

In fact

There are four areas of harm that will occur with the implementation of ATN: harm to financial administration of parishes and the Archdiocese, violations of rights in parish mergers and parish alterations, violation of priests' rights (especially those of pastors), and harm to the unity of the Church with disadvantage to her Mission of Evangelization. I will address each of these separately below. Before doing so, it seems prudent to provide some context taken from a survey of priests that is currently in progress (Attachment 5—Copy of "Survey for Archdiocese of St. Louis Priests"). Because of changes to the ATN parish models made in February 2023, the survey was not mailed to the priests until recently. While the minimum response rate for a survey of this kind has been exceeded, we consider the results preliminary at this time. A full report on the responses will be forthcoming in a matter of weeks. Nonetheless, it seems prudent to share what this valid sampling of priests has provided us so as not to delay this Petition.

The survey questions regarding ATN are found on pages two, three and four of the survey. The questions were posed because the Archbishop has expressly stated his intention to transfer a very large number of pastors just before announcing the parishes he intends to alter. Of course, this raises significant questions about the validity of causes *ad rem* for extinctive mergers and whether proper consultations would occur before such decisions are made. Interestingly, while the initial communications to priests made clear that most pastors would be transferred, after the mailing of the Priest Survey, the Vicar for Pastoral Planning, Father Chris Martin, made a March 30, 2023 video in which he expressed a new position, by stating that the plans for pastor transfers is only suggestive (<https://stlosp.flocknote.com/note/20962146/video/521985812>). Nonetheless, it seemed prudent to ask the priests about their perceptions of ATN. Here are the preliminary results we have at the time of this Petition.

1. **Only 13% of priests** believe ATN reflects a proper catechesis of the people, flexibility of parish styles and identity, and gradualism as demanded by the Holy See's Instruction (#10 in the Instruction).
2. **Only 16% of priests** believe the obligations of the Instruction, #48 are properly respected by ATN.

3. **65% of priests** believe a different model for parish restructuring should be used. Put another way, only 33% of the priests believe that ATN is a viable model for restructuring the parishes in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.
4. **Only 6% of priests** believe ATN will increase vocations.
5. **90% or more of priests** believe ATN will cause a decrease in parish donations, a decrease in participation of the Faithful, and will harm missionary outreach to non-Catholics, the elderly and homebound.
6. **90% of the priests** believe the Archbishop is out of touch with the unique situations of parishes in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. They do not believe he understands the situation he is trying to fix.
7. **65% of pastors** responding would use the appeal process in law if the Archbishop tries to transfer them.
8. **Fewer than 13% of priests** believe ATN would prove beneficial if implemented as explained by the Archbishop and his Vicar.

These numbers are alarming. They demonstrate that a super-majority of the presbyterate of the Archdiocese of St. Louis is opposed to the implementation of ATN as intended. They do not believe the Archbishop understands the evolving situation in St. Louis, and they believe that ATN will cause significant harm to the Church. That all being said, a majority of priests (and lay Faithful) are not opposed to pastoral planning provided it authentically reflects the elements identified in the Instruction (proper collaborative dialogue, no pre-conceived arrangements, and a respect for the rights and obligations of parishes, parish churches, schools, pastors, priests, and the lay Faithful).
