

**ST. MARY
ROMAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH**

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GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT WE PLAN FOR OUR FUTURE

St. Mary Parish Strategic Plan

Guided By The Spirit, We Plan For Our Future

October 2009

Areas of Focus

Spirituality Team

all Parish spiritual resources for public and private prayer - weekday and weekend Masses, Preaching, Sacrament of Penance, Adoration, etc.

Educational/Faith Formation

all programs that expand understanding of our Faith (Religious Education, Life Teen, Parish Lecture Series, Scripture Study, Men's Ministry etc.)

Social Outreach Team

all efforts to implement our Catholic social teaching and all Parish ministries that serve those in need (Dorothy Day, Midnight Run, Life Teen Outreach, etc.)

Social/Fellowship Team

all Parish community building activities/events (Lenten Fish Frydays, Parish Picnic, Parish Fair, Widows and Widowers, Senior Citizens' Luncheon, New Parishioners' Welcome etc.)

Facilities/Physical Team

all Parish physical facilities (Church, School, Parish Hall, Parish Office, Barn, Cemetery, rental properties, parking, etc.)

Finance Team

all aspects of Parish finances (weekly offertory, budget, use of assets, special fundraising, Annual Bishop's Appeal, etc.)

Communications Team

all methods of making information available to Parishioners (web-site, bulletin, town hall meetings, Mass announcements etc.)

What is a Parish Strategic Plan?

Simply put, a Parish Strategic Plan is a roadmap that will guide us, giving direction to our Parish life now and in the future.

Strategic planning is not a Parish program, nor is it a project. It is a process that will help us take a long, hard and careful look at who we are as a Parish, what we are doing and how we are doing it. It will give us an opportunity to ask ourselves:

- What are our strengths?
- What are our most pressing needs?
- How can we make our Parish stronger?
- What are our future goals and objectives?

Our Parish Strategic Plan will help us look at our mission and our vision, develop appropriate goals and objectives for our future, and the strategies to accomplish those goals. We will do all of that together as a Parish family, helping us live even more faithfully our commitment to Jesus Christ and to his Church.

Why?

If we want to strengthen our already dynamic Parish, we must look to the future and collectively chart the course for succeeding generations.

Developing a strategic plan is the most important thing we can do for an organization as large and complex as our Parish. Not to do it would be irresponsible. A long



St. Mary
Roman Catholic Church

range plan will help us avoid short-term mistakes.

Keep in mind, we are planning not only for next year, but for the next 5 - 10 years, and we'll be evaluating our plan periodically as conditions change.

We Need You!

It is our goal to involve as many Parishioners as possible in the planning process. Here are some ways that you can be involved.

- Completing and returning our Parish survey
- Participating in our Parish forums (watch

our bulletin for dates)

- Attending a listening session or focus group
- Encouraging others to be involved
- Praying for our Parish in this process (see prayer on back page)
- Reading "Guided By The Spirit," our Parish Planning Newsletter

Who Can I Contact?

Any member of the Strategic Planning Committee would be a great source of information. Please see committee list on back page.

All comments and questions should be directed to the Parish Office at (203) 438-6538.

Homily of Msgr. Bronkiewicz at all Masses, October 17 and 18, 2009

Someone once said that "when you fail to plan, you plan to fail." Looking back over the past 7 years as your Pastor, I cannot think of anything more important to the life and future of Saint Mary Parish than what I am about to announce. **We - you and I - are going to develop a Strategic Plan for our Parish.**

Simply put, our Plan will be a strategic roadmap that will guide our Parish as we carry out our mission and work toward achieving our future goals and objectives.

Our planning process will help us take a long and hard look at our Parish. What are our strengths, what are our weaknesses? What are our most pressing needs? Is there room for improvement in any area of our Parish life? What new opportunities and programs do we need to add?

Our Plan will chart our course for the next 5 – 10 years, giving us a sense of direction and helping us live even more faithfully our commitment to the Lord and his Church.

Now is the Best Time

Now is the best time to do the planning we need to do because our Parish is in good shape. Our Parish Ministries are thriving thanks to our growing corps of volunteers – 143 men and women signed up for Parish ministries during our recent "Time and Talent " Weekend. Thanks to your generosity, our Parish Development Campaign was very successful. We have been able to reduce our Parish indebtedness by \$1.6 million thus far. I am also happy to report that again this year, we received an A+ from the independent auditors who reviewed our Parish financial controls and procedures. And, for the second year in a row, our School has been nationally recognized for its excellence. Now is a perfect time to plan for our future.

Four Things to Keep in Mind

There are four things I want to emphasize as we begin our planning process:

- the **first** is the need to look at every aspect of our Parish life –Spirituality, Education, Fellowship, Outreach, Facilities, Finance and Communications. There are no sacred cows. There is nothing we cannot talk about or discuss. Candor and honesty are essential to this process.
- **second**, in all that we will address and consider our guiding principle must be what is best for our Parish, not our own personal agendas, not what I want or don't want, not what I need or don't need.
- **third**, our pastoral planning process will be my first priority as Pastor and our first priority as a Parish until we have developed a plan by early spring.
- the **fourth** and final point I want to underline is the great value of a strategic planning process. It will give us the opportunity as a Parish to look at our mission and vision and develop goals and objectives for our future and strategies that will help us to accomplish them. And to do all of that **TOGETHER.**

Parish Mission and Vision

Our mission as a 21st century Roman Catholic Family of Faith can be summed up in three words: **FAITH, PRAYER AND WITNESS**

- **FAITH** - to live the gift of our Catholic faith each day and to enrich our understanding of that gift
- **PRAYER** – to celebrate and express our faith through our prayer and worship, especially the Mass
- **WITNESS** – to practice our faith through our own good example and service to others

Our Parish vision is to enhance and strengthen the way we carry out our mission by creating

- a greater variety of ways to deepen our understanding of that rich gift of faith we share
- a better environment for our prayer and worship
- and even more opportunities to help those in need by sharing our resources

Our Strategic Planning Process

Our planning process will be carried out in three phases:

- **Phase One** – Fact Finding – which will include a parishioner survey, roundtable forums, and interviews. The data we gather will be assessed by teams covering all aspects of our Parish life, and we plan to report the findings to you in mid January.
- In **Phase Two** our teams will develop strategic initiatives to address areas for continued growth and expansion, areas of weakness that need improvement, and new opportunities for faith, prayer and witness. We expect to complete Phase Two by the end of April, and finalize the plan for publication to the Parish by mid May.
- Finally, in **Phase Three** we will communicate and begin to implement our strategic initiatives.

Throughout the course of our planning process we will be updating you with interim reports on a regular basis.

To manage our planning process I have asked Dick Camuso, Chair of our Finance Council, and Deacon Henry Hein, both of whom have had considerable experience in strategic planning. They will head up the Operating Group which will assist me in overseeing the overall process. An additional Board of Advisors will provide periodic feedback to me and our Operating Group. I am very grateful to the 56 capable and dedicated parishioners who have accepted my invitation to play a more active role in our planning process.

What I am announcing today is not just another program. It is a process that will help us take a careful look at every aspect of our Parish life and all that we are doing to make us an even stronger Community of Faith. **It will involve all of us who love our Parish and who want to make it an even better spiritual home.**

The one thought I want us to keep in mind as we begin our planning is this:

**The quality of our planning
will determine the quality of our success!**

And that means we need to hear from you. There are two ways we ask you to participate. First, we ask you to complete a one page survey, and second, we invite you to participate in roundtables and discussion groups that will be held after all Masses during the month of November.

You will find a newsletter and survey in this week's Bulletin. Please complete this one page survey as soon as possible. It will provide leading indicators to help our thinking in this initial stage of our planning.

I know you're busy, so I'd encourage you to do it right after Mass as you enjoy a cup of coffee. After all Masses in the Church, please join us in the Barn. After all Masses in the Hall, please come to the 6th grade classroom. You can learn more about this effort and fill out the survey at the same time. You may also leave the surveys in drop-off boxes that will be placed in the back of our Church and Parish Hall for the next six weeks or return the survey to the Parish Office. The survey will also be on line at our Parish website beginning this week. The website address is in the Bulletin. But, please, help us by filling it out – all it takes is a few minutes. This is our Parish, and we need to hear from you.

As I mentioned earlier, we will be conducting roundtable forums—discussion groups during November to dig deeper into issues identified by our survey. When the detailed locations for our roundtables are announced, please sign up and attend one.

Since the quality of our planning will determine the quality of our success, let's strive for excellence, and if we're going to do that, we need to have everyone on board. That means your full cooperation and participation as we go forward. The critical success factor is you, the members of our Parish Family. We can do this and do it well only with your help.

As I conclude, may I make one more request. Join me in praying for the success of our planning process for one and only one reason – because we love our Parish.

Know how grateful I am and how proud I am to be your Pastor.



Parish Planning Committee

Operating Group

Dick Camuso
Deacon Henry Hein
Mike Cardí
Mimi Delcuze
Beth Gollogly
Ben Nneji
Paul O'Connell
Sheila Stanziale

Advisory Board

Digby Barrios
Nanette Bracken
Deacon Hans Gram
Jan Hebert
Joyce Ligi
Remy Rodas

Spirituality Team

Barbara Hecht
Sandy Hoddnott
Jerry Lambert
Paula Molloy
George Schuster
Sue Feeser

Educational/Faith Formation

Mary Jo Calamai
Ed Tonnessen
Rick Belmonte
Jane Lambert
Margaret Scally

Social Outreach Team

Mary Staudt
Bob Wendel
Sam Jensen
Sue Fernandez
Bob Iseley
Janie Nneji

Social Fellowship Team

Frank Calise
Carolyn Witthoft
Frank Alvarez
Barbara Baughman
Anne Doty
Bob Tulipani

Facilities/Physical Team

Joe Boland
John Davidson
Aileen Egan
Tom Leporati
Frank McPike
Ellen Tarsi

Finance Team

Nick Lang
Ralph Passarelli
Cathy Savoca

Communications Team

Roger Grannis
Jennifer Mitchell
Bob Calamai
Tim O'Malley
Kathryn Shelava

How Will It Happen?

This planning effort will be a collaborative effort involving our laity, clergy and Parish staff and will demand an extraordinary amount of planning, perseverance and prayer.....clearly with the Holy Spirit guiding our efforts.

The initial phase of our planning process will be centered on collecting and understanding the facts about our Parish. Parish organizations and ministries will be surveyed. Listening sessions and open forums will be held, and a survey will be available to all Parishioners.

All aspects of our Parish life will be examined through seven areas of concentration. Teams have been assigned to these areas, and in the second planning phase they will develop strategic initiatives to address the findings highlighted in the initial phase. The teams will be supported by an Operating Group and Advisory Board in preparing the final recommendations of our Parish plan.

Parish forums will be held to review the strategic planning work, and, at the end of the process, our Parish strategic plan will be presented to our Parish advisory and finance councils for a final look and to our Pastor for approval.

Parish Involvement

Our plan will be our guide to living out our mission and vision. To succeed, it will require the commitment, energy and partnership of

ALL our Parishioners. By planning together, our parishioners and our parish will grow stronger through the relationships we build with each other.

Let us remain open to the workings of the Holy Spirit to guide us all to be the Family of Faith God wants us to be. Together we can and will accomplish the goals and objectives of our Parish plan with God's help.

We hope to become a model of how parishes in an urban core can be a dynamic force for the 21st century and stay ahead of the pace of change.

If we are to lead rather than follow, we must follow a process that invites our Parishioners to participate in the development of our Parish mission and vision, the identification of priorities and the definition of the steps required to achieve our goals.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, as the people of Saint Mary Parish, dedicated to the Mother of God, we ask Your help as we plan for the future of our wonderful Family of Faith.

Throughout our history You have blessed our community with many gifts, and we are so grateful. Each day we try our best to live our Catholic Faith and to express this great gift of God in our prayer and witness.

In this 9th year of a new millennium, the 127th of our history, we have discerned Your call to take a closer look at who we are and all that we do so that we can grow even stronger in our commitment to God's Word and the teaching of our Church.

As we continue our Parish planning, which will mean so much to the future of our Faith Community, we ask Your special guidance. Bless us with all of the graces we need to plan carefully and well and to implement the plan that we will develop with Your assistance.

All of this we ask through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God, and in the name of her Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Your prayer support is greatly needed...Thank you!

Time Line

October	}	Introduce Plan
November		
December	}	Parish Participation & Team Analysis
January		
February	}	Findings to Parish
March		
April	}	Strategic Initiatives
May		
	}	Recommendations