

We Walk By Faith – Community Pillar

Questions for Parish Reflection and Renewal:

1. What programs, ministries, activities, and resources does the parish offer to help enliven and deepen the faith of its members?
 - ◆ What we do well:
 - Lectors; RCIA; CCD/L.I.F.E.; Men's Shelter; Food Pantry; CARITAS
 - Approachability of Pastor; Communal Penance Service; Stations of the Cross; Lenten Soup Suppers
 - Black History Month; Hispanic Heritage Month focus; Celebrations around feast days; Food at social gatherings after feast days and funerals
 - Adopt a Highway; Just Faith Program
 - ◆ Needs/Challenges:
 - Need to work on revitalizing the community
 - More catechesis for adults (potentially L.I.F.E.)
 - Getting more involvement may require more petitioning from the pulpit
 - Obtaining a formal presentation to the parish on "Faithful Citizenship"
 - We need to become more confident at being more overt evangelists
 - More conversations around L.I.F.E. and resetting of priorities
 - Is the mission statement of the parish still valid?
2. How does the parish actively invite all its members to take part in the sacramental life of the church?
 - ◆ What we do well:
 - We do a lot of Announcements calling for involvement
 - Stewardship programs
 - ◆ Needs/Challenge:
 - Not having as well as it should (there are only two reminders of going to reconciliation a year.
 - Mass announcements and bulletin announcements of invitations most often have to be followed up with personal invitations
 - Feeling is that folks are looking for more overt personal rewards
 - With the personal invitations, we need to ask that they bring a friend or two to increase the number of personal invitations
 - Need to find ways to build small communities
 - Geographic dispersion making the "community" sense difficult
 - Enliven the small community approach to building involvement
 - Engaging the youth a great deal more
 - Calls to physical action into the community
 - Soliciting the involvement of surrounding businesses to sponsor activities and programs, particularly for youth programs
3. To what extent does the membership of St. Augustine honestly reflect the ethnic and cultural make-up of the wider community in which it is situated? Are the traditions and practices of these cultures adequately and appropriately integrated into faith activities and sacramental preparation and particularly into liturgy and worship?
 - ◆ What we do well:
 - Bi-lingual masses for Anglo/Hispanic communities
 - ◆ Needs/Challenges:
 - Other ethnicities are not represented – more inclusively is difficult
 - Having two of everything (Anglo/Hispanic) not very integrated
 - More English As A Second Language (ESL)
 - Must build trust between the two major communities

- Have more community meals – get both major communities in the kitchen to create together
 - Create more opportunities for both communities for them to come together to learn
 - These need to be very short programs like a CPR class
 - These need to also be focused on small groups
 - Need to get aware of Anglo/Hispanic (us/them) mentality...If this distinction remains then the division remains.
4. What are some of the concrete challenges to families living in the area and what is St. Augustine's doing to help families meet the challenges?
- ◆ What we are doing:
 - Food Pantry – directly helping the community
 - Sponsoring CCHASM
 - Furniture Ministry
 - Legislative Advocacy
 - ◆ Needs/Challenges:
 - Transportation; Child care; affordable housing; General Poverty; Livable wage
 - Gang violence; Growing Domestic Violence
 - Have professional presentation by Officer Applewhite on gang violence and what can be done.
 - Another opportunity for a small group session bringing together all of our ethnic communities.
 - Many opportunities for extension type activities and small group activities bringing together all of our ethnic communities.
 - In the grand scheme, we are not doing very much outside the walls of the church
5. To what extent does the parish actively seek out, extend an invitation to and consciously welcome into the community immigrants and people from different cultures and inactive Catholics and the unchurched?
- ◆ What we are doing:
 - Web-Site and Street Frontage
 - Care-A-Van as advertisement
 - Clothing drives to Southwest Virginia
 - ◆ Needs/Challenges:
 - No advertising of the parish
 - Suggest using local township papers to advertise masses and other activities
 - Suggest using the Chamber of Commerce
 - No ecumenical activities
 - Suggestion to conduct a progressive dinner with local community churches
 - More outreach programs to the communities
 - Focus staffing and resources on these types of programs
 - Being more vocal in the parish for programs that support our community
 - Invite our youth to participate specifically in these types of programs.
6. What methods does the parish use to communicate with all its members?
- ◆ What we are doing:
 - Web-Site
 - Bulletin and Announcements
 - Email announcements and Messages
 - Another opportunity for small multi-ethnic groups sessions for learning to use computers and email
 - ◆ Needs/Challenges:
 - Need a better census for emails and other contact mechanisms for parishioners
 - More effective means to communicate to our youth
 - Suggest structured chat rooms for specific topics
 - Chat rooms are not 24x7 but scheduled with curricula or agendas

- Would ask for support from the diocese for establishing the chat room and monitoring the conversations
 - Topics for chat rooms might include We Walk by Faith; answering theological questions, and so forth
7. How does the faith community use media and personal contacts to identify inactive and alienated Catholics? Are settings provided in which people might feel comfortable enough to express and concerns which might have kept them from participation in the church? Does the parish address these concerns to the fullest extent allowed with the teaching of the church? How do we warmly welcome into our parish those who takes steps to return?
- ◆ What we are doing:
 - Individual's might know who are alienated
 - But what happens next...
 - ◆ Needs/Challenges:
 - Make Virtus a community function
 - Be open in Mass to discussing social topics such as divorce
 - Annulments what are they and what does it mean for the children
 - Make more information available, such as that offered by the Knights of Columbus.
 - There are several more opportunities for small group opportunities that bring together many ethnicities of the parish to grow and learn together.
 - Query the parish about what they want to know more about.
 - Have more calls to actions.
8. How might the staff of the diocesan offices assist your parish to develop programs and processes important for full implementation of COMMUNITY dimension for **We Walk by Faith**?
- ◆ What we are doing:
 - Legislative Advocacy
 - ◆ Needs/Challenges:
 - Catholic Social Teaching (Justice & Peace) talk to the parish
 - Another opportunity for small multi-ethnic group discussions regarding the topic
 - Web-Site infrastructure support and monitoring of the chat room.
 - More help with election information
 - Knowing as much as possible regarding voting record in the legislator
 - More publication in voting records and political highlights of candidates in the Catholic Virginian
 - Ask to have Russell Institute sessions offered at St. Augustines