

**John Paul II Catholic Community  
Strategic Planning Committee:  
Worship Sub-Committee 2018**

## I. Purpose

To assist the John Paul II Parish Pastoral Team and Council with gathering data and examining parish programs to identify strengths and weaknesses within our parish and offering recommendations on where improvements might be made.

**Vision Statement:** Through God's grace we are drawn together in faith, hope, and charity as we strive to achieve salvation by building a strong Catholic Christian community firmly rooted in the gospels and the living sacraments.

**Mission Statement:** As members of the Body of Christ, united with the Diocese of Boise and the universal Church, we, the People of the Saint John Paul II Parish are called to build up the Kingdom of God and achieve salvation by:

- Promoting a single community of life-long faith formation; spiritual growth through Scriptures, Sacraments, and prayer; and recognition of cultural diversities.
- Defending and caring for those who are most vulnerable and in need through prayer and charitable acts.
- Enhancing stewardship and growth through talent, finances and education to meet the needs of our growing Catholic community.
- Providing the necessary facilities and resources to fulfill our Vision and Mission Statements

**Sub-Committee Goal:** Provide opportunities for Saint John Paul II parishioners to deepen their personal relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Mass, various parish ministries and catechesis.

## **II. Worship Sub-Committee**

### **(A) Worship Sub-Committee Team Members:**

- Alex Contreras
- Ester Torres (Recorder)
- Joe Earnest (Chair)
- Maria Cortez
- Steve Bright

### **(B) Areas of Focus**

#### **Welcoming Committee:**

This area encompasses a variety of Parish programs that often cross over into other areas of focus. The Sub-Committee was tasked with identifying the current strengths, weaknesses and areas for growth and address the following questions:

- Do we welcome people into our Community?
- How can we create a more welcoming Parish for newcomers and less-active parishioners?
- Do we have an outreach program for absent parishioners?
- How can we increase participation in Parish Life?
- How can we inform, encourage, and enlighten our community with consistent, engaging and effective communication? (Bulletin, Website, Mass/Pulpit Announcements, Other Technology)
- How do we create and encourage cultural harmony?

#### **The Holy Mass**

This area focused on the celebration of the Holy Mass and the parish clergy, including both priests and deacons. The Sub-Committee was tasked with identifying the current strengths, weaknesses and areas for growth and address the following questions:

- Are the times and number of Masses appropriate for the demographic we serve? Keeping in Mind Canon Law 905 §1. A priest is not permitted to celebrate the Eucharist more than once a day except in cases where the law permits him to celebrate or concelebrate more than once on the same day. §2. If there is a shortage of priests, the local ordinary can allow priests to celebrate twice a day for a just cause, or if pastoral

necessity requires it, even three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

- Are we using our Priests/Deacons appropriately? Keeping in mind Canon Law (above), and our current situation where our two priests say 8 Masses between them each weekend. They may celebrate even more when Weddings, Funerals, or Quinceanos are scheduled. They also have Baptisms, Daily Mass, Anointing of the Sick (Caring for the dying and homebound), religious education, administrative responsibilities, etc. that are handled throughout the week and weekend.
- How do we ensure that our priests are spiritually and physically cared for?
- How do we increase and sustain Mass attendance and participation?
- How can we limit the number of people in the sacristy before and after Mass so the priests can properly prepare themselves? (Canon Law 909)
- How can we encourage discipleship and promote vocations at our Masses?
- How can we provide spiritual growth opportunities to help people strengthen their relationship with Christ?

### **Mass Ministry**

- This area focuses on the ministries performed by lay people before, during, and after the celebration of the Holy Mass. The Sub-Committee was tasked with identifying the current strengths, weaknesses and areas for growth and address the following questions:
  - Review the procedures for Mass Ministers – are they current, effective, bi-lingual?
  - How can we more effectively recruit and train volunteers?
  - What type of leadership training program can be implemented to improve the impact of ministry leaders?
  - What is a good method to encourage, acknowledge, and celebrate individuals' contributions of time, talent and treasure?
  - What is a good method of ensuring the same people aren't involved in several ministries? This is reducing opportunities for others to volunteer and participate?
  - What sustainable operational structures are necessary to ensure the long-term success of these ministries? What methods can be implemented to ensure the parish staff and lay-person management coordinate and assist the pastor with day-

to-day business operations?

- How can we encourage discipleship and promote vocations through our Mass Ministries?

### **Religious Education – Adult**

This area focused on formal and informal catechesis of adult parishioners. The Sub-Committee was tasked with identifying the current strengths, weaknesses and areas for growth and address the following questions:

- Continual catechesis of adults – Review existing efforts: bulletin articles, Gospel Reflections, Reflection inserts, Keeping it Catholic, web site, books, etc? What other ideas are there for getting adults and parents to engage?
- Sacramental Prep – review of existing programs and effectiveness in preparing and retaining adults through sacramental preparation (RCIA, Confirmation, Profession of Faith, Weddings, Convalidation). How do we manage and support participation in sacraments that begins with the preparation and training and provides a means to continue the sacramental journey throughout a participant's life?
- RCIA – is the current program effective? How do we recruit additional sponsors and catechists? How can we better serve the Hispanic population?
- Evangelization - review of existing worship related procedures & committees (Cursillo, retreats, bible studies, etc.). Are we providing spiritual growth opportunities to help people strengthen their relationship with Christ?
- Review the current methods of caring for the elderly (Hospital, Homebound, Assisted Living, etc.). Are we providing the correct level of contact? How can we improve?
- What are the best methods for recruiting, training, and retaining the volunteers? (Catechists, Mass Ministers, Funeral Dinners, etc.)
- What type of spiritual growth opportunities are we providing to enhance the cultural harmony between our Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parishioners? Can we improve?
- How do we catechize and care for the spiritual needs of the different age groups (single young adult, married youth adult, middle age, elderly)?
- Safe Environment – How do we educate, train, enforce, renew, etc.? How do we

- provide a safe environment to grow in faith for our adults and children to grow in faith?
- Can we better use technology for catechesis?
- What type of spiritual formation activities can be provided for couples and families?
- How do we equip parishioners to explain and defend our Catholic faith so that we will attract others to our Catholic beliefs?

### **Religious Education – Youth**

This area focused on the Religious Education program, EDGE and Life Teen programs. The Sub-Committee was tasked with identifying the current strengths, weaknesses and areas for growth and address the following areas and questions:

- Elementary (Grades 1-5)
- Edge (Grades 6-8)
- Life Teen (Grades 9-12)
- Confirmation (Grade 10)
- RCIC (7 – 18 years old)
- Sacramental Prep (Reconciliation, First Communion, Confirmation)
- Bible studies
- Supervision
- Circle of Grace (children) – How do we educate, train, enforce, renew, etc.?
- How can we retain our youth after sacramental prep (First Communion)?
- What are parents and youth looking for in a continuing education program?
- How do we train and encourage parents to be examples to their children and understand their responsibility of being the first catechists to their children?
- How can we make the registration process easier for both staff and parents?
- How do we create and encourage cultural harmony, especially with the parents?
- How can we encourage discipleship and promote vocations through our youth programs?
- How do we equip our youth to explain and defend our Catholic faith so that we will attract others to our Catholic beliefs?

### **III. Process**

#### **(A) Interviews**

The team members interviewed the leaders of the ministry groups. Some interviews were conducted individually, by phone, and others were conducted in person with the team as a whole. The team met bi-weekly beginning with the first Strategic Planning Committee meeting. At these meetings the team members would report back to the team on their findings from individual interviews and other acquired information.

#### Parish Survey

The team conducted a parish survey prior at each mass held on the weekend of May 20<sup>th</sup> at Christ the King and Holy Rosary churches. The survey was presented in both Spanish and English. The survey was created after the team reviewed surveys from other parishes, and by reviewing the questions presented to the team by the Strategic Planning committee and determining which questions were the most important, and that would best be answered by a parish-wide survey.

#### **(B) Parish Survey**

##### **Summary**

The survey consisted of a single page which consisted of 24 total questions. The survey instructed parishioners to fill out only one survey per family. Questions 1-16 presented statements about parish life to which the parishioner would answer whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, or whether the statement did not apply to them. Question 17 asked about the frequency at which the family attended mass. Questions 18-21 collected family demographic information. Questions 22 and 23 asked whether any minor children were enrolled in religious education programs at the parish. Question 24 asked whether the parishioner is registered with the parish.

A sample survey is on the following page:

John Paul II Parish Life Survey 2018

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. They will be collected by the ushers or can be given to the ushers after mass. This survey is anonymous. **Please only fill out only one survey per family.** Thank you for your help.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Does not apply to me
1. The weekend Masses are held at convenient times.					
2. I/we would benefit from a brief introduction to the Mass theme at the beginning of the Mass.					
3. There is enough time for reflection during Mass.					
4. There are sufficient opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.					
5. There are sufficient opportunities to attend Eucharistic Adoration					
6. I/we am satisfied with the types of religious programs offered for children.					
7. I/we am satisfied with the religious education programs offered for adults.					
8. I/we am satisfied with the sacramental preparation programs offered at the Parish.					
9. I/we regularly attend Parish sponsored social / community events.					
10. I/we <u>volunteer</u> regularly at Parish social / community events.					
11. There is a strong sense of community among parishioners.					
12. Parishioners are made aware of the opportunities for ministry and are encouraged to become active in various ministries.					
13. The Youth are encouraged to become active in various ministries					
14. The Parish provides training in the various ministries					
15. I/we am satisfied with the ministry programs provided at the Parish.					
16. The parish does a good job keeping parishioners informed about upcoming events.					
<b>Statement</b>	<b>More than once a week</b>	<b>Once a week</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>3-6 Times a year</b>	<b>A few times a year</b>
17. I/we attend mass:					

18. Number of adults in the home: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Number of children in the home: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Number of seniors (60+) in the home: \_\_\_\_\_

21. Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_

22. Are your children enrolled in Religious Education?    Yes    No    N/A

23. Are your children enrolled in EDGE/Life Teen?    Yes    No    N/A

24. Are you registered members of John Paul II Parish?    Yes    No

## The Numbers

The Survey was conducted on May 18<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup>. A total of 750 surveys were distributed, and 331 completed responses were collected. Surveys that were only partially completed were not used in compiling data. 59% of responses filled out the survey in English, and 44% of responses filled out the survey in Spanish. 45% of responses indicated that they had children at home, and 44% of responses indicated that seniors (60+) lived in the home. Most of the responses were made by registered parishioners, 80%.

The survey allowed for parishioners to state whether they “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree,” with each statement. For the purposes of percentage, “strongly agree,” and “agree,” were compiled together, as were “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.” Parishioners were also given an opportunity to respond with, “Does not Apply.” The majority of responses to each question were positive, however, several areas had a notable number of negative responses. The more notable responses are listed below, and comprehensive tables are on the following pages.

- 50.8% of parishioners disagreed with the statement that they regularly volunteer at parish events or indicated that this category did not apply to them, while 35.3% disagreed with the statement that they regularly attend parish events, indicated that this statement did not apply to them, or simply did not answer the question.
- 33.9% of parishioners disagreed with the statement that there is a strong sense of community among parishioners, or indicated that this statement did not apply to them.
- 28.7% of parishioners disagreed with the statement that parishioners are made aware of the opportunities for ministry and are encouraged to become active in various ministries, or indicated that this statement did not apply to them.
- 27.1% of parishioners disagreed with the statement that the youth are encouraged to become active in various ministries.

	<b>% Positive</b>	<b>% Negative</b>
<b>1. The weekend Masses are held at convenient times</b>	92.4%	7.6%
<b>2. Benefit from a brief introduction to the Mass theme at the beginning of Mass</b>	85.2%	14.8%
<b>3. There is enough time for reflection during Mass</b>	88.0%	12.0%
<b>4. There are sufficient opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation</b>	75.7%	24.3%
<b>5. There are sufficient opportunities to attend Eucharistic Adoration</b>	88.9%	11.1%
<b>6. Satisfied with the types of religious programs for children</b>	86.9%	13.1%
<b>7. Satisfied with religious education programs offered for adults</b>	83.9%	16.1%
<b>8. Satisfied with the sacramental preparation programs</b>	89.3%	10.7%
<b>9. Regularly attend Parish sponsored social/community events</b>	77.3%	11.9%
<b>10. Volunteer regularly at Parish social/community events</b>	66.0%	34.0%
<b>11. There is a strong sense of community among parishioners</b>	71.6%	28.4%
<b>12. Parishioners are made aware of the opportunities for ministry and are encouraged to become active in various ministries</b>	75.4%	24.6%
<b>13. Youth are encouraged to become active in various ministries</b>	72.9%	27.1%
<b>14. Parish provides training in the various ministries</b>	81.4%	18.6%
<b>15. Satisfied with the ministry programs provided at the parish</b>	84.9%	15.1%
<b>16. Parish does a good job keeping parishioners informed about upcoming events</b>	88.1%	11.9%

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	did not answer	% Positive	% Negative	N/A	% Not answering	% Positive (not counting N/A answers)	% Negative(not counting N/A answers)
<b>1. The weekend Masses are held at convenient times</b>	184	120	18	7	2	0	91.8%	7.6%	0.6%	0.0%	92.4%	7.6%
<b>2. Benefit from a brief introduction to the Mass theme at the beginning of Mass</b>	120	145	36	10	20	0	80.1%	13.9%	6.0%	0.0%	85.2%	14.8%
<b>3. There is enough time for reflection during Mass</b>	129	150	31	7	14	0	84.3%	11.5%	4.2%	0.0%	88.0%	12.0%
<b>4. There are sufficient opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation</b>	105	129	44	31	22	0	70.7%	22.7%	6.6%	0.0%	75.7%	24.3%
<b>5. There are sufficient opportunities to attend Eucharistic Adoration</b>	126	155	23	12	15	0	84.9%	10.6%	4.5%	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%
<b>6. Satisfied with the types of religious programs for children</b>	90	103	17	12	109	0	58.3%	8.8%	32.9%	0.0%	86.9%	13.1%
<b>7. Satisfied with religious education programs offered for adults</b>	99	135	29	16	52	0	70.7%	13.6%	15.7%	0.0%	83.9%	16.1%
<b>8. Satisfied with the sacramental preparation programs</b>	101	140	20	9	61	0	72.8%	8.8%	18.4%	0.0%	89.3%	10.7%
<b>9. Regularly attend Parish sponsored social/community events</b>	77	137	24	9	54	30	64.7%	10.0%	16.3%	9.1%	86.6%	13.4%
<b>10. Volunteer regularly at Parish social/community events</b>	66	97	70	14	84	0	49.2%	25.4%	25.4%	0.0%	66.0%	34.0%
<b>11. There is a strong sense of community among parishioners</b>	54	165	60	27	25	0	66.2%	26.3%	7.6%	0.0%	71.6%	28.4%
<b>12. Parishioners are made aware of the opportunities for ministry and are encouraged to become active in various ministries</b>	84	152	58	19	18	0	71.3%	23.3%	5.4%	0.0%	75.4%	24.6%
<b>13. Youth are encouraged to become active in various ministries</b>	66	114	48	19	84	0	54.4%	20.2%	25.4%	0.0%	72.9%	27.1%
<b>14. Parish provides training in the various ministries</b>	70	157	41	11	52	0	68.6%	15.7%	15.7%	0.0%	81.4%	18.6%
<b>15. Satisfied with the ministry programs provided at the parish</b>	86	168	34	11	32	0	76.7%	13.6%	9.7%	0.0%	84.9%	15.1%
<b>16. Parish does a good job keeping parishioners informed about upcoming events</b>	124	156	25	13	13	0	84.6%	11.5%	3.9%	0.0%	88.1%	11.9%

**Marital Status****SJPII Registered** 263

0.794562

Divorced	13	3.9%		
Married	249	75.2%	<b>Total Responses</b>	331
Other	18	5.4%		
Single	34	10.3%	<b>Children in RE</b>	59
Widow	17	5.1%	<b>Edge/Life Teen</b>	22

**Mass Attendance**

>once/wk	90	27.2%
Weekly	199	60.1%
Monthly	14	4.2%
3-6/yr	2	0.6%
Unknown	26	7.9%

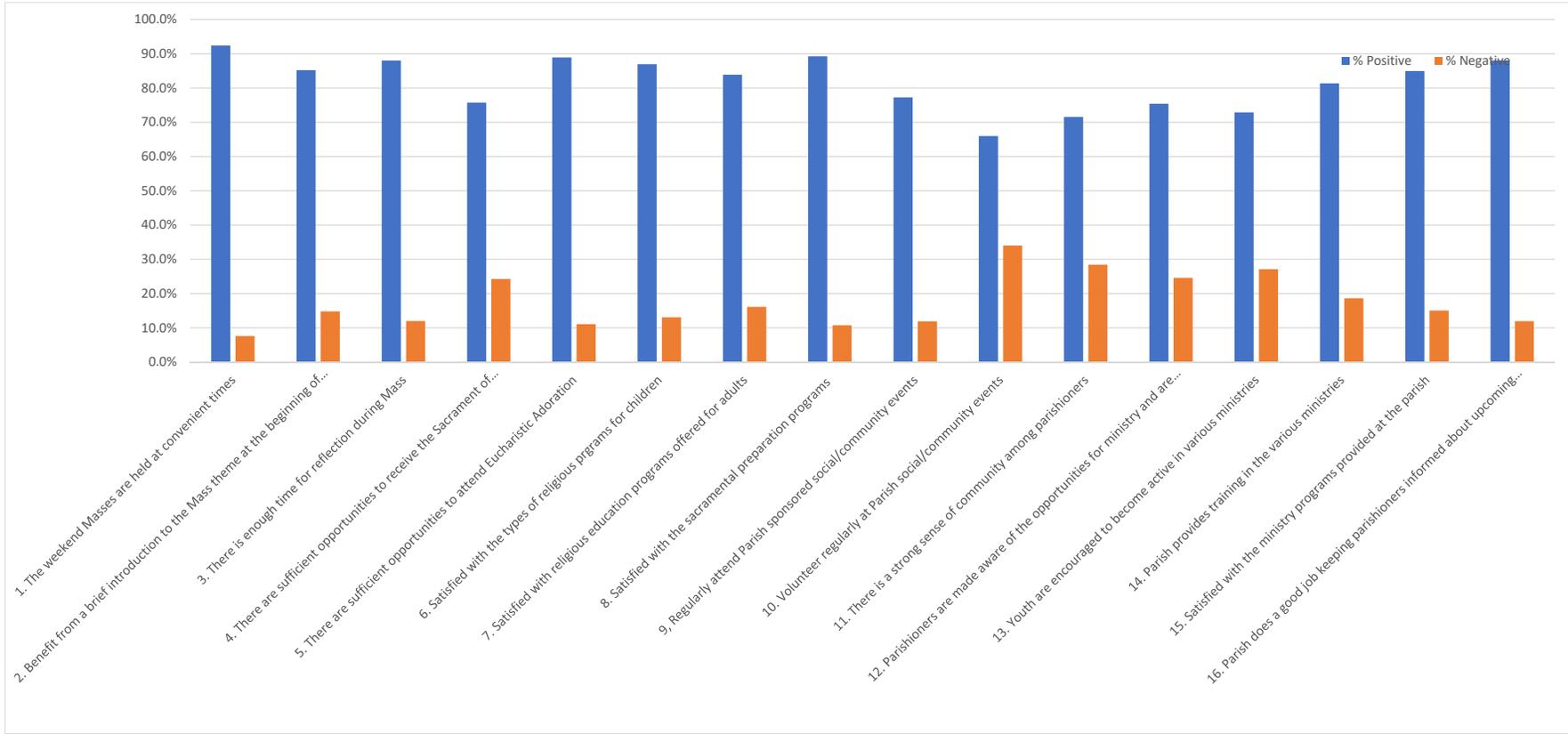
**Mass Response**

5pm Sat	48	14.5%
7pm Sat	96	29.0%
8am Sun	29	8.8%
10am Sun	65	19.6%
12pm Sun	55	16.6%
5pm Sun	38	11.5%

**Language**

English	194	58.6%
Spanish	137	41.4%

Children at home	149	45.0%
Seniors at home	144	43.5%



## **IV. Analysis**

### **Format**

Each area of focus will be addressed in turn. First the strengths of our current systems are identified, followed by the weaknesses. Last, recommendations are made for how our systems might be improved. The team used the questions provided in section II as a guide, and focused on the overall health of the systems and the areas of greatest import. Additionally, many of these areas overlap, resulting in some analysis that arguably could be placed in another section.

### **(A) Welcoming Committee**

#### **Strengths**

The welcoming committee currently has a strong system for reaching out to newly registered parishioners, that includes personal contact (phone calls), welcoming basket, and events.

A ministry fair is currently being organized and expected to take place this coming fall. This will be a good opportunity to inform parishioners about the ministry options in our parish and be a useful tool for recruitment.

The welcoming committee provides a contact person for multiple ministries.

Our parish carnival (formerly the parish picnic) is a good opportunity to have both the English and Spanish speaking communities participate in parish events together.

#### **Weaknesses**

There is a lack of consistent communication on ministry opportunities, or who to contact for each ministry. Finding the right person to contact is often difficult, and is not always met with a response. The only consistent places to find information is in the bulletin and parish announcements. However, with today's fast paced society where parishioners use their smart phones to dictate their schedules and remind them of events, a bulletin post is quickly forgotten amid the turmoil of the week.

There is a lack of outreach to new and returning parishioners. The current system only initiates contact when a family registers. As new families move into our parish, registration is not usually one of their main priorities, unless they are already seeking to be involved with the parish in some capacity.

There are too few opportunities in our parish for the English and Spanish communities to interact with one another.

Evangelization should be more of a focus.

### **Recommendations**

The parish should create a master Ministry Directory that can be available on the parish website (and also as hard copies either in the bulletin or on request). This directory should include all of the ministries and who the contact person is for each ministry. The directory would need to be updated regularly.

The parish should utilize social media and technology in order to inform the parish of events and ministry opportunities. The parish could create e-mail and/or text listservs that parishioners could “opt-in” too in order to receive reminders about parish events, announcements and ministry needs. The parish could even operate several listservs with some specifically for RE or Life Teen, etc. Apps like Remind could also be used. The parish should create a Facebook page that could also be used to post parish news and events.

The parish should investigate scheduling more parish events that are designed to attract both English and Spanish speakers. These events should also offer some sort of bi-lingual services (such as a bi-lingual Rosary) in conjunction with said events.

The parish could utilize pew cards and altar announcements to encourage new parishioners and returning parishioners to register with the parish.

### **(B) The Holy Mass**

#### **Strengths**

Masses under the current mass schedule are mostly well attended. The least well attended masses are the 8:00am Sunday mass and the 5:00pm Sunday mass, however, this can fluctuate greatly depending on the time of the year. Overall, the survey indicated that parishioners are happy with the current mass schedule.

Our parish has a healthy deaconate presence. We currently have four deacons, with two who are approaching retirement. We have an additional two men in deaconate formation who, God willing, will be ordained within a year from this report. Our deacons are utilized to run various ministries such as: prison ministry, homebound and hospital ministries, RCIA, training lay mass participants, processing annulments, etc. The deacons also assist at Mass, give homilies, say Benediction, perform communion services, and officiate at weddings, funerals, and baptisms.

Some of the needs of our priests are provided for by the Diocese (health insurance, spiritual direction and training), however, the Parish can also offer services to assist our priests in these matters. Prayers are offered for our priests through out the year, and a few days are set aside specifically for this purpose. Holy Rosary School, also utilizes a, “Vocations Prayer Box,” that encourages families to pray for our current and future priests throughout the week. There are also some organized efforts to provide meals for our priests at different times of the year. These are often organized by lay groups within the Parish, such as the Knights of Columbus.

### **Weaknesses**

It is common for attendees of a particular mass to limit their Catholic community to the regular attendees of that particular mass. This is most pronounced between the English speaking and Spanish speaking communities.

Our current mass schedule requires 8 masses to be divided between 2 priests. This is problematic due to Canon Law 905 §1. Although our current schedule is permissible, it does put a lot of strain on our priests.

There are some requests for daily mass at Christ the King and for Spanish daily mass

There are some requests for more or different times for the Reconciliation. The current times are often very crowded and can be difficult for some parishioners to attend.

Utilizing the deacons in these ministries takes some of the load off of the duties of our priests. However, many of these ministries have an administrative component, and past deacons have not had adequate assistance in dealing with the administrative tasks.

While deacons can celebrate at weddings and baptisms, many parishioners prefer to have a priest officiate. This can add additional mass celebrations to an already busy weekend.

### **Recommendations**

The group discussed the possibility of combining masses at certain times of the year (such as the summer) when certain masses are less well attended. This would reduce the overall number of masses that the priests would need to celebrate each weekend.

The team also discussed having a bi-lingual mass each weekend in order to combine some of the masses and to integrate the English and Spanish speaking communities into a shared celebration of the Eucharist. The team acknowledged that this would present certain difficulties, such as adequate space if the mass is well attended, the possibility of low mass attendance, and the simple

fact that bi-lingual masses are typically longer celebrations, and while this could reduce the number of masses celebrated, the priests are already on a tight schedule in order to meet the sacramental needs of our community.

Priests and Deacons fill unique functions within the parish as the only persons capable of celebrating the sacraments and are also the only ones (or most appropriate ones in normal circumstances) to perform community sacramentals. Additionally, the number of priests and deacons in our parish is mandated by the diocese. The team discussed utilizing deacons for sacramental celebrations whenever possible as a means to lighten the burden of the priests' already hectic weekends. This would require the parish to place limitations on parishioner requests, such as, identifying which Sundays are allowed for baptisms, and all baptisms scheduled at other times to be performed by deacons. This type of arrangement is not uncommon in larger parishes throughout the United States.

Any administrative tasks that are associated with a deaconate ministry that can be delegated to parish staff, or a lay volunteer, should be so delegated. This would help maximize a deaconate's time spent working for the parish in actual ministry. This is especially true of deacons who also have full time employment.

Ideally, the parish should provide an office and appropriate equipment for the deacons. While this may not be economically or physically feasible, it should be a parish goal.

A parish administrator might have a job description that would include checking with the priests to see what their needs are. One time needs could be sought out for assistance through an appropriate parish organization. Reoccurring needs could result in the creation of a new parish organization or ministry. For example, parishioners could volunteer time to assist the priests with chores at the rectory, or to provide some other moderate professional services (the team recognized that some of these things may already be taking place).

The team discussed the following options regarding the use of the sacristy:

- Pulpit announcements before mass, and/or priest announcement after mass;
- Appropriate signage;
- Tasking the sacristan with "policing" the sacristy, to ensure that the atmosphere in the sacristy is conducive to Canon 909; (asking people to leave when necessary, reminding the altar servers to quiet down, etc.)

The team discussed the following options regarding encouraging vocations:

- Bulletin spotlights on seminarians, deacons, priests and religious in our diocese that give brief bio's and how God lead them to their vocation.
- Using a, "Vocation Prayer Box," at regular masses similar to that used by Holy Rosary School.

The sanctuaries should have reserved areas for disabled/elderly at mass using existing reserved signs, or create new signs (perhaps blue with the an appropriate phrase or symbol).

The parish would benefit from having the announcements include a brief description of the theme of the mass for that day. This would invite parishioners to engage with the mass by giving them a focus before the readings begin.

The parish may benefit from reminders for parishioners to respect the sanctity of the mass celebration both before and after the service. This could be does thorough announcements before and/or after mass, or moveable signage.

### **(C) Mass Ministry**

#### **Strengths**

Most of the mass ministries have established systems of coordination, and strong base teams.

Many of the ministries had established, "mass teams." These were groups of volunteers that would always be assigned to the same mass together, and/or they could rely on each other to serve in their absence.

Many of the leads for the various mass ministries have been leading their particular ministry for quite some time. This means that they have a lot of experience in their particular area, and have a list of volunteers that they can draw from.

#### **Weaknesses**

Many of the leads for the various mass ministries have been leading their particular ministry for quite some time. This also means that they may have developed a particular team that is utilized to the exclusion of others, and that sometimes procedures are enacted, or perpetuated that are ineffective or inappropriate.

The preparation classes and procedures are different depending on who leads the ministry, and they are not bi-lingual.

## **Recommendations**

Advertise the needs for volunteers and the training options through mass announcements (parishioners especially respond when a priest asks for assistance after mass).

Provide leadership training, particularly training that focuses on leading volunteers. Many people who volunteer for leadership rolls have leadership experience, however, it is more common for them to have experience leading employees, which is a different skill set from leading volunteers.

Special events that recognize volunteers can be helpful. However, many volunteers feel satisfaction in receiving a thank you letter or card from our Pastor. This could be coupled with verbal thanks at mass on occasion. Many of the leaders were appreciative that we were asking them how their ministry was going and what the ministry needs were. These types of inquiries could be done on a regular basis.

An overarching Mass Ministry Coordinator would make for smoother transitions and aid in communication. This person would be the point of contact between the various mass ministry leaders and the parish office.

The Parish should establish protocols for ministry leaders. Leaders would only be allowed to serve a leadership role in one ministry at a time. This would include leadership roles in parish organizations such as Cursillo. Ministry leaders could also be limited in how long they are able to serve in a leadership role for a particular ministry. For example, a person who is a leader for ushers could be limited to serving as a lead for only 2 years. This gives them an opportunity to train another usher to act as lead when their “term” is over. They could continue to serve as an usher, but would relinquish the leadership role for a time. This could help with, “ministry burnout,” and would ensure that others are trained to fill this leadership role if the current lead is no longer willing or able to serve.

Some leaders get too comfortable with their ministry teams and may build a culture within their ministry that discourages others new volunteers. Changing leads regularly and leadership training may help to alleviate this problem.

The Parish should institute protocols regarding communications. For example, a database for ministry leaders should be kept, and could include message lists (for text or e-mail) that could remind particular leaders that volunteer lists were due at a certain time. Standardizing communication through e-mail or text messaging would also be helpful in the

event of an emergency, or when parishioners are unable to serve at a time that they were scheduled to serve.

The 5pm Sunday mass currently lacks consistent leadership. In the past the youth served at this mass and it was organized by the youth minister. This is a great opportunity for young people to serve, both in the mass ministries themselves, but could also be an opportunity for youth (or young adults) to act as leaders to organize the ministries for this mass.

There has been some miscommunications on who may serve at the Spanish masses. A priest who used to serve at our parish seemed to require participation in a particular sacramental service in order to serve in the celebration of the mass. This has resulted in many parishioners (some of which used to serve) believing that they are not eligible to serve at mass. This situation needs to be addressed and clarified to alleviate confusion. This situation also resulted in hurt feelings among some parishioners.

Altar servers are often in high demand. Recruiting altar servers from Holy Rosary School and RE might be a positive focus.

The altar server vestments need to have a replacement schedule.

#### **(D) Religious Education - Adult**

##### **Strengths**

The principle means of adult catechesis is in the mass. The readings and homily are the primary means by which most parishioners learn their faith. We are blessed with priests and deacons who are able to explain the faith, and personalize the teachings to the parishioners lives.

The bulletin inserts from our Pastor are insightful and offer a way for parishioners to go deeper.

The parish has many materials available for parishioners to grow in their faith, such as a library of recorded talks, FORMED, and the materials provided by Lighthouse Ministries. Many parish ministries have arisen to help adults grow close to Christ such as Cup of Grace, Cursillo, Evangelization Retreat, and Lenten Bible Studies, etc.

Our RCIA program provides a comprehensive introduction to our faith.

Occasional missions from visiting clergy and religious offer additional opportunities for faith formation.

### **Weaknesses**

Parishioners often don't know about the opportunities that are present within our community.

Bible/book studies are not well advertised and there are a lack of options, which results in many parishioners being unable to attend. Child care is also an issue that leads to low attendance. Many young families want to be more involved with the parish but a lack of child care options results in some choosing not to participate.

### **Recommendations**

Create opportunities for adult small groups. The team discussed the following: Task a deacon with choosing an appropriate study (either a book or a series of videos such as those in FORMED) preferably one that already has study questions. Draft a simple structure that could be followed over the course of a few weeks, with study questions or discussion prompts. Choose leaders from the parish to host the studies. These groups could be organized around common interests such as: certain ages, couples, families with young children, teens, young adults, women, etc. The leaders could follow the simple structure (prayer – video – discussion – prayer, etc.). A “virtual small group” could even be created through a Facebook group that a Deacon or other organizer could moderate and post discussion questions.

Encourage parishioners to attend RCIA, or portions of RCIA for continued catechesis.

Continue to invite priests and religious to provide mission series (talks) for the parish.

### **(E) Religious Education – Children and Teen**

#### **Strengths**

Both elementary RE and the Edge/Life Teen programs have seen growth over the last few years. The elementary program currently has approximately 300 students and the teen age group has about 100. This includes an increase in the number of students that return from previous years, and an increase in students participating in Vacation Bible School. ICYC has also seen growth with about 90 teens attending this last year.

Programs like retreats, VBS and ICYC help students become more engaged and interested in their faith, and increases participation. This also aids in recruiting student leaders.

The teen programs have integrated service projects into their curriculum that benefit our community.

### **Weaknesses**

There is not enough space to handle the number of students in elementary RE. As a result, kindergarten is no longer offered in RE because of this lack of space.

Both elementary and teen groups suffer from a lack of volunteers. This shortage of volunteers is a result of the absence of people willing (or able) to act as volunteers, willing individuals who have not had safe environment training, and willing volunteers who are not currently in good standing with the church due to their marital status (most commonly parents who are divorced and remarried without having sought an annulment).

Parents are often ignorant of church teaching as they themselves were poorly catechized.

While the number of students has increased, the Sacramental Preparation classes are always the largest, and many students stop attending once the sacrament (first communion/confirmation) has been received.

Youth director position is currently vacant, and has had high turnover over the last 5 years.

### **Recommendations**

Increase parental participation by requiring volunteer hours. Holy Rosary school currently requires a certain number of volunteer hours (or an equivalent fee) for all families, based upon the number of students that attend the school. A similar method could be used with the RE program. Volunteer hours would have to be filled by an adult on behalf of the student (a parent, grandparent, god-parent, etc.). Volunteer opportunities could include volunteering at the classes themselves, but could also be done in capacities that did not involve direct contact with students and/or teaching. For example, volunteer hours could be spent setting up or tearing down for life teen (a volunteer would not have to be in good standing because they are not teaching, although they would need safe environment training), they could assist with cleaning the parish facilities, serve at mass, volunteer at the carnival, or participate in another parish ministry. This would have the added benefit of incentivizing volunteers into other parish ministries.

Administer “pre-test” homework at the start of the year. This would help identify where students and parents are at in their catechesis, and would help in organizing small groups and classes. Additional homework for the parents would also encourage their involvement and help with adult catechesis.

The youth should be involved in the mass ministries, such as filling the mass ministry roles for the 5:00pm mass. This organization could also be student lead so as to alleviate some of the burden from the youth director.

Small groups seem to be more effective as they encourage discussion and help students build relationships with each other and the team leaders. Having authentic relationships within a group invests the students and makes continuing participation more likely