

DIOCESAN PRIORITIES

Addressing effectively these pastoral priorities requires first and foremost a commitment by all in the Church to intentional discipleship and to enthusiastically embrace the mission of Christ at the heart of which is evangelization. This includes individuals, families, parishes and other faith communities, Catholic institutions and agencies, organizations and movements.

I. Promoting Catholic Spirituality with Emphasis on the Sunday Eucharist

- emphasizing traditional piety and devotions
- toward keeping holy the Lord's Day
- respecting diverse cultures
- leading to living a Christian Life

II. Fostering Evangelization & Systematic Catechesis

- based within and promoting the mission and evangelizing activity of the Church
- including Sacred Scripture, the Creed and Tradition
- utilizing inspiring witnesses and presenters
- making faith formation relevant and the foundation for living out the moral and social teaching of the Church
- using discipling and mentoring as the basic methodology
- emphasizing adult faith formation toward dynamic discipleship;
- embracing those baptized but uncatechized and reaching out to those who have drifted away from the Church

III. Strengthening Marriage & Family Life

- based upon the plan of God and teaching of the Church
- with marriage preparation which prepares engaged couples for mature commitment, utilizing the help of mentoring couples;
- including ministry with young marrieds and newly parenting couples which anticipates and addresses challenges
- offering enrichment opportunities and promoting Catholic family practices and traditions

IV. Building a Culture of Life & Dignity

- promoting human life and dignity;
- encouraging the development in every parish of an integrated program of social ministry based on the principles and values of Catholic social teaching
- fostering systems of collaboration which will allow the Church to make a difference in the world

V. Engaging Youth & Young Adults

- responding to them within their cultures and integrating them within the Church and parish life
- including parents in discipling
- activating clergy and parish leaders and groups to be part of the process

VI. Promoting Priestly & Religious Vocations

- within our common Christian vocation
- with prayers and programs in behalf of vocations
- engaging priests, religious and laity at the parish level

VII. Embracing Cultural Diversity

- respecting cultural differences while striving for unity within every faith community
- ensuring the inclusion of different cultures in every aspect of parish life and guaranteeing fairness in responding to the needs and desires of all
- welcoming traditional Catholic devotions and practices

VIII. Engaging the Laity in their Christian Vocation

- radically based on good stewardship
- including participation in ecclesial ministries and administration
- expressed in the evangelization of cultures and environments

Pastoral Priority I

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY & THE SUNDAY EUCHARIST

1. Respecting various cultural expressions, our parish promotes approved forms of traditional piety and devotions as an authentic and invaluable means of fostering and enriching our faith; they are intended to lead to a sincere conversion to Christ, a deep sense of membership in the Church and the practical exercise of charity.
2. Our parish encourages everyone to keep holy the Lord's Day, above all by sharing in the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, but also by observing Sunday as a day of *joy* in the Lord because it is the day of his victory over sin and death; a day of *rest* in the Lord because the day belongs to him; and a day of *solidarity* in the Lord because it is the day for special outreach to his "brethren" in helping whom we serve him.
3. We foster weekly participation in the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist because we see it as our indispensable opportunity for ongoing encounter with Jesus toward ever deeper conversion and communion with him, the basis for our sharing in his mission.
4. In both the assembly and in all liturgical ministries open to the laity, our Sunday Eucharist welcomes the diversity of God's people, including various cultures, age groups and persons with disabilities, and we extend our celebration to ministry with our sick and homebound members.
5. Our parish invites all members to "full, conscious and active participation" in the Eucharist and promotes at one and the same time a spirit of hospitality and belonging, and an atmosphere of reverence and prayer.
6. Our liturgical ministers, including lectors, altar servers, extraordinary ministers of communion, cantors and musicians, ushers and greeters, are given proper formation and supervision in order to be prayerful themselves and to foster worship, avoiding anything akin to secular performance and entertainment with consequent signs of approval and recognition.
7. In our parish, the Word of God is proclaimed in a manner which nurtures faith, and homilies are given which are relevant to our lives, dispose us to worship God in spirit and truth, and prepare us both to share Jesus with the whole world and to affect our environment for Christ.
8. Music for our celebrations of the Eucharist is liturgically appropriate, reverently performed and engaging of the assembly according to liturgical norms.
9. Within our parish pastoral council, we have an active liturgy and spirituality committee or team which plans, oversees and evaluates our liturgies and devotions.
10. The devotional and sacramental life of our parish leads to and flows from the Sunday Eucharist from which we are sent "to glorify the Lord by our lives."

What are we doing well?

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What challenges do we face?

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Pastoral Priority II

EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS

1. Our parish leaders and members are committed to evangelization as our common mission to witness to Christ and to proclaim the Good News of salvation.
2. Our parishioners are invited to ongoing evangelization through more frequent encounters with Jesus, ever deeper conversion, and communion with him; they are encouraged to know Christ and to make him known, to live Gospel values and to actively evangelize their environments.
3. We reach out to those who do not know Christ, to Christians seeking full communion with the Church and to alienated and inactive Catholics.
4. Newcomers are warmly welcomed into our parish.
5. Our parish is committed to life-long faith formation for which adequate resources are available.
6. Our parish, in collaboration with the Diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechesis, has a comprehensive plan for catechesis respecting language and cultural diversity including:
 - a. sacramental preparation and systematic catechesis for children and youth, engaging their parents as their primary educators in the faith,
 - b. the Christian initiation of adults and children,
 - c. Scripture study and faith-sharing experiences,
 - d. adult faith formation,
 - e. response to special education needs.
7. Our parish engages a qualified director of catechetical ministry (DCM), along with coordinators, according to diocesan policies and guidelines, and encourages their ongoing formation.
8. In accord with diocesan policies we provide for the certification and ongoing renewal of our catechetical ministers.
9. Within our parish pastoral council, we have a parish committee for evangelization and catechesis.
10. Our parochial school is an integrated part of the educational mission of the parish with full parish support.
11. Since our parish does not have its own grade school, it offers support for our children attending parochial schools in the area.

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What challenges do we face?

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Pastoral Priority III

MARRIAGE & FAMILY LIFE

1. Our parish promotes Catholic teaching on marriage and family life beginning with youth and young adults.
2. We have a comprehensive marriage preparation process which, in collaboration with the diocese, provides future married couples with opportunities to grow in faith, to learn the moral and social teaching of the Church, including the full truth of conjugal love, and to acquire life skills for marriage.
3. We assist those in marriage preparation and help newlyweds to address their particular challenges and to become actively involved in the sacramental life and mission of the Church.
4. Our parish offers parents, especially new and single parents, opportunities to deepen their faith, and we help them to become involved in the faith formation of their children.
5. In a variety of ways, we respond to the various needs of our families and their members including: families suffering from domestic violence or addictions; couples in struggling marriages; divorced, separated and widowed persons; needy or troubled children and youth at risk; those in crisis pregnancies or post abortion trauma; and persons with disabilities.
6. We support the vocation of marriage and family life by providing enrichment opportunities, by promoting family and cultural traditions and practices, and by offering activities which bring families together within the parish community.
7. Our parish engages a qualified marriage and family life coordinator who works in collaboration with our pastor in implementing diocesan policies and guidelines.

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What challenges do we face?

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Pastoral Priority IV

A CULTURE OF LIFE & DIGNITY

1. Our parish provides ongoing education and formation in Catholic social teaching so that all members will actively affirm and foster human life and dignity, promote justice and peace, and respond to human need.
2. We engage ourselves in the threefold expression of social action: providing direct service to those in need, empowering people to help themselves and advocating for those without an effective voice.
3. Our parish, in collaboration with the Diocesan Office for Social Ministry, seeks to respond to the human needs of our own members and of those outside our boundaries with concern for the unborn and those who are poor, hungry, unemployed, homeless, immigrants, refugees, sick, aging, homebound, victims of crime, imprisoned, experiencing violence in relationships or dying.
4. Our parish, assisted by the Diocesan Office for Social Ministry, fosters faithful citizenship by educating and encouraging active participation in political and social processes in order to protect and promote human and Christian values.
5. Our parish seeks to promote social ministry under the direction of a qualified coordinator and a social ministry committee or team.

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What challenges do we face?

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Pastoral Priority V

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

1. Our parish leaders and members are committed to responding to our youth and young adults, both single and married, within their various cultures, and seek to integrate them into the full life and mission of the Church, particularly as parish-based.
2. Our parish engages the parents of youth to participate in discipling their children, that is, to know Christ and to make him known.
3. Our clergy and parish leadership consistently seek to include our youth and young adult members in all ministries open to them and in all parish activities and events, especially in various forms of outreach and service.
4. Our parish provides comprehensive ministry with our youth and young adults in programs and activities which balance spiritual, intellectual and social development.
5. Our parish provides for the ongoing formation of our youth and young adult ministers according to diocesan policies and guidelines, and engages a qualified coordinator of youth and young adult ministry.
6. Our parish adequately budgets for youth and young adult ministry.

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What challenges do we face?

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Pastoral Priority VI

PRIESTLY & RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

1. Our parish recognizes that God calls each of us to communion with him in Jesus and sends us in the Spirit to participate in the mission of Jesus whether as lay people, single or married, or in the consecrated or ordained life.
2. Faithful to the direction of Jesus to pray for more laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, we pray often and in many different ways, especially in our families, for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
3. In our parish, all programs of faith formation include education about Church vocations.
4. Within our parish pastoral council, we have an active parish vocations committee or team which fosters vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
5. Our pastor and parish leaders seek to identify potential candidates and invite them by name to discern whether God is calling them to the priesthood or religious life.
6. In our programs for youth and young adults we provide them with opportunities for exploring the possibility of a priestly or religious vocation.
7. We encourage our priests to promote vocations by spending time with our youth and young adults.

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Pastoral Priority VII

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

1. Our parish respects and appreciates the different cultures represented in our membership, and we are enriched by their inclusion.
2. Our parish leadership reflects our cultural diversity, and it seeks to ensure a proper response to the diverse needs and concerns of all language and cultural groups as well as to foster their full integration into the life of the parish.
3. Where cultural groups do not have substantial membership on the parish pastoral and finance councils, their needs and concerns, as well as their integration in the parish, are addressed by committees related to the office of the pastor.
4. We are committed to developing a sense of community among all the members of our parish, including all cultures, and we reach out to those who are not active participants.
5. While we foster the participation of everyone in all of our parish ministries and activities, we welcome the traditional devotions and practices specific to members of our various cultures.
6. We give ongoing attention to the identification and development of potential Church leaders from our different cultures so that they might provide the leadership necessary for collaboration by everyone in achieving our parish goals and objectives.

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Pastoral Priority VIII

THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION OF THE LAITY

1. Our parish promotes Christian stewardship as a way of life and is animated by a truly catholic spirit and missionary zeal which is demonstrated within but readily looks beyond parish boundaries to neighboring parishes, to the diocese and even beyond the diocese.
2. We actively support the diocesan Annual Catholic Appeal and wholeheartedly embrace the required special collections for national and worldwide missionary and charitable causes.
3. Our parish has a pastoral council and a finance council which are set up and function according to diocesan guidelines and to which our parish offices in the areas of ministry and administration are related. We adhere to all diocesan requirements for parish administration.
4. Our parish staff and leadership team members meet regularly with our pastor in order better to fulfill their particular roles and responsibilities toward accomplishing the mission of Christ.
5. We provide opportunities for parishioners and staff members to participate in programs of formation for various ministries and administrative roles.
6. We value effective communication as essential for building strong relationships within our parish and for realizing our goals.
7. We encourage and assist our lay members to embrace the vocation for which they are empowered by the Holy Spirit: to evangelize the cultures of which they are a part and to affect their environment for Christ.

What are we doing well?

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