issues and confident of their own Americanism. Since the administration of Purcell the archdiocese had sustained a separate Catholic subculture. But that subculture gradually broke down, as more and more Catholics moved into the middle class and beyond and became more a part of American culture. As it defined and solidified its place in society, the archdiocese, under the supervision of Archbishops McNicholas and Alter, saw a significant increase in the number of churches, schools, hospitals, and charitable agencies. Both ordinaries were builders. In addition, the archdiocese remained theologically conservative and took public positions on a variety of ethical, social, political, and economic issues. Through their church leaders, who continually valued religion, education, family, and human rights, Cincinnati Catholics developed a specific and distinctive Catholic culture.

During the administrations of Leibold, Bernardin, and Pilarczyk, the archdiocese of Cincinnati responded to the social and political unrest of the 1960s and the Second Vatican Council. Since the 1880s the archdiocese, wedded to a traditional theology, had appeared uniform and disciplined. What had helped hold it together was its hierarchical structure and centralized teaching authority. But the social and cultural changes of the sixties and the liberalization of the church in the post–Vatican II era brought about a new model of church and authority and new forms of worship and parish activity. The authoritarian and clerical concept of church and authority was replaced with one that emphasized greater community and shared responsibility. In the process, lay people, clergy, and religious became more identified with various social issues. Because of these changes the archdiocese was very different from what it was prior to 1960. The priesthood no longer symbolized the high status conferred by the old subculture, and most lay people no longer took the priest’s word as law. Catholics now witnessed the crowding of lay Eucharistic ministers around the altar before communion, and lay people alongside some clergy now typically placed the host in the communicant’s hands.

As the archdiocese was about to enter the new millennium, many Catholics wondered how they would meet the spiritual needs of more educated Catholics with fewer priests and churches. Challenges facing it, as it continued to adapt to changing times, consisted of carrying on the tradition of the church, dealing with the smaller number of priests and religious, and
fostering the development of ministry and leadership among the laity. The spirit and faith in parish life and the competence and creativity of lay people and ministers were a source of encouragement to the archdiocese. There was now a stabilized Mass attendance, greater participation in prayer meetings, and increasing shared clerical, religious, and lay involvement in church life at parish and diocesan levels. To many clergy, religious, and laity the future of the archdiocese appeared challenging.