

We Walk By Faith – Service Pillar

Questions for Parish Reflection and Renewal:

1. In what way do volunteers serve in or support local interfaith or civic organizations that:
 - > *Address specific human need such as homelessness and hunger?*
 - > *Provide assistance to battered spouses and children?*
 - > *Provide alternatives to abortion for women face with an unplanned pregnancy?*
 - > *Work for social justice in the community (for example, affordable housing, inclusive zoning, etc)?*
 - > *Empower low- income persons, such as groups funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development?*
 - ◆ Strengths:
 - St. Augustine's Parish supports CARITAS, the Men's Shelter, Cub & Boy Scouts Food Drive, CCHASM (Food Pantry), Clothing drives for Southwest Virginia, the white clothing drive bin in the parking lot generates a \$50 stipend to the parish which goes directly to a battered woman's shelter.
 - We also support Freedom House and the results of the poor box at the Lenten Soup Suppers go to the hungry.
 - There is also the Furniture Ministry; Angel Tree; Adopting a child from another country and monetary gifts to support juvenile reform programs.
 - ◆ Opportunities:
 - Would like to see us continue to find as many ways for individuals to participate.
 - i. Need to keep the focus on the person making the offer to help with some thing.
 - ii. We also need to be sure to continue to include teens and children in these activities.
 - iii. Would like to see more opportunities for children and teens to participate in these types of activities year round.
 - Would like to see more activities directed towards children and teens as most programs referenced focus on families and adults.
 - We are struggling with ecumenical activities:
 - i. Not sure what is out there.
 - ii. Not sure who is doing what and when.
2. To what extent does the parish integrate education on Catholic social teaching and opportunities for service learning into its religious education programs. Does it promote participation in JustFaith and similar justice education programs?
 - ◆ Strengths:
 - The information is available on Catholic Social Teaching, albeit a best kept secret.
 - RCIA makes an attempt to introduce the candidates, catechumens, and sponsors; however, the time allotted only allows for a broad spectrum and only covers the perimeter of the topic
 - There is high expectation on L.I.F.E. to provide deep dives into this topic.
 - i. The key here is to drill into small actionable topics.

- There is a strong desire to re-enforce our efforts and communities with more prayer groups for specific topics.
 - i. This is another opportunity for small groups outlined during the Community presentation.
 - ◆ Opportunities:
 - We do not feel that we are doing this well to any degree; DO not feel we know how to deliver justice education.
 - While the information may be available on Catholic Social Teaching...
 - i. It is not very well promoted.
 - ii. Presentations given on the topic to parishioners is often very broad and difficult to convert to action.
 - iii. The documentation and teaching material needs to be much more focused and allow individuals to find personal ways to act.
3. How does the parish integrate justice and peace and respect for creation into liturgical celebrations (for example, Prayers of the Faithful, homilies, music and sign of peace)?
- ◆ Strengths:
 - Choir is very strong and the music is good; however, it is mostly geared towards adults.
 - Catechesis to the children during Choir practice for the STAR choir is excellent.
 - ◆ Opportunities:
 - Children's STAR Choir represents a major opportunity from the perspective of participation.
 - i. It seems that the priorities of our families with children our not so much focused on catechetical programs.
 - To leverage the pulpit to deliver more catechesis on Catholic Social Teaching when the parish family is most open to the conversation within the mass.
 - i. More witness talks by parishioners during ordinary time after the homily.
4. How do preaching and catechesis enable members to bring principles of justice, peace and respect for the life and dignity of all people into their everyday life and work?
- ◆ Strengths:
 - Identifying problems; gaining knowledge and identifying some opportunities
 - ◆ Opportunities:
 - To develop an Advocacy Phone Tree
 - Establishing small support groups
 - i. again creating a directory of such groups and follow-up for those who volunteer
 - ii. such also establish a prayer group supporting the small groups
 - More directed bulletin announcements regarding the options facing individuals.
 - Finding ways to help folks realize their own value in supporting others and offering them opportunities to give back to the community.
 - We are not quite adept at providing effective help lines.
 - i. Need to have stronger information referral help lines.
 - ii. Also need to follow-up on those who call and we pointed them in a particular direction.

5. How does the parish seek opportunities to discuss and address social and ethical questions with the followers of the Gospel and other religious traditions?
- ◆ Strength:
 - We do have some Bible study groups
 - Red Cross; Vacation Bible School; CCHASM are examples.
 - ◆ Opportunities:
 - We struggle to be ecumenical within our own Universal Church.
 - We need to be more consolatory to others in the Christian faiths; i.e. letters and cards on condolence to Liberty University and the family of Jerry Falwell.
 - Major opportunity to establish a messaging/phone tree for those who are ill.
 - i. We have had too many occasions where parishioners were hospitalized for many weeks without the parish knowing, praying, or visiting the parishioner.
 - This reflects another opportunity for witness talks.
6. How does the parish encourage participation of traditionally marginalized groups, such as racial and ethnic groups, women, low-income parishioners and persons with disabilities, in parish life and its leadership?
- ◆ Strengths:
 - Personal invitations have been good but need a great deal more.
 - ◆ Opportunities:
 - Establish expectations that when invited, bring a friend. We must expand the involvement of the parishioners rather than our parish staff.
 - To forgo assumptions of the difficulties of getting into existing small groups.
 - i. We often carry assumptions of what we think about how long established groups or committees will react to new members...These assumptions are often the furthest from reality as possible.
 - Following up on folks who would like to volunteer
7. How does the parish call its members to be just stewards of their resources of time, talent and money? Does the parish provide ways of being financially accountable to its members?
- ◆ Strengths:
 - Stewardship Fair
 - Budgeting process and Financial Reporting
 - ◆ Opportunities:
 - Following up with individuals who wish to volunteer.