

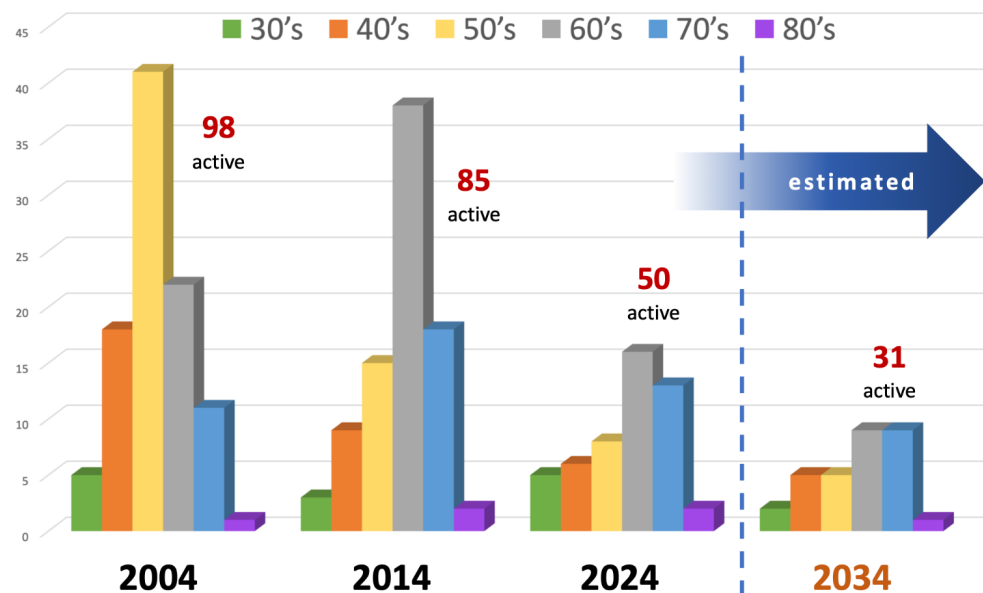
An important Message from the President of the Paulist Fathers

We Paulists discern the movement of the Holy Spirit within ourselves and in our world by continually asking the questions: *What* is the Holy Spirit prompting us to do? *Where* is the Holy Spirit prompting us to go? As a result of asking these questions, **we have discerned that change is coming. We ask you to please keep us Paulists in prayer at this pivotal time.**

In 2024, as we have done for over 165 years, we are once again engaging in an intentional process of discerning where the Holy Spirit is calling us. The current reality of fewer Paulists demands that we enter into a process by which we decide **which ministries we can continue to staff** and which we will have to entrust to others to carry on the good work we've begun. Our Paulist General Council, along with our lay advisory board, is in agreement with me and the presidential board regarding the urgency of this discernment.

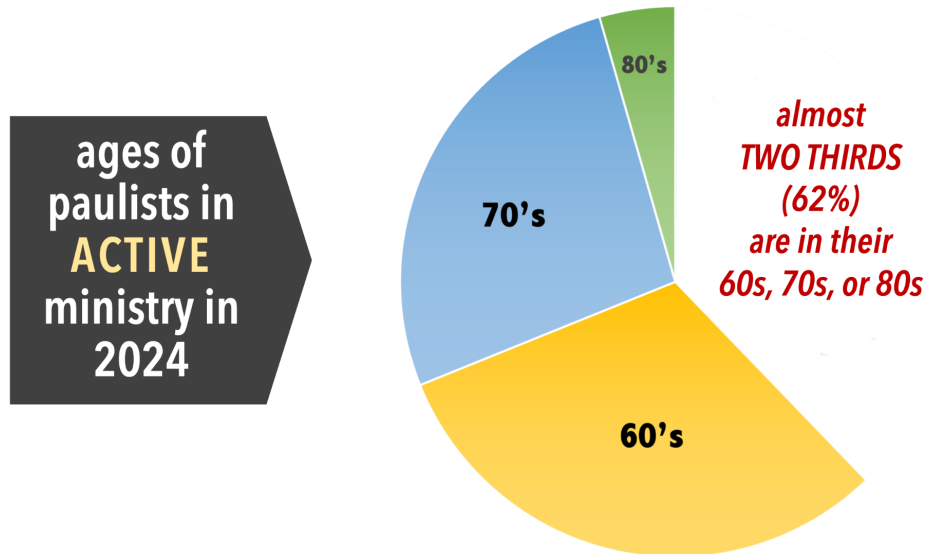
To give you an idea of merely one factor contributing to this present discernment, our number of Paulists in active ministry (ordained but not yet retired) has gone from 98 in 2004... to 85 in 2014... **to 50 active Paulists in 2024.** The last time we had 50 active men in our community was in 1910. Of those fifty active right now, **almost two thirds are in their 60s, 70s and 80s.** In ten years, we project that we'll be down to about 31 active Paulists.

ages of
paulists in
ACTIVE
ministry:
30-year
compare



Certainly, people live longer these days, and many of our beloved senior priests have generously and selflessly continued working well into their 70s and beyond, but **it is obvious that the current situation is not sustainable.** Of course, these trends are not just affecting the Paulist Fathers but most Catholic religious communities in North America as well. Beyond the numbers, for the good of the People of God, it is also imperative to match an individual Paulist's gifts and talents with a ministry assignment for which they are best suited.

We remain hopeful for the future as we continue to attract new members to our Paulist life and mission. We are just as passionate as ever about the unique pastoral style, voice, and approach we offer in today's Catholic Church. Yet prudence and stewardship has demanded that we enter into a discernment about where and how Paulists can best serve the People of God and the American Church with the greatest impact.



We began this process of right-sizing our ministerial commitments in June of 2022 with resolutions at the Paulist General Assembly. Last September, we engaged the services of a church management consultant to help us proceed with as much objectivity and integrity as possible, and to keep us true to our commitment to make difficult decisions. **We believe that sometime this year we will likely have to say farewell to two or three parishes or institutions where Paulists are currently serving.** Additionally, this process will likely involve **reimagining some of our national ministries** with different structures or leadership. We know this will be challenging, and it always hurts to see good things come to an end, but we trust that the Holy Spirit will lead all of us forward.

Today I am writing to every Paulist ministry in the spirit of transparency. I can honestly say that **no decisions have yet been made, but they will be soon.** Right now we are continuing to gather data that will aid in our discernment, along with prayer and dialogue. The General Council has added a special meeting in early March during which we intend to make decisions based on this discernment.

So once again I ask you to please keep our entire Paulist community, and all the people we serve, in prayer at this time of transition and transformation.

Prayerfully yours in Christ,

Fr. René Constanza, CSP
President