



## NEXT GENERATION CATHOLIC PARISH

### PART THREE

As we soon enter into the **Next Generation Catholic Parish** initiative, it is important to remember that this is not just another program, indeed it is not even a program. Also, it is not being sponsored or led by the Archdiocese. The **Next Generation Catholic Parish** is an initiative sponsored by and mentored by the Catholic Leadership Institute.

The Catholic Leadership Institute was founded almost 30 years ago. As highlighted on their website at [www.catholicleaders.org](http://www.catholicleaders.org):

“Catholic Leadership Institute was founded in 1991 by a successful Catholic businessman, Tim Flanagan, on the simple vision that God’s gift to us is our potential, and what we do with it is our gift back to God. Tim saw all of the money and resources being invested into leaders in the corporate world, academia, and the military, and asked the question: *why not for the Catholic Church?* Nothing is more important or deserving of our support that deserves the best in leadership development and training than our Church.”

With this vision, the Catholic Leadership Institute has been expanding their ministry within the Church, first beginning with young people, and then offering their services to priests, bishops, diocesan and Archdiocesan staffs, and more recently to parishes, such as our own St. Frances Cabrini Parish. Catholic Leadership Institute is partnering with us and will walk with us as we prepare for the **Next Generation Catholic Parish**.

As we mentioned last weekend in the Pastor’s Column, fewer and fewer people are coming to Church on a regular basis. Nationally, 13% attend Mass once or twice a month, 10% attend Mass weekly out of a habit of faith, and only 7% are *highly engaged* in their Catholic faith, attending Mass each Sunday. Here at St. Frances Cabrini, we do not have our attendance rate so well refined as the national attendance rates. In last week’s Pastor’s Column, I noted that prior to COVID-19, our Mass attendance rate was **22%** and during the pandemic, our Mass attendance rate is currently **12%**. These percentages were based on parishioners identified as **active parishioners**. When we base our Mass attendance on **all our registered parishioners**, these percentages are much lower. Prior to COVID-19, our average weekly attendance rate was only **12%**, and currently, our Mass attendance rate is **6%**. In light of these statistics, nationally and locally, it is clear that current models of parish life cannot be sustained when the number of churchgoers in their 50s and 60s are declining and, for the most part, young people are not engaging with the Church.

In the spring of 2018, our Parish Community participated in CLI’s Disciple Maker Index. One of the main purposes of the DMI was to see how well we were meeting the spiritual needs of our community, especially with regard to our weekly celebration of Mass, including the homilies, and also the formation of our parishioners in the ways of our Catholic faith. CLI believes that a Catholic parish exists to help people develop a relationship with the Lord. They also believe that a Catholic parish equips disciples to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others.

Again, we are being blessed through this invitation to participate in the **Next Generation Catholic Parish**.

~ Monsignor Michael P. McCormac