

ST. LOUIS PARISH, MD

St. Louis parish, located in Clarksville, MD, was founded in 1855 as part of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The parish has undergone significant growth since its formation, currently serving approximately 4,200 registered families from the area. The location of the parish experienced substantial growth from new residential developments since the 1990's, due in part to its proximity to the DC metro area. From 1996 to 2005, St. Louis parish saw an increase of 1,400 registered families from 2,800 to 4,200 families. St. Louis parish is unique in the sense that about two-thirds of the registered parishioners travel from outside of the parish boundary to be a part of the parish. Accommodating such rapid growth can present many challenges and changes within a parish. Change is inevitable, but having the tools and information to better equip and prepare for impacts of change is essential to the success of any establishment.

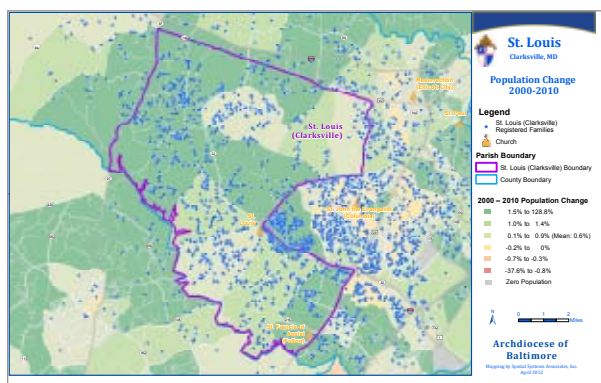
Geographic Information System technology (GIS) creates the opportunity to visualize data in a spatial format and provide answers to questions that otherwise may be difficult to envision. Use of GIS provides an additional context to statistics and numbers on a page. Maps provide a real "picture" of trends and changes in a geographic extent. Spatial Systems Associates, Inc., a GIS and FMIS firm based out of Columbia, MD, was able to assist St. Louis parish in identifying parish and parishioner trends by utilizing our expertise to provide a variety of mapping analyses.

The goal of this project was to provide St. Louis parish a closer look into parishioner trends in the area to assist in becoming more prepared for future decisions. Utilizing the 2010 Census and American Community Survey data opened up numerous possibilities for additional mapping analyses to include with the map content. In the spring of 2012, SSA delivered a set of five maps to St. Louis parish. The map set consisted of:

- Parish Boundary—location with aerial photography background
- 2000–2010 Population Change
- Location of Registered St. Louis Families
- Location of Registered Catholic Families
- Median Household Income

Map 1: Parish Boundary

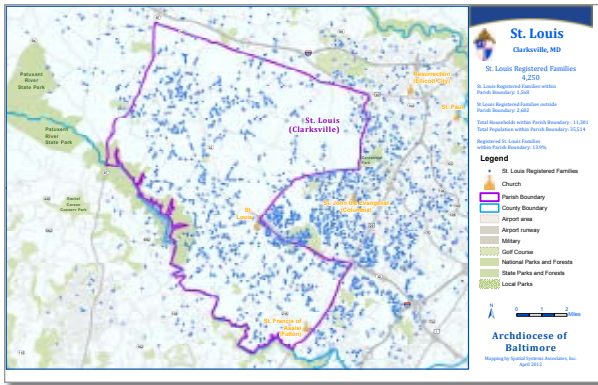
The first map in the set is the parish boundary which is overlaid with the most recent aerial photography. The written version of the parish boundary was translated into a digital format for use by the mapping software. Included in the map content are the surrounding parish church locations within the extent of the map. This generalized map is helpful to both diocesan and parish staff in understanding the current land uses within the geographical boundary of the parish, and for visualizing where new development potential may exist that could affect the services necessary in the future of the parish.



Map 2: 2000–2010 Population Change

This map utilizes the 2000-2010 census population change data, thematically displayed underlying the parish boundary and location of registered families. This map provides insight into population trends throughout the parish and surrounding parishes.

Determining where the greatest decrease or increases of populations have occurred may help in deciding where additional parishioner services are necessary, or in some cases, where they may no longer be sustainable.



Map 3: Registered Families

This map shows the location of the registered St. Louis families represented by the blue circles. The map displays the concentrations of parishioners registered to the parish and demonstrates when parishioners are being drawn from adjacent parishes. By combining the locations of the registered parishioners with the 2010 census data and ACS data, we were able to include analysis describing the following:

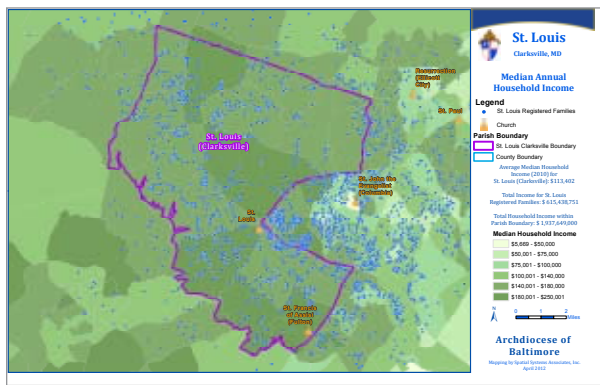
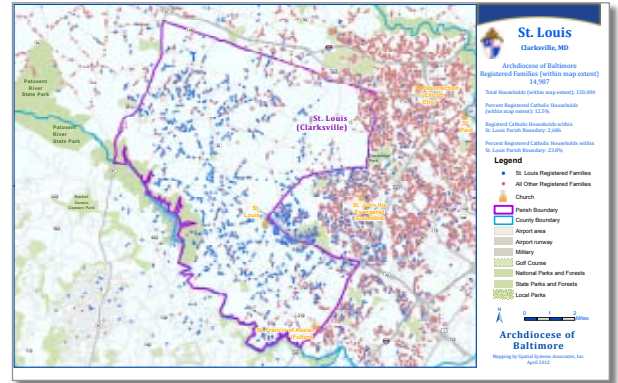
- Number of Families Registered within the Parish Boundary
- Number of Families Registered outside the Parish Boundary
- Total Number of Households within the Parish Boundary
- Total Population within the Parish Boundary
- Percent of total households within the parish boundary that are registered to the local parish.

When combined with an estimate of the regional percent Catholic population, this statistic is useful in assessing opportunities for evangelization.

Map 4: Registered Catholic Families

As a general rule of thumb, the Catholic population throughout the United States is considered to be about 20–25% of the population. By using diocesan-wide data we were able to determine the percentage of registered Catholics within the region as a whole compared to the general population. This analysis helps to identify potential opportunities for reaching out to the community for evangelization. We included in this map the following analyses:

- Number of Registered Families in the map extent
- Total Number of Households within the map extent
- Percent Registered Catholic Households within the map extent
- Number of Registered Catholic Households within the St. Louis Parish Boundary
- Percent Registered Catholic Households within St. Louis Parish Boundary



Map 5: Median Annual Household Income

Identifying areas to focus financial campaign efforts was accomplished by combining the location of the registered parishioners with the Median Household Income data from the American Community Survey. We were able to determine the potential income for the parish by using the census population data, Median Household Income data, and registered parishioner data. The Median Household Income data was displayed thematically providing a look into the household income distribution among the parishioner locations. By completing some spatial analyses, we were able to determine the:

- Average median household income for the parish
- Total Household Income for registered families
- Total Household Income within the Parish Boundary

These and other analyses can be conveniently completed and graphically/geographically shown at a parish or diocesan level through the use of GIS technology.