

## **We Walk By Faith – Worship Pillar**

### **Questions for Parish Reflection and Renewal:**

1. To what extent are the youth and children of the parish invited to be a part of the liturgical celebrations?
  - ◆ Improving with the STAR Choir, Children's Liturgy, and Ushers.
  - ◆ Vacation Bible School is another method we engage and involve our youth.
  - ◆ Our youth are almost exclusively involved in our Altar Server Ministry.
  - ◆ Youth are stepping forward for other Liturgical Ministries, e.g., Lector and Eucharistic Ministers.
  - ◆ Would like to see more involvement in music and in Liturgies other than feast days.
  - ◆ Would suggest have a seating area upfront for baptisms to further engage them during this most important Sacrament.
  - ◆ Would like ensure that we are taking the opportunity to catechize our children singing in the STAR choir as to the meaning of the message and the importance of music as a form of worship and prayer.
  
2. How do the liturgical celebrations of the parish take into account the various ethnic groups represented by those present in the parish?
  - ◆ Doing well with bi-lingual masses and worship aid translations. We do need to be sure that there are enough translations for everyone.
    - The lack of translations excludes those not understanding the language from fully participating in the Liturgy of the Word.
  - ◆ Some frustrations in mixing Anglo and Hispanic traditions.
    - Suggested that the nursery be open for the bi-lingual celebrations.
    - There was some discussion regarding the newly reopened nursery. As in life, all things must grow and mature.
      - Still quite new and processes and procedures are still being developed and finalized.
      - The Diocesan requirements for the nursery require paid staff attendants. At least 1 with a volunteer parent. Teenagers can volunteer only if there are the two required adults (1 staff and 1 parent volunteer).
      - Maintaining the supplies for the nursery is also challenge given the other uses this space sees throughout the month.
      - Our parish's main concern is the safety of the children entrusted to our care during mass and we are not taking the liability lightly.
      - As the nursery matures, it will add more services and capabilities. However, in the near-term, the nursery will remain as is for the 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM Sunday Masses only.

A side note from the Hispanic perspective, to be comfortable leveraging the nursery service does require a great deal more marketing and hands on experience of the Hispanic parents to become comfortable with such a service.

  - Another opportunity exists for the 2-4 year old child, other than a nursery, specifically, Sunday School. Create a pre-school model for these children around the scriptures for that week. A "school" environment may increase involvement of more parents, as well as those children as they grow in the parish family.
  - While we are a bi-lingual parish family and are doing well for the Anglo and Hispanic communities, other ethnic groups do feel left out as they are not afforded the same opportunity for personal and spiritual growth through hearing the Word in their God language or traditions.

3. Does the music program provide music at liturgy that is appropriate to the community and context of the parish? Does the music program enhance the Eucharistic liturgy and other worship services? How is this assessed?
- ◆ Music talks to the emotions of all hearing it.
  - ◆ The Diocese provides our church with valid options of hymns and psalms to be sung during the Mass.
    - The Diocese is constantly reviewing music (the word) to ensure that they are liturgically correct and appropriate. Those that are not are henceforth omitted from this list of appropriate hymns.
    - It would be nice to have a little more of the “traditional” songs and hymns as there is a great deal of comfort with those hymns with a many of our long-practicing parish family members.
    - The challenge is to balance the diverse needs of our parish family to draw out positive or appropriate emotions for all generations.
  - ◆ Not really sure how the impact of on the Liturgy can be assessed.
  - ◆ There does not seem to be enough room to grow the choir area to include more participants as there are many good voices in the congregation that are not in the choir.
  - ◆ Currently, the Choir Director position is filled by a volunteer and even some of the traditional duties of the Choir Director are being shared by multiple individuals given the time commitment to perform the duties of Choir Director are extensive. The suggestion was made that perhaps it is time again for a paid staff position for Choir Director.
    - Volunteerism is in keeping with our Parish Family ideals. The concern regarding a “professional” Choir Director may breach the boundary of music as prayer to music as a performance.
  - ◆ Our parish family has seen the tides of change regarding the time before mass from silence, to instrumental music, to community building and fellowship. With the implementation of the Deacon welcoming from the Sanctuary and inviting us to acknowledge the presence of Christ in our midst, some feel its time to reintroduce instrumental music to help set the tone for the liturgy.
    - In all aspects of music, there is improvement and there are opportunities, particularly in the greeting of the congregation.
    - The Anglo community may want to witness impact of music as a greeting during the Hispanic mass.
  - ◆ Overall, there is the perception that only a few of the parish family are involved in music or other ministries and would like to see this apparently systemic issue resolved. Essentially, we need to find many different ways to get more people involved.
    - More personal invitations (one-on-one interactions).
    - Asking someone to become involved and mentoring them through the process and staying with them to be sure they are enjoying the experience as much as you would of thought.
4. Does the parish offer formation opportunities for liturgical ministries? Does the parish communicate about diocesan liturgical formation opportunities?
- ◆ Yes the parish does offer formation opportunities for ministers. It is typically communicated through the bulletin or from the Ambo during announcements.
  - ◆ However, blanket invitations do not seem to be enough. More one-on-one, personal invitations are needed to increase participation.
  - ◆ Members of ministries have the accountability/responsibility to invite new members.
  - ◆ There are some opportunities for improvement in the training of Lectors.
    - Some cannot be heard as they may think the microphone does all the work. They must speak and project their voices in proclamation as if there is no microphone.
    - Enunciation is also important aspect of the proclamation that offers all an opportunity for improvement.
    - The pace of the proclamation must also be much more appropriate. If you think you are going to slow, slow down as you are not. Remember to breath and look at the congregation.

- Practice out loud so you can hear the phases and tempo and to place the emphasis where it is needed.
  - ◆ There have been numerous opportunities to obtain continuing formation and ministerial training, however, the turnout has not sufficiently represented the size of our parish family. Of the many thousands of parishioners, we have a very small minority of, approximately 150, Liturgical Ministers.
  - ◆ Opportunities offered by Bishop Russell Institute are not widely known.
  - ◆ When the Diocese or other parish families arranges for speakers to come to their area, some advanced noticed should come from the Diocese to all to garner more participation.
    - Or perhaps, the Diocese could take ownership of scheduling such individuals in multiple locations.
    - Diocese should have a mailing list to all parishes regarding the opportunities available.
    - Email groups should be established by parish staff role rather than individual to ensure continuity of operations.
  - ◆ The Diocese has, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 15 years, an Office of Worship. Our parish family needs to investigate how we might fully leverage this very important Diocesan resource.
  - ◆ Our parish has not had a full time Worship staff member in 10 ten years
  - ◆ Generally, there is the recognition that we need to do a better job of expounding on the need for continuing formation.
    - Worship Committee is requiring the annual obligatory formation retreat of all ministers followed by specific ministry training sessions.
    - A suggestion to help fill the void is perhaps, monthly Ministerial Meetings to discuss the ministries, identify opportunities for improvement, to indoctrinate new members, and create a foundational community from which much growth can be built.
    - We also must recognize that there are some who limit their participation in ministries for whatever reason and do not see the need for “formation”.
5. To what extent do leaders of the parish call forth and invite people to share their gifts through liturgical ministry? When was the last time that the parish invited people to be trained for liturgical ministries?
- ◆ There are regular calls by leaders of the parish to share their gifts. The results are less than expected and very limited. Something is not happening following the invitation.
  - ◆ Personal contact/invitation is found to be much more successful for a time than an open invitation. However, there must be closure to the personal invitation. Those making the invitation need to ensure that the individual being invited is also being involved.
  - ◆ There is an opportunity to build more extensive and efficient action plans for 1, 3, 6, and 12 months out to address the needs for participation.
  - ◆ There has been dissatisfaction in the participation of women in Advent programs and other liturgies.
    - There is the recognition that the “Women Participation” goes beyond the Diocese.
    - However, it is important to stress to our Bishop our collective desire to have more involvement of women in the liturgy.
    - It was mentioned the involvement/requirement of spouses in the Diaconate Formation as an important extension of their Sacrament of Marriage. These spouses were leaders and continue to lead and be involved. This should continue.
    - There is an opportunity to publicize opportunities for women in all ministries.
  - ◆ Encouraging participation is to take one step at a time. Participation does not require the volunteer to take the entire journey.
    - Volunteers must be reinforced by prayer and practical mentorship.
    - Volunteers must be acknowledged for their participation and their work.
    - We all own positively reinforcing participants to build their confidence.
    - Formal mentorship programs are important to building long-term relationships.
    - Remind everyone that we are all called through Holy Thursday, to service.
  - ◆ Most importantly, we are called to let God do the judging.

- We are called to love one another and to welcome all especially when they are not able to fully participate in the Liturgy through to its prayer of sending.
6. Has the parish undertaken a thorough review of the accessibility of its buildings and property for those who have some form of disability? What accessibility issues exist in the church buildings or practices? What assessment tools could be used to address these issues? Are those affected involved in assessment or decision making?
- ◆ It is not known if a thorough review has been made.
    - We have learned that there is a new committee called Safe Environment dedicated to these issues. However, it has not yet been able to form due to a lack of participation.
  - ◆ Wheel chair accessibility for Lectors does not seem to be viable.
    - There is a ramp and door access at the back of the Sanctuary where the Lector is able to come to the Altar for the proclamation. However, this requires that the Lector be at the door for the start of their proclamation requiring them to miss some portion of the Liturgy. Much more accommodation needs to be considered for Lectors.
    - This is not so much a problem for Eucharistic Ministers as the precious body or blood can be brought to them.
  - ◆ We have many opportunities in order to address the hearing impaired.
  - ◆ We also have opportunities in addressing the needs of the visually impaired who want to serve.
    - From a Lector perspective, the main challenge is a Braille version of the readings. The Xavier Institute offers Braille versions and this should be considered something the church should investigate for this and other reasons.
      - The other reason is the translation of the Hispanic proclamation of the Word should also be in Braille for those visually impaired.
  - ◆ Elderly needs when accessing the building are increasing. The doors to the church are very heavy and difficult to manage for our more mature population.
  - ◆ We are currently challenged to fully assess the accessibility needs of our parish other than through word of mouth and a census of those who minister to the home bound.
  - ◆ We must all need to keep in mind that accessibility is a “human dignity” issue. As Catholic Christians we are called to uphold the social teachings of Christ and treat all with the care and love that we would want for ourselves.
  - ◆ We do have some parishioners serving in the capacity of driver for those unable. However, this is very limited in scope and does not speak to the “human dignity” aspect of our call to service. There are many who have great difficulty seeing at night and therefore cannot attend any evening service. (Note that Holy Week Services and Mass (our most important celebration) begins in the evening.)
    - There may be an opportunity to obtain one or more grants from various foundations and government entities to support the acquisition of a church bus or van to facilitate ride sharing and finding.
    - The challenge is that writing grants is very complicated and would benefit from the support of someone who has written these types of grants.
    - To further comprehend the need, our parish should conduct an assessment of the challenges facing our parishioners from a transportation perspective.