

## Parish Classifications

**A SINGLE PARISH** is one that conforms to the general description of a parish in the Revised Code of Canon Law. “A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a suitable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop.” (*Canon 515*)

**A CLUSTER OF PARISHES** is a grouping of two or more parish communities served by at least one priest, one or more parish life coordinators and possibly other staff. The parishes are separate but work together in some ministries. Each parish has its own parish council, finance committee and other committees. They coordinate parish schedules, sacramental preparation, charity and social concerns, liturgy and planning. They may cooperate in running a Catholic school. Some programs and activities may be done separately. The key element is that there is a conscious effort on the part of the parishes to work together.

**CONSOLIDATING PARISHES** are two or more parishes working together toward greater unity. It involves a process that may take some time. The end product of the consolidation process is the formation of one new parish corporation out of two or more parishes. For parishes that have consolidated, there is one parish council, one set of books, etc., even though two or more church buildings remain.

**ORATORIES** are churches that remain open only for funerals and, perhaps, the celebration of anniversaries of the parish itself or the feast of the patron saint. There are no regularly schedule Masses at oratories. The parish corporation continues to exist and the property remains in the possession of the corporation. A neighboring priest will be assigned to the board of directors of the parish. There must also be adequate funding to care for the property. Every five years the board of directors must apply to the Bishop of the Diocese of Davenport to have the status of Oratory renewed.