†InFormation

RENEWING PARISHES

News for Pastoral Planners and Those Making the Plan a Reality!

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Do the Parishioner's know their Mission statement? Who will tell them?

A vital role of the parish pastoral council is to keep the parish focused on its own mission. The parish pastoral council does this by creating a pastoral plan for the parish and involving parishioners in accomplishing it. The parish pastoral plan is a concrete agenda, detailing the way the parish intends to live out its mission in the coming years. But, it is important for all parishioners to not only know of the parish plan and be engaged in its implementation, but also to be acquainted with the mission of the parish itself. The parish pastoral council also has the role of keeping the mission of the parish in front of the parishioners. The parish mission statement is a great learning tool and guide for future effort. It should clearly state who we are, what we are committed to, and what the goals of the parish are.
 Having said that, we ask ourselves...

What is the Parish Mission Statement?

A Parish Mission Statement is an expression of why our parish is in existence. It helps us identify ourselves as a community of faith and set broad goals. It answers the questions: Who are we as a parish? What do we value? What do we want to become as a parish community? The Parish Mission Statement is in concert with the mission of the universal church and the Archdiocesan Mission Statement.

The Parish Mission Statement should inspire, motivate and give direction for parish life activities. It explains the reasons why as a parish we exist. The words should be simple, clear, and meaningful to the people of the parish. It is meant to be understood and used by the parish community as it strives to be faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Christ: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all of creation". (Mark 16:15)

Developing a Parish Mission Statement and faithfully reviewing and revising it is a function of a Parish Pastoral Council. Since this is the Parish Mission Statement and because all parishioners are called to participate in the mission of the Church, the parish should be involved in the development or revision of the Mission Statement. When the Parish Mission Statement is finished, the Council continues the pastoral planning process by assessing the parish's strengths and needs and by setting broad goals and priorities which are rooted in the Mission Statement.

The entire parish community should be aware of the vision and share in the effort to make it a reality. Some thoughts on how to be sure that the entire Parish feels empowered, motivated and united in the effort to make the

mission a reality: 1– Publish it frequently in the Sunday Bulletin, 2– Refer to it and pray for the parish to realize it. 3– Make it an integral part of Council meetings and regular planning sessions.

If these steps feel uncomfortable, maybe the Mission should be revised. Let's ask ourselves what was our thinking when the mission was penned? Is it entirely too long? Is it hard to communicate? Is it in a language that is clear, concise and understandable to all? We might also consider how our parish has changed since the mission statement was written.

Notes-   *1*, *Every parish founded prior to 1999 has at least one copy of a "Mission Statement" on file in the Office for Research & Planning. You can request a copy. If you need to write a new "Mission Statement" you can find help on our web site @ Developing a Parish Mission Statement*

   2, *If you're reading a printed paper copy of the InFormation and want to follow the links in any of our articles go on line to the news letter web site @ http://www.archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/InFormationindex.html and follow the embedded links.*

This article written by Ron Lill

Parishes Provide A Wide Range of Human Services

Over 40,000 parishioners provide service to more than 325,000 people each year

Each year Pastors are asked to report on a wide range of activities in the annual Pastoral report recent changes to the "parish social ministry" questions enabled us to summarize the numbers of parishes and parishioners providing services and the number of people being served by the vitally important social ministries provided by parishes.   Without your conscientious reporting, the 40,539 parishioners providing social services for 326,721 people would not be recognized as it was in a recent article that The Catholic Standard & Times prepared on the social ministry of the Archdiocese. **See the chart on page 3...**

VOLUNTEERS!

Did you know? About 61.2 million people volunteered through or for an organization at least once between September 2005 and September 2006, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. The proportion of the population who volunteered was 26.7 percent. This is 2.1 percentage points lower than the volunteer rate in each of the prior 3 years and slightly lower than in 2002, the first year for which comparable data are available.

Volunteers are defined as persons who did unpaid work (except for expenses) through or for an organization.

(BUSY PEOPLE)

Digitally Enhance the Work of the Holy Spirit?

God gave us dominion over the things of this world and expects us to use them for the good of his church.   We can't afford to ignore the resources that have become available to us because we don't quite understand or feel a little intimidated with computers, the Internet, software, DVD's, PDA's, texting and iPods. We could save time and money with a little help from those that are more competent in the art of digital communications.

How?

The very first thing to do is to pray for the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Claim modern technology for the purpose of spreading the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. Share your ideas or questions with parish council and ask if they think that a proper use of digital tools can enhance the work of the parish. When you are ready, reach out to the entire parish for volunteers who understand the mission of the parish and new technology.

Some technology application already being used in churches are; 1- getting members into a database and using it for population, address changes and annual visitation; 2- integrating today's digital tools (such as iPods and Podcasting) into parish web sites; 3- reducing committee time and getting more done by using tools such as LISTSERV, *(An automatic mailing list server . When e-mail is addressed to a LISTSERV mailing list, it is automatically broadcast to everyone on the list. The result is similar to a news group* *or forum except that the messages are transmitted as e-mail and are therefore available only to individuals of the particular ministry or committee list. Interaction is protected by password security. For more information GOTO:* http://www.lsoft.com/default.asp *4 -* message boards and blogs for different ministries within the parish; 5- online classrooms for CCD, Sacramental Preparation, parish school, youth projects, and adult education; 5- on line surveys; 6-electronic fund transfers for collection while on vacation, for fundraisers, and an annual appeal; 7- all this centered on your own web site.

In a recent interview, Archbishop Celli, the President of The Pontifical Communications Council said "It's a challenge we have to confront at the places where man lives in this context. At the same time, the means of social communication are a great opportunity to find help in spreading the Gospel. There is a statement from Pius XII, in which the Pope refers to the means of communication of his time, defining them as "a gift of God." Imagine if he lived today. It is undeniable that these means place many possibilities at the disposal of one who wants to be a missionary".
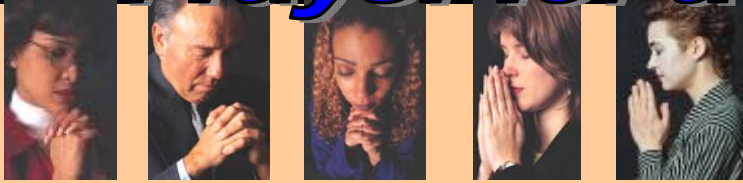
Article by Ron Lill

Cont. from Page 2
Parishes Provide A Wide Range of Human Services

Program	# of Parishes	About how many parish staff & parishioners are involved in providing the service?	About how many people are served or participate?
Feeding Programs	35	965	34,903
Home Food Delivery	102	2,024	15,708
Food Cupboard	84	565	20,742
Food Distribution (Holidays)	168	2,834	19,403
Food Collections for Others	131	3,085	24,122
All Food Programs		**9,473**	**114,878**
Habitat for Humanity	16	316	157
Home Mortgage Assistance	10	40	67
All Housing Programs		**356**	**224**
Alcoholics Anonymous	78	135	3,292
Narcotics Anonymous	29	18	985
All Addiction Services		**153**	**4,277**
Nursing and Health Ministry	51	361	5,271
Health Support Groups	11	107	411
Blood Drives	123	678	9,736
All Health Related Programs		**1,146**	**15,418**
Bereavement Programs	118	**612**	**7,628**
Pastoral Care Migrants	26	**67**	**1,541**
Literacy Programs	22	134	956
Child Care Programs	22	278	719
Head Start Programs	18	72	973
CARES (Extended Day)	130	756	5,413
All Education and Enrichment Programs		**1,240**	**8,061**
Abstinence Education	22	76	1,919
Marriage Promotion Programs	62	721	2,755
		797	**4,674**
Cash Assistance	83	301	1,683
Clothing Drives	143	1,751	11,437
H.O.P.E. Programs	43	619	2,526
Fundraising for Social Ministry	128	4,853	13,490
Gift or Toy Collections	182	7,395	50,033
All Basic Needs Assistance Programs		**14,919**	**79,169**
Sister Parish	23	**505**	**4,972**
Camps	56	568	4,274
CYO Social Ministry	132	2,992	14,965
Senior Citizen Programs	129	859	13,067
Community Organizations	26	198	2,790
Other Neighborhood Services	22	460	2,208
All Socialization and Neighborhood Services		**5,077**	**37,304**
Services for Unemployed	16	42	529
Homemaker Services	33	507	686
Homebound Senior Services	136	2,246	8,703
Transportation	103	846	2,636
Tuition Assistance	120	408	2,504
All Social Support Services		**4,049**	**15,058**
Newborn/Mother Support	56	826	2,337
Counseling Parenting Prenatal	20	77	325
Support for Those Affected by Abortion	26	45	163
All Pregnancy Services		**948**	**2,825**
All Other Services		**1,197**	**30,692**
Total Number of Catholic Parishioners Providing Services and Number of People Benefiting in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 2006		**40,539**	**326,721**

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Prayer for a Meeting

ROOTED IN PRAYER

The Parish Pastoral Council is the pastoral planning body of the parish. It carries out this task in collaboration and cooperation with the pastor, the parish pastoral staff, committees, groups and parishioners. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council need to be rooted in prayer, open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, committed to patient listening and study, and working to recommend to the pastor the plans and directions which will enhance the quality of parish life and promote parish vitality. Serving effectively on the pastoral council can be quite demanding after a long day. By the end of a nighttime council meeting it is sometimes easy forget to acknowledge God's presence and thank God for the opportunity to serve. But sometimes, the prayer at the end of a meeting is much more important to help council members keep things in perspective. Here is a suggestion for a closing prayer after a council meeting:

Lord of Day and Night
of beginnings and endings,

as we prepare to conclude this meeting,
we once again lift up our hearts to You,
the Divine Source of All Life.

We thank You for the gifts that have been present
within this act of service to the community.
For the gifts of fellowship and understanding,
of mutual respect and shared vision,

We are grateful.
For the gifts of perseverance
and of insight into the common concerns we share,
for these and all other graces, we are thankful.

As you have blessed our coming together,
now bless our departure and journeys homeward.
May Your Ever-Youthful Blessing be upon us,
in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

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Note:
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Trivia Box

How many Vicariates are there in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia?

Has your parish or Cluster entered into a Planning Process?
Do you need a professional Facilitator?
The office of Research and Planning maintains a list of trained and experienced Resource people.
Contact us at: *The Archdiocese of Philadelphia*
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Phila, Pa 19103
tn# *215-587-3545*   E-mail *orp@adphila.org*

How are Young Catholic Adults Different From Their Elders?

Young adult Catholics are different than older Catholics in a variety of ways according to Dean Hoge of Catholic University. Data on how young adult Catholics differ from their elders is available from the 2003 Notre Dame Catholic survey, a random sample of Catholics 18 or older. The researchers divided the sample into three age groups. First was age 18-39, "Post-Vatican II Catholics." Second was 40-62, "Vatican II Catholics," that is, Catholics whose impressionable years included the Second Vatican Council or its aftermath. Third was 63 or older, "Pre-Vatican II Catholics," whose impressionable years were clearly prior to the Council. The second group (born 1941 to 1963) is similar to the Baby Boomers, and the first group (born 1964 or later) are Post-Boomers.

The youngest group, which we will call "Post-Vatican Catholics," represents 42 percent of the total, and the Pre-Vatican Catholics represent only 17 percent. The influence of the Pre-Vatican Catholics will disappear in the next two decades, and the two younger groups will become the lay leaders. The uniqueness of these young adult Catholics can be described in three statements.

Young adult Catholics call for greater individual authority in religious and moral decisions.

Asked if Catholics need to obey church teachings even if they disagree with them. Twenty-six percent of the young adults said yes. But the older Pre-Vatican Catholics held a different view; 42 percent said yes.

Young adult Catholics want more influence of laity in institutional decision-making They want lay people to have more say in choosing parish priests, they want better financial reporting at all levels, and relative to their elders, they are more in favor of withholding donations to the Church until lay people have more voice in financial decisions.

Young adult Catholics are less invested in the institutional Catholic Church. Young adults attend Mass, receive Communion, and go to private confession with a priest much less than older Catholics

Other research confirms that young adult Catholics are not as involved in church life as older Catholics. A large 1999 study of participation in Catholic small faith groups found that between 500,000 and 800,000 adults and youth participate in such small groups--mainly in parishes, but only 19 percent of the participants were 18-39 years old. Today, reform movements such as Call to Action and Voice of the Faithful find few young adults in their membership. For whatever reason, Catholic young adults are fairly detached from the institutional Church.

According to Hoge, this raises a basic question. If young adult Catholics want more lay input in church governance and more accountability of leaders to the laity, will today's young adults be committed enough to the institutional Church in the future to give their energies to reform movements? Or will they be only indifferently involved in the Church, taking the attitude that "my faith is in God, not in the Church, and what the church leaders do doesn't matter to me"?

Dr. Robert Miller Dir. Office for Research And Planning Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Welcome!

A Parish with a Welcoming Spirit
By Mrs. Alta Slagle

Saint Paul Church in Valparaiso, Indiana is one of three Catholic churches in the Diocese of Gary, Indiana. We will be celebrating our 150th anniversary in 2008.

We have 2,726 families in our parish, for a total of 7,755 members. We have a K through 8 school with an enrollment of 386 students. Our religious education program has 610 students registered from first grade to confirmation classes.

One of the goals of evangelization for Catholics is invitation. The manner in which we welcome newcomers to our churches speaks volumes about our attempts at evangelization. At Saint Paul, we take pride in our welcoming spirit. We have parishioners voluntering as greeters and registrars; they are part of the welcoming committee. We position the greeters outside the doors of the church. There are three doors and we have two greeters at each door. Then, at the end of every weekend mass, our pastor announces that newcomers can register in a quiet area (our reconciliation room).

The registrars welcome the new family and give them a pictorial directory and our Welcome Packet, which contains a campus map, a ministry booklet, our school information, and many ministry brochures. Each item in the packet is explained and any questions people have are answered. We also take this opportunity to invite the family to join a ministry and to tour our facility.

The data from the new family's registration form is entered into our census system the Monday following their registration. Within two weeks of registering, the census secretary sends them a letter, which has a bold line in the greeting, "Welcome to Saint Paul Church." It states that we are happy to include them as parishioners and hope that they feel at home with us. We explain our pride in the many ethnic groups we have in our parish. We go on to say that we are here to serve them and they should call with any ministerial needs. We close by inviting them to share, as they are able, themselves and their gifts.

One month after they register, all newcomers receive a telephone call from a member of the parish Stewardship Committee. The caller welcomes them and answers any questions. Also, the new family is invited to bring up the gifts during the mass they attend. When their names are announced at mass, it is noted that they are new parishioners.

We have a giving tree in our lobby and the newcomers' family names are written on green leaves and these are placed around the giving tree on the wall. We believe this shows that we welcome new growth. The leaves remain for two years and then one group of newcomers is replaced by another group, with another shade of green leaves.

Each year in the spring, we invite all the newly registered from the previous year to a very informal Sunday brunch. It's a time for them to ask questions of the ministry leaders and the pastor. They get to know the other newcomers and share stories of their journey. We always like to ask why they chose Saint Paul Church and take pride in their responses.

We believe that this system works well because we meet people where they are, new to our parish and attending mass, and we welcome and register them.

Mrs. Alta Slagle is the Pastoral Associate for Stewardship and the Office Manager at St. Paul Church in Valparaiso, Indiana. She has a Bachelors Degree from Purdue University in the School of Humanities. She and her husband have four children and five grandchildren.

NOTE: This article appeared in the October issue of "The Evangelization Exchange" the online Newsletter for parish leaders. For more Information and materials available from the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association Visit them at www.pncea.org ...*Ed.*

Did You Know?

According to the U.S. Department of Education, for every 100 Hispanic children entering kindergarten, 63 will graduate from high school and only 11 will obtain a bachelor's degree by the age of 29. Parishes might want to work to reverse the trend through programs and initiatives focusing on Hispanics' educational needs including mentoring and financial support.