

Diocese of Bridgeport Parish Pastoral Plan “Building a Bridge to the Future”

Part One: Introductory Information

Parish:

St. Jerome Church

Pastor:

Rev. David Blanchfield

Date:

September 7, 2016

Parish Task Force Members:

- 1) Rev. David Blanchfield
- 2) Rev. Rojin Zacharias Karickal
- 3) Kathy Coyne
- 4) Melissa Ely
- 5) Dan Loch
- 6) Joe O'Callaghan, Jr.
- 7) Nicole Tobin
- 8)
- 9)
- 10)
- 11)
- 12)

Leadership Position:

Pastor
Parochial Vicar
Director of Religious Education
Former Pastoral Council Member
Past Chairperson of Pastoral Council
Director of TOTAL (Youth Program)
Delegate to the 2014 Bridgeport Synod

Add additional lines if there are more Task Force members

Signature of the Pastor: *Rev. David Blanchfield*

Pastoral Challenge #1: Worksheets for Parish Goals and Action Steps

Please note: One Worksheet must be completed for each pastoral challenge to be addressed.

A. Pastoral Challenge to be addressed:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catechesis and Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Evangelization
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Life | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liturgy and Worship |
|--|---|

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority Area:

While St. Jerome in its 2016 DMI report (page 19) had "statistically significant" higher "Strongly Agree" percentages compared to "all parishes" for 7 of the 8 categories, the areas in which our parish could improve were:

- (1) St. Jerome parishioners who have a personal relationship with Jesus (23% Strongly Agree on DMI "Catholic Journey," page 12, vs. 32% all parishes) and
- (2) St. Jerome parishioners who believe in Scripture as the Word of God (63% Strongly Agree on DMI "Statistical Significance," page 19, vs. 69% all parishes).

To address our Liturgy and Worship priority area we shall introduce over the next six months four "Build your Faith Sundays" followed by four "Witness Talk Sundays." The Build your Faith Sundays will use homily time in creative ways to help our parish community have an experience of the Lord by entering more thoroughly into the Sunday Gospel. The following Witness Talk Sundays a parishioner after Communion will give a brief witness talk in which the speaker will talk about the personal importance of his or her Catholic Faith.

C. Statement of the First Goal to be achieved:

The goal of the "Build your Faith Sundays" will be to use the practice of Ignatian Contemplation in a guided meditation on the Gospel of that Sunday

- to help the congregant *enter into a deeper relationship with Jesus* as well as to experience the power of the Scriptures to help one encounter God, and
- to help parishioners see Scripture as that which *communicates the living Word of God* and not as just another source of information.

Homily time on Build your Faith Sundays will set the scene of the Gospel, get the parishioners into the scene, have them interact with the people in the scene, and end with quiet time.

The goal of the following Witness Talk Sunday will be to capitalize on our parish's vibrant faith-sharing groups

- to communicate the importance and necessity of *having a personal relationship with Jesus*, and
- to continue to model the sharing of personal faith stories to our parishioners.

a. Action Step# 1 to achieve the Goal:

Summary Information:

Timeline, Responsible persons, Diocesan assistance, Cost

The Parish Task Force Team will choose four Sundays with Gospels suitable for Ignatian Contemplation. We will choose Sundays for their likelihood of immersing the congregation in the Gospel story. A script will be prepared and the priests trained to deliver it at homily time. There also will be an introduction to the method in the weeks leading up to the first effort.

The Parish Task Force Team has finalized the Build Your Faith Sundays and we will publicize their start to the parish community in early October. The first will be on October 30, the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, the story of Zacchaeus. Future dates are December 18, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Joseph takes Mary as his wife; March 19, 2017 the Third Sunday of Lent, the Woman at the Well; and April 30, the Third Sunday of Easter, the Emmaus story.

The pastor, Fr. David Blanchfield, will write the Build your Faith Sunday scripts and Dan Loch will do publicity. Both Fr. David and Fr. Rojin Zacharias Karickal will prepare the Sunday congregation the week before the first and subsequent Build Your Faith Sundays.

During October we also will prepare, preview, and advertise the Witness Talks which our speakers will give the Sunday following the above Build Your Faith Sundays. The

speakers will come from our parish's men's and women's faith-sharing groups who meet weekly.

After April 30, 2017 the Parish Task Force Team will evaluate the Build your Faith and Witness Talk Sundays for their effectiveness in our progress toward achieving our first Synod Challenge goal.

There is no cost and we will not need diocesan help.

Pastoral Challenge #2: Worksheets for Parish Goals and Action Steps

Please note: One Worksheet must be completed for each pastoral challenge to be addressed.

A. Pastoral Challenge to be addressed:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catechesis and Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Evangelization | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family Life
<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership
<input type="checkbox"/> Liturgy and Worship |
|--|---|

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority Area:

While St. Jerome Church has a strong Religious Education program and a strong Youth Ministry program, our parents and families do not participate in our programs or Sunday liturgy proportional to their children. As the children get older they often are dropped off for Mass or Religious Education with little parent involvement.

C. Statement of the Second Goal to be achieved:

The goal is to provide ongoing workshops for parents in areas of concerns to them and in particular workshops on raising healthy children with an emphasis on spirituality and its impact on the overall physical social and emotional health of children. We strongly believe that if we offer opportunities for parents to come together to discuss issues in raising children, we will be able to assist them as parents and also have greater opportunities to share faith with them.

a. Action Step# 1 to achieve Second Goal:

We will design four parent workshop evenings that will focus on different aspects of raising healthy children. Each workshop will take a different area of concern to parents and offer parents both a developmental understanding of the issues as well as concrete ways parents can help their children in each area. Finally each workshop will help parents see how faith and spirituality are integral to family life and to the development of the whole child and family.

Workshop topics will include:

1. Raising Kids in Tough Times: How to Help Your Children Become Resilient and Hopeful in a Challenging World.
2. What Can Our Faith Teach Us about Managing Stress and Helping Our Children Live a Healthy Balance in Their Lives?
3. Why Does Community Matter? How Can the Christian Community Help Enrich Your Life?
4. Stillness in a Busy World: Learning and Teaching Our Children and Ourselves To Unplug from All the Noise and Listen to Their Heart.

Summary Information for Action Step #1:

- Timeline for completion:
The first two workshops will be offered in the Fall of 2016 and the second two in the Spring of 2017
- Responsible person/Task Force:
Joe O'Callaghan, Jr., the Director of TOTAL (Youth Ministry), and the St. Jerome religious education staff
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any):
None needed.
- Projected Costs (if any):
\$300 for food and supplies

Temporalities and Administrative Challenge: Worksheets for Parish Goals and Action Steps

Please note: One Worksheet must be completed for each temporalities challenge to be addressed

A. Temporalities and Administrative Challenge to be addressed:

- Buildings and Facilities**
 Finances
 Community Life

B. Rationale for Choosing this Priority Area:

Over the years St. Jerome Parish has done a yearly project to improve or upgrade our facilities. One important area that needs attention is the front entranceway to the church. That entranceway is the original concrete from 1962. It is cracked and last year Catholic Mutual insurance required us to replace one section. In addition, the landscaping in front of the church is an unattractive hodgepodge and there is no access for handicapped from the front of the church.

C. Statement of the Third Goal:

We will replace the old concrete, install a handicap ramp, and redo the landscaping to make it attractive and inviting.

a. Action Step# 1 to achieve Third Goal:

We will get quotes from three contractors and landscapers.

Summary Information for Action Step #1:

- Timeline for completion:
We will seek the quotes in September and early October 2016 for accomplishing the work.
- Responsible person/Task Force:
Alex Sgoutas of the St. Jerome Building and Grounds Team will co-ordinate this work.
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): None needed.
- Projected Costs (if any):
There is no cost at this point. The anticipated cost for the work based on early investigation is \$22,500.

b. Action Step #2 to achieve Third Goal:

We will research memorial brick fundraising companies as a way to finance the project.

Summary Information for Action Step #2:

- Timeline for completion:
In October 2016 the St. Jerome Pastoral Council will set up a committee to investigate and choose a memorial brick fundraising company.
- Responsible person/Task Force:
The St. Jerome Pastoral Council
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): None needed
- Projected Costs (if any): None

c. Action Step #3 to achieve Third Goal:

We will recruit a committee to run the memorial campaign. The goal will be to raise at least \$ 25,000.

Summary Information for Action Step #3:

- Timeline for completion:
The campaign will run in January and February 2017.
- Responsible person/Task Force:
A Council member, a volunteer, or a paid project manager will lead this committee.
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any):
None needed
- Projected Costs (if any):
None if a Council member or volunteer. TBD if a paid project manager.

d. Action Step #4 to achieve Third Goal:

The construction work to be done will include replacing all the concrete, installing the ramp, redoing the landscaping and putting in the memorial bricks. A blessing of the memorial bricks will then take place upon completion of the work.

Summary Information for Action Step #4:

- Timeline for completion:
The construction work will be done in early April 2017. The project should take one week.
- Responsible person/Task Force:
Alex Sgoutas and key members of the Building and Grounds Committee will oversee the project which should take one week.
- Diocesan Office assisting (if any): None needed
- Projected Costs (if any): \$22,500

Optional Question:

- 1. If you had the ability to respond to a third pastoral challenge, which would you choose and why?**

Catechesis and Education. We would establish an additional K-6 religious education program that is Scripture-based for both the children and their parents. We would invite each REACH grade's classes and their parents to the church hall for a Sunday morning inter-active Bible session focusing on activities and group conversations, possibly using the settings in "The Bible Blueprint" by Paprocki. We would recruit session leaders and offer coffee, beverages, and doughnuts. The goal would be to get parents more connected to Scripture and to addresses belief in Scripture as the Word of God.