

Resurrection of Our Lord Church Parish Pastoral Plan

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INTRODUCTION

In June 2003 Resurrection of Our Lord Parish completed its yearlong celebration of its 75th Anniversary. Providing the parish community with an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate its past 75-year history prompted many to ponder the future possibilities of the parish community as it continued its mission to spread the Gospel message for future generations. In response to these future considerations it was determined that a new parish pastoral council be formed using a new and innovative process based upon individual discernment and group consensus rather than the traditional election process.

In the Fall of 2004 names of possible council members were solicited from the parish community. The names of approximately 65 individuals were submitted for consideration. Those individuals were then invited to attend an information night in which the purpose and structure of a parish pastoral council was presented along with the personal qualities council members should bear. Those present were asked to prayerfully discern their interest in and capability of serving as a pastoral council member and were invited to attend a second evening to discern membership for said council. Of the original 65 individuals, roughly 25 people returned the following week to prayerfully discern membership for the parish pastoral council.

A total of nine individuals were selected through prayerful discernment and group consensus that evening and Resurrection of Our Lord's Parish Pastoral Council was formed. The membership of the council consists of four ex officio members, one appointed member, and the nine members selected through the discernment process. The members of Resurrection of Our Lord's Parish Pastoral Council are Rev. William C. Kaufman (pastor), Rev. John DiOrio (parochial vicar), Stephen Hewitt (principal), Dennis M. Mueller (director of faith formation), Viviana Packel, Jeanette Arthur, Robert Donahue, John Fiorella, Joanne Friel, Al Maguire, Frances Mordell, Joseph Notarfrancesco, Rodrigo Rocha, and Teresa Yankanich.

The council spent the following year working in collaboration with the parish community to create a parish pastoral plan that would serve as a "living" document designed to assist the parish community in successfully expressing its mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The pages that follow are the fruit of that labor.

THE PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

Everything that we do as a Church is grounded in the mission of the Church, and at the heart of that mission is the spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our parish mission statement is grounded in fulfilling the mission of Jesus Christ. It addresses our parish community's history, tradition, and composition and serves as a stark reminder of why we exist as a parish community.

Resurrection of Our Lord Parish Community Mission Statement

We, the people of God, of the Resurrection of Our Lord Parish, acknowledge our call and gather together to grow as a faith community. As a Community, baptized in Christ Jesus and confirmed by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to be:

A community joined together as a family to worship God by giving witness that we are Christian and in spirit and in truth by our active participation in the Sacraments of Our Lord, especially through the celebration of the Eucharist.

A Christian community that establishes and nourishes itself by our love for God, our immediate family, our parish and society.

A community that proclaims the Good News by practicing what has been taught and standing up to be counted as Christians and Catholic through love, faith and acts of kindness and by reaching out to bring back those who have become alienated and no longer heed the Good News.

A community that teaches the saving message of Christ by the strong commitment of priests, teachers, parents and laity to provide religious and spiritual development of adults, youth and children.

A community that serves the needs of others by sharing our talents, helping our shut-ins with visits, giving aid for spiritual and financial needs, taking down the barriers of indifference and prejudice and encouraging all to serve others so that we may build a strong bond of caring, love and faith.

We pray to God Our Father, through Our Lord Jesus Christ, that He send His Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us, so that we may continue to respond to the special call to be a parish faith community.

THE SEVEN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PARISH LIFE

The following seven elements are key components in nurturing a healthy faith community. While each of these elements comprises a separate area of parish life, all of the elements are interrelated. At the center of this relationship is the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist from which we take our identity and sustenance in Jesus Christ.

Evangelization

Evangelization encompasses the way in which a parish spreads the Gospel message. The goal of evangelization is to foster a deep appreciation for the faith among the faithful so that they will be emboldened to practice their faith with enthusiasm and invite others to share in their faith, the result of which transforms society. Evangelization is at the heart of all we do as Church for we are all called to bear individual and communal witness to Christ.

Worship

Worship encompasses the spiritual life of a parish community, which serves to build up the Body of Christ through personal and communal prayer. We express our faith through our public acts of worship. Through the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist, liturgies, sacraments, and devotions we proclaim our faith and carry out the mission of evangelization by giving public witness to the Gospel.

Word

Word encompasses our ongoing formation and maturation in faith. As with all relationships, we are called upon to grow and deepen our relationship with Christ. To enable such a deepening of our relationship we must come to know Christ intimately through sacred scripture and the sacred tradition of the Church. Such “catechesis” takes place in a wide variety of contexts, both formal and informal, the goal of which is to deepen our love for and knowledge of Christ so that like the Apostles and disciples we are inspired to share the Good News with others.

Community

Community encompasses many of the doctrinal themes of the Church. We are all one body united in Christ Jesus. We form one Church, one people, united by the Father, Son and Spirit. As one body we are called upon to support, celebrate, and nurture each other. As a parish community we are called upon to engender a sense of belonging emboldened by our modeling inclusivity and mutuality. Fostering Christian community is the natural outcome of parish life.

Service

Service encompasses our natural response to living the Gospel message. We cannot come to know Christ without being forever changed. Through our conversion we are called upon to be of service to others for God has no hands but our own. “The Church is called to both serve the needs of others and to eradicate the causes of injustice.”¹ We cannot be faithful to the Gospel message of Christ Jesus without being of service to others.

Stewardship

Stewardship encompasses the responsible use of one’s gifts and resources and the recognition that all of our gifts come from God. We should be humbled by God’s overwhelming generosity in our lives and respond to Him with profound gratitude. Stewardship is essential in parish life because it calls for the responsible sharing of our time, talents, and treasure for the support of the community and the mission of the Church in direct proportion to the gifts we have received from our loving God.

Leadership

Leadership encompasses the laity as well as the priests, religious, and pastoral staff of a parish community. Leadership involves visioning and re-visioning, planning and promoting, and enabling and empowering. An individual’s gift of leadership is placed at the service of the parish community so that it may successfully achieve the mission of the parish. While pastors bear the ultimate responsibility and authority within a parish, it is the entire parish community that is called to serve the parish with their gifts of leadership. Effective leadership is necessary to ensure the success of each of the essential elements and the parish community as a whole.

¹ Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council, Mary Ann Gubish & Susan Jenny, S. C. Paulist Press © 2001, p. 79

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PASTORAL PLAN

The Parish Pastoral Council, henceforth referred to as the PPC, held its first meeting in January 2005 to begin discussing the process for developing a Parish Pastoral Plan, henceforth referred to as “the Plan.” The PPC was presented with information concerning the Seven Essential Elements of Parish Life (Evangelization, Worship, Word, Community, Service, Stewardship & Leadership). These seven elements would provide the lens through which to assess the needs of the parish community.

The PPC began planning for its First Parish Assembly, which was scheduled for May 22, 2005. In an effort to inform parishioners of the nature and purpose of the assembly, PPC members spoke at all of the weekend masses concerning the seven essential elements of parish life beginning in April of that year. Each weekend featured one of the seven essential elements, what the element entailed, and how that element was currently being addressed in Resurrection of Our Lord parish. Parishioners were extended an invitation to attend the parish assembly each week leading up to the assembly. In addition to the weekend presentations at the masses, weekly bulletin inserts were provided which supplied additional information on each essential element. These inserts were also sent home to the families of our parish school and religious education program.

The First Parish Assembly was held on Sunday, May 22, 2005 at 3:00 PM. The assembly began with prayer, followed by brief presentations on the history of the parish and the parish’s demographics over the last 10 years. Participants were invited to gather in groups of eight to ten and each group was given a series of three discussion questions to work on as a group. All responses were written.

1. *What do I as a member of Resurrection Parish community expect of my parish?*
2. *How should we reach out to the broader community from our parish?*
3. *What do our demographics and data suggest that we do for the future?*

Each group was then given time to summarize key points in their discussion with all of those present. Each participant was then given an opportunity to provide a written response to the following question: *Which of the seven essential elements do we, as a parish community, need to focus on and why?*

The PPC then analyzed the data that was collected from the first assembly over the following months in an effort to identify common themes, areas of concern, or areas of need. These areas, themes, or needs would help to formulate the goals for the Plan. The three areas that received the most comments were Community, Evangelization, and Word in that order. It was those three elements that went on to form the basis for the Plan’s goals, which are as follows:

- Goal 1** To strengthen the spirit of community so that all members of our parish family will feel welcome and at home. (*Community*)
- Goal 2** To bring about or increase in all active and inactive parishioners, and non-registered Catholics, an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others. (*Evangelization*)
- Goal 3** To enhance the religious education of adults and youth, thus enriching their knowledge about the Catholic faith. (*Word*)

With the goals for the Plan created from the first assembly, the PPC began the process of planning for its Second Parish Assembly, which was scheduled for October 6, 2005. A second media campaign was initiated in September to inform the parish community of the goals selected for the Plan and how those goals came into being. Parishioners were encouraged to sign-up to work on a goal of interest to them during a “Goal Sign-Up Weekend” held the weekend of September 24 & 25. Those signing up to work on a goal were encouraged to attend the Second Parish Assembly.

The Second Parish Assembly was held Thursday, October 6, 2005 at 7:00 PM. Following prayer, participants were invited to move to one of three designated areas pertaining to each goal. Groups began brainstorming ideas for how the goal could be achieved. All ideas and suggestions were recorded in written form and each of the three groups was permitted an opportunity to share their discussion and ideas with all of those present.

The PPC then examined all of the comments made for each goal and began to formulate concrete ways to achieve the goal by forming specific and attainable objectives from the ideas and suggestions submitted by participants. Once all of the objectives had been written for each of the three goals the PPC then developed a timeline for the implementation of the Plan’s objectives over the next three years. The final result of which is Parish Pastoral Plan. The next section provides an overview of the Plan’s goals, objectives and implementation schedule.

RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD CHURCH PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: COMMUNITY

To strengthen the spirit of community so that all members of our parish family will feel welcome and at home.

- 1) To establish a Welcoming Committee by May 2006 whose responsibilities will include but will not be limited to personally welcoming all new parish members.
- 2) To form an Activities Committee to plan and develop activities, socials, and events for youth, young adults, families, adults and seniors by May 2007
- 3) To celebrate a heritage mass and social twice a year beginning October 2007.
- 4) To undertake an immediate redesign of our parish website in order to make it a more informative and interactive resource for the community.

GOAL 2: EVANGELIZATION

To bring about or increase in all active and inactive parishioners, and non-registered Catholics, an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.

- 1) To establish an Evangelization Committee by January 2008 to reach out to the broader parish community to foster a fuller participation in parish life.
- 2) To implement the concept of small faith sharing utilizing a program similar to Disciples in Mission by Lent 2008.
- 3) To develop a parish sponsored program to help Catholics reconnect with the parish community by October 2008.

GOAL 3: WORD

To enhance the religious education of adults and youth thus enriching their knowledge about the Catholic faith.

- 1) To incorporate a monthly youth and family mass in the current mass schedule utilizing the youth in ministerial roles by October 2006.
- 2) To establish an ongoing/periodic adult seminar series to address life issues, such as parenting skills, elder care giving, healthcare, etc., by June 2007.
- 3) To begin a bereavement ministry support group to assist those coping with the loss of a loved one by December 2006.
- 4) To conduct a yearly parish mission beginning November 2006.

An Explanation of the Implementation Timeline

The following page details the timeline for the implementation of the Plan's goals and objectives. The implementation of the Plan will occur over a five-year period. The timeline spans a three-year period allowing for the remaining two years to be available for

1. the assessment and evaluation of the implementation process
2. preparation for further pastoral planning
3. the implementation of any objectives that may be delayed due to unforeseen events or complications.

The order in which the objectives for each goal are being implemented over the next three years was determined by the PPC after prayerful discussion and reflection. It is important to note that each objective is equally important in assisting the parish community in achieving its mission of spreading the Gospel message. Therefore, those objectives occurring in year three of the Plan are just as vital as those set to begin during the first year. The PPC made a conscious effort to distribute the larger more involved objectives over the course of the three-year plan in order to allow sufficient time for the proper planning and implementation of those objectives.

Implementation Timeline

2006

- January To undertake an immediate redesign of our parish website in order to make it a more informative and interactive resource for the community. *(Community)*
- May To establish a Welcoming Committee whose responsibilities will include but will not be limited to personally welcoming all new parish members. *(Community)*
- October To incorporate a monthly youth and family mass in the current mass schedule utilizing the youth in ministerial roles. *(Word)*
- November To conduct a yearly parish mission. *(Evangelization)*
- December To begin a bereavement ministry support group to assist those coping with the loss of a loved one. *(Word)*

2007

- May To form an Activities Committee to plan and develop activities, socials, and events for youth, young adults, families, adults and seniors. *(Community)*
- June To establish an ongoing/periodic adult seminar series to address life issues, such as parenting skills, elder care giving, healthcare, etc.,. *(Word)*
- October To celebrate a heritage mass and social twice a year. *(Community)*

2008

- January To establish an Evangelization Committee to reach out to the broader parish community to foster a fuller participation in parish life. *(Evangelization)*
- Lent To implement the concept of small faith sharing utilizing a program similar to Disciples in Mission. *(Evangelization)*
- October To develop a parish sponsored program to help Catholics reconnect with the parish community. *(Evangelization)*

Final Notes

During the course of the Plan's implementation, the PPC will be carefully evaluating the Plan's outcomes in an effort to ensure that each objective is achieved and each goal successfully attained. In doing so the PPC will provide both verbal and written feedback to the parish community over the course of the Plan's implementation. During the course of the evaluation process, the PPC will continuously monitor the needs and resources of the parish community in order to ensure that current and future challenges are satisfactorily addressed so as to maximize the success of the current Plan.

Once all of the objectives have been achieved and the Plan's goals successfully attained the PPC in conjunction with the parish community will begin the planning process anew in an effort to ensure that Resurrection of Our Lord Parish continue to be successful in its mission to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.