St. Mary’s Parish Family

2018-2022

Five Year Parish Pastoral Plan
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**Read ~ Pray ~ Discern ~ Act**

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Dear Friends,

It is with immense pleasure and pride that I am able to present our Five-Year Pastoral Plan for St. Mary’s Parish. The document is the culmination of work by staff and volunteers along with our two leadership councils: The Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council. It is also the product of our CORE Assessment Team and Parishioner surveys and provides a direction for us as a family of faith for the next five years.

Many of the goals and objectives are based on the observations and the current reality in our community. No one knows how life may change over the next five years or what new challenges we may face. As a result, it may be necessary to edit, revise or update this Plan as we move forward. The staff, pastoral council and finance council will conduct periodic reviews to ensure that the Plan is still relevant to the lives of our parishioners and community.

Thank you to the staff, pastoral and finance councils for their leadership and input. Thank you to Fr. David Frederici and the Parish of St. John the Evangelist, Pocasset, Massachusetts for their inspiration and template to present this pastoral plan.

Exciting things are happening in our parish and there is more to come!

Peace,

Very Rev. Daniel W. Lacroix, VF
Pastor
Parish Pastoral Plan

St. Mary’s Parish

Mission
St. Mary’s Parish is a Roman Catholic faith-filled community composed of those who have accepted the invitation to follow our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The faithful members of this Eucharistic Community, in union with the Universal Church, admit to a genuine responsibility to welcome, evangelize, witness and serve others in Christ's name.

We place ourselves under the protection of our Blessed Mother as we seek to imitate her son.

Vision
“Service is the Price We Pay for Bearing the Name Christian”

Introduction
The Parish's role has been to assist the people of God as they grow in their worship of God, develop a greater knowledge and understanding of their faith while servicing the needs, spiritual and otherwise, of our brothers and sisters not only within the City of New Bedford, but Acushnet, Dartmouth, East Freetown and other adjacent communities. This is possible through a collaborative effort between clergy and our laity.

In 2016, the Diocese sponsored and engaged in a Parish Self Study and Survey thus providing an opportunity to:

- reconnect to who we are as a Catholic Parish,
- connect to our mission (see above),
- identify the needs and challenges of the Parish and greater community.

This Parish Pastoral Plan contains various strategies for preparing us for the next five years as a vibrant Parish community.

Implementing the Plan will once again rely on strength and collaboration between our laity and clergy as well as between ministries and age groups.

St. Mary’s Quick Stats
- Founded: 1952
- Registered Families: 982
- Children in Faith Formation: 161
- Average Mass Attendance: 1053
Values

**Christocentric:** The teachings of Jesus the Christ is our central reference point.

**Faith:** We believe in the Gospel of Jesus the Christ and the Catholic Spiritual Tradition. Faith brings us together.

**Right to Life and Human Dignity:** Our True Self is who we are, and always have been in God. All life in God’s creation is sacred. We affirm the dignity of each person. We believe that all people, regardless of their faith choices, have worth and are deserving of respect and compassion.

**Inclusion:** We embrace inclusion and serve people of all races, ethnicities, cultures, languages, genders, ages, socioeconomic groups, physical challenges, sexual orientations, backgrounds and life experiences. We invite all who identify with our mission and values to join us in working toward our vision. We interact with humility, in a spirit of community-building, to understand and learn together.

**Self-Determination/ Personal Agency:** We believe in supporting those who use our ministries to take responsibility for their lives and make choices that will support their health and well-being.

**Service as Duty:** In Hebrew, the word for the acts we call charity is Tzedakah. The root of Tzedakah is justice, obligation, and duty to do what is right. We serve and act in the spirit of obligation to better our world Community for all-- especially the poor and marginalized.

**Communication, Transparency and Trust:** We believe in honesty and integrity in all our interactions and work to create and maintain trust with our parishioners, among staff and volunteers and with the greater community.

**Sustainable Development:** We believe in long term environmental, economic and social accountability and strive to practice responsible stewardship in these areas whenever possible.

**Community:** The way we work together matters. Our service is designed to build community, to be individually empowering, and to be delivered with kindness and compassion for giver and receiver alike.

**Stewardship:** We create opportunities for people to share their time, talent and treasure for the benefit of our community and for their own fulfillment. Volunteers will always be our core workforce.

What We Do As A Catholic Parish

- Build Community
- Evangelize
- Provide Faith Formation
- Support Families
- Provide Pastoral Care
- Pray and Celebrate Together (Worship)
- Provide Temporalities (Administration)
- Grow our Youth and Young Adults
OUR PRESENT AND OUR FUTURE

St. Mary’s Parish activities, events and ministries are grounded in our mission for they demonstrate our purpose as a Parish community. As a community, we must also have a better understanding of who we are and who we represent.

The original chapel was destroyed by the 1938 hurricane. The parish was then suppressed. Then in 1952, it was once again hesitatingly renewed. Because of the uncertainty of the times, only a basement was constructed as a temporary church. In the sixties, all attention was devoted to the building of a parish school. In 1988, a new, larger church was built along with an annex for the middle school division of the school. The basement church became a parish center. When construction of the church moved forward, a new office wing and rectory was also constructed to provide decades of use as a Parish Worship, Educational and Gathering site.

The Diocese of Fall River requires parishes to conduct Mass count once per year. Our current Mass attendance is approximately 1000-1100 per week.

The median age of New Bedford is estimated at the mid-40s with a median household income $51,886. Our parish has an average age of 45. These numbers indicate that most of our community is made up of blue-collar wage earners as well as a significant number of retirees.

As we proceed with any future planning, it is imperative that we keep in mind the statistics so that we can strive to set new goals and objectives to reach the population we are not seeing at Mass.

Emerging Themes from the Parish Surveys

- Become a more Spirit-filled, welcoming community of faith;
- Strengthen our programs so that they focus on and include families;
- Increased presence in the wider community;
- Invite, train and support volunteers for various ministries;
- Increase outreach to new parishioners;
- Cultivate families and young adults to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the Mass;
- Invest in a personal life-long faith journey
YOUR ROLE AS A PARISHIONER

When the Mass ends, we are sent forth to “…go in peace,” or to “go in peace glorifying the Lord by your life.” These words encourage us to leave Mass and carry our faith with us for it is a call to put our faith into action. But actions vary from person to person depending on his/her gifts and talents.

As you take the time to read through this plan, prayerfully consider (discern) where your gifts and talents lie but also those of your family and the greater Parish community. Here are some tips:

- **Read** and **review** the outcomes and goals in search of opportunities where you can best contribute to the life of the Parish;
- **Pray** for insights where you can share your time and talent;
- **Discern** how best to proceed through consultation with your family and/or Parish Staff;
- **Act** on/participate in one or more Outcomes.

Answering your baptismal call requires not only an openness to the Holy Spirit in your life, but a self-awareness of the contributions (non-financial) you can and are willing to make to the life of the Parish. Be open to the possibility that someone else may see gifts and talents in you that you may not even recognize!

As a family of faith, baptized into the Body of Christ, we can all strive to enhance and enrich our Parish ministries as well as establish new ones that address the needs uncovered in the survey. But we cannot do it alone. Like the Body of Christ, we are a body with many parts and for those parts to function, we must collaborate and support one another.

This Pastoral Plan will provide several opportunities to fully live in the grace we received by virtue of our Baptism.

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**OUR PASTORAL PRIORITIES**

1. To engage more parishioners into the life of the Parish.
2. To develop an effective outreach strategy.
3. To build long term relationships with parishioners.

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“Among the baptized, all of whom are called to serve the mission of the Church, some experience a further specific call to lay ecclesial ministry. The call may come in a dramatic moment. More often, it comes over time, as the person grows—in love for God and a desire to do his will.”

OUTCOME ONE – SOCIAL & OUTREACH

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”

~ Matthew 18:20

BACKGROUND

Our community is blessed to be a friendly and welcoming one, but with any area, there is always room for improvement.

The following are the seven goals that were identified.

<table>
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<th>GOALS</th>
<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>• Become more visible to newcomers and those hovering on the fringe of our Church by attempting to encourage them to participate in our faith Family by December 31, 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Centered</td>
<td>• Provide two welcoming, family-centric activities and events within our Parish to encourage social interaction that will appeal to all ages and provide opportunities for parishioners to know one another more deeply by June 30, 2019.</td>
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| Communications      | • Communicate periodic updates from the pulpit concerning news and announcements from the Parish Council meetings/upcoming events starting by September 30, 2018.  
                         • Develop and implement a Parish Communication Plan for external communications by December 31, 2019.  
                         • Identify a parishioner to write and create articles regarding parish life at St. Mary’s Church for the purposes of promoting the Church by December 1, 2018 |
| Serving Those in Need | • Continue fostering an ongoing relationship with financial and volunteer support to provide emergency and short-term human support to those in need through our Parish Conference of the St. Vincent De Paul Society. Ongoing yearly.  
                         • Develop and implement a consolation (funeral planning) team and support plan by September 1, 2019. |
| Social Media        | • Create videos uploaded to You tube by June 30, 2019  
                         o Recruit volunteers of all ages & ministries to participate  
                         o 5-10 minutes in length with various subject matter (i.e. catechesis, ministry/apostolate highlights; faith; and current events).  
                         • Increase the Parish’s presence in the following through more regular updates by January 1st, 2019  
                         o Social media opportunities (Including Twitter and Instagram)  
                         o Web site |
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<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
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</table>
| Young Adult Ministry| • Delineate specific aspects of the faith or faith life that young adults ages 18-25 feel would strengthen their everyday lives to help them live faith centered lives by January 31, 2019.  
• Provide opportunities for young adults to feel connected to their parish by December 31, 2019. |
| Youth Ministry      | • Establish a Youth Ministry consisting of students in grades 6-9 from within our Parish to help develop their social, spiritual and emotional growth.  
• Solicit four (minimum) adult volunteers to serve as advisors for our Youth Ministry programs.  
• Train Youth Ministry members grades 10-12 in their role as leaders.  
• Invite students from grades 10-12 to serve as junior advisors.  
• Schedule monthly social activities that include but are not limited to:  
  o Movie Nights with follow-up discussions  
  o Game Nights  
  o Educational and Service activities  
  o Establish a Peer Mentoring Activities from those in grades 10-12 to work with their peers.  
• Send a minimum of two parish youth(s) to the Diocesan CLI (Christian Leadership Institute) to be teen leaders within our community.  
• Look at additional opportunities in the future for including youth in Parish Centered Activities and Ministries. |

Please take the time to Pray, Discern and Act on your time, gifts and talents. In what way can you serve your parish and help further the above goals? List it below.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
OUT COME TWO – EVANGELIZATION & VOCATIONS

“We must evangelize because the Lord Jesus commanded us to do so. He gave the Church the unending task of evangelizing as a restless power, to stir and to stimulate all its actions until all nations have heard his Good News and until every person has become his disciple.”

~ Go and Make Disciples of All Nations, paragraph #28 (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

BACKGROUND

Most Catholics struggle with the term “evangelization” while others are not sure what it is. Evangelization means “to bring the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself.”

How we go about evangelizing in the greater community differs greatly from the methods used by the early Church. The following are the five goals that were identified.

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<th>GOALS</th>
<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
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| Vocations                    | • Promote vocations through a dedicated team of men and women by December 31, 2019.  
                               | o First Friday Adoration & Benediction  
                               | o Vocation Awareness contest  
                               | o Guest speakers/presentations, etc | | Trainings                    | • Establish small faith communities with Evangelization as the primary goal by June 30, 2020.  
                               | • Train a core group of volunteers to facilitate small groups by June 30, 2020. | | Self-Awareness               | • Move from a self-focused mentality to other-minded mentality by January 1, 2020. | | Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) | • To establish and train a core team of RCIA Catechists and sponsors by September 1, 2019.  
                               | • To make known within our community the opportunity of a process to receive the sacraments of initiation for non-Catholics/unbaptized by June 30, 2018. | | Respect Life Ministry        | • Establish a core Respect Life Team by September 1, 2019.  
                              | • Offer informative and service-based opportunities to promote a culture of life by January 1, 2020. | |

Please take the time to Pray, Discern and Act on your time, gifts and talents. In what way can you serve your parish and help further the above goals? List it below.

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

1 Go and Make Disciples of All Nations, paragraph #10.
OUTCOME THREE – EDUCATION & ENRICHMENT

“When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.”

~1 Corinthians 13:11-12

BACKGROUND

Ask yourself the following question, “Do I have an eighth-grade understanding and relationship with God?” If you answered yes, you probably are familiar with either the Baltimore Catechism or CCD. As Catholics, it imperative that we must strengthen our personal faith before we can share that faith with others – including our own families. Thus, faith formation is a lifelong journey (Faith Formation) that grows as we do and matures with our life experiences.

The following are the five goals that were identified to help strengthen our Faith Formation program.

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<th>ACTION ITEMS</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Ongoing Faith Enrichment</strong></td>
<td>• Determine the needs and interests of parishioners to enhance their Spirituality and Faith Formation. June 1, 2018 – June 19, 2018; Report complete Nov. 1, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whole Family Catechesis</strong></td>
<td>• Develop whole family catechesis using multi-age-level and diverse local parish programs based on the interests and needs of the local parish family by July 1, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop relevant programs that will allow our parish families to expand and explore the core elements of our Catholic faith and practices of the Catholic way of life to live their lives in the world as disciples of Jesus by June 1, 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s Liturgy of the Word (CLOW)</strong></td>
<td>• Identify and train a core team of adults to facilitate Children’s Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) during the Sunday 10:30a.m. Mass for Grades K-4 by January 1, 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faith Formation (Gr. 1-9)</strong></td>
<td>• Query parents and catechists on new curriculum opportunities by June 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Execute events and programs which foster fellowship and friendship among families in the local faith community to create the sense of belonging, being needed so that they contribute to the parish’s life and mission through the stewardship of their gifts by Mar. 1, 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stewardship</strong></td>
<td>• Encourage parishioners to discipleship through service in their local faith community to actively live the gift and choice of faith through membership in the Catholic Christian Community. June 1, 2018 – Ongoing</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Establish a Stewardship Committee in consultation with the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils by September 1, 2019.</td>
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Please take the time to Pray, Discern and Act on your time, gifts and talents. In what way can you serve your parish and help further the Faith Formation goals? List it below.
Service is the price we pay for bearing the name Christian
OUT COME FOUR – SACRAMENTS & WORSHIP

“Let us greet him with a song of praise, joyfully sing out our psalms. Enter, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the LORD who made us. For this is our God, whose people we are, God’s well - tended flock.”

Psalm 95 :1-2, 6-7

BACKGROUND

Full, conscious and active participation. These are the three elements asked of us as Catholics. We should be active and totally present not only at Mass but also in our personal journeys of prayer. Passionate involvement by parishioners at Mass as well as other opportunities for prayer and social outreach can only help our Parish grow by welcoming new families to our community.

The following three goals were identified.

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<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer Apostolate</td>
<td>• Implement a parish-wide Prayer Apostolate to include parishioners who are homebound as a means to help feel connected to Parish life by September 30, 2019</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Invite parishioners to join the apostolate to pray for others who are ill, etc. by September 30, 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer Forms &amp; Spirituality</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for parishioners to participate in different forms of prayer by June 30, 2021.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Liturgy of the Hours</td>
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<td>o Eucharistic Adoration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Ignatian Spirituality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Franciscan Spirituality</td>
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<td>o Novenas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Establish a Spiritual Life Team to plan ongoing spiritual programs. By September 1, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liturgy</td>
<td>• Enhance an Art &amp; Environment Committee by November 2018.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Develop a children and adult choir by January 1, 2019</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Develop greater and more full and active participation in the Liturgy including congregational singing by June 30, 2019.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage and invite families to participate in various liturgical ministries by December 1, 2019.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increase family participation at mass by 10% by September 2020.</td>
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</table>

Please take the time to Pray, Discern and Act on your time, gifts and talents. In what way can you serve your parish and help further the goals listed above? List it below.

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__________________________________________________________________________
OUTCOME FIVE—GOVERNANCE & FINANCE

“The Church needs an institutional framework for its stability, community, and mission for serving the cause of the Gospel and opening people to God’s call to holiness.”

~ U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, p. 121 (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

BACKGROUND

The Parish is a community of people joined together in faith. However, the community needs a place to come together and like the U.S. Bishops stated above, we need a stable framework from budgets to structures to staff and ministry personnel.

The following four goals were identified.

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<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>• Develop a yearly operating budget by July 1, 2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Transparency through an annual financial report by September 1, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities Upkeep</td>
<td>• Formulate a Building &amp; Grounds Committee by December 31, 2018.</td>
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<td>• Review the facilities and identify extraordinary needs and repairs by June 30, 2019.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Establish timetable for special projects.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Establish a subcommittee of the finance council as buildings and grounds committee to coordinate with facilities manager.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>• Develop policies and procedures handbook for paid staff by June 30, 2019.</td>
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<td>• Develop a written job description for each paid staff position by June 30, 2019.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Implement a Diocesan yearly evaluation tool for self-assessment of the staff and a Pastor evaluation of each paid staff member by June 30, 2020.</td>
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<td>• Create an employee file folder including job application, references, W-4, etc. by July 1, 2018.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lay Ministry</td>
<td>• Create opportunities for training ministry heads for the various parish ministries, so that those heads of ministries feel competent in exercising their role as a leader by September 1, 2019.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Create a position of Director of Ministries (salary/stipend) to be the liaison between the various parish ministries and offer enrichment opportunities by July 1, 2018.</td>
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</table>

Please take the time to Pray, Discern and Act on your time, gifts and talents. In what way can you serve your parish and help further the goals listed above? List it below.
WHAT'S NEXT?

“So, what does this mean for our Parish Community? The staff, Pastoral Council and Finance Council will establish time tables for the aforementioned outcomes and goals. Since the Parish will participate in the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Process, Parish Leadership will conduct periodic reviews of this Plan to ensure it stays relevant to our needs while keeping in line with previously stated Diocesan Goals.

Hopefully, as you have read this living document, you have been able to pray and discern areas of interest where you may wish to become involved; or at the very least, perhaps you have an idea that you would like to share with Fr. Dan, the staff or the Pastoral Council? These are small but necessary steps as we look forward to being Disciples and members of a Parish that is Mission based and not simply maintenance based.

“*The participation of the lay faithful in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King finds its source in the anointing of Baptism, its further development in Confirmation and its realization and dynamic sustenance in the Holy Eucharist. It is a participation given to each member of the lay faithful individually, in as much as each is one of the many who form the one Body of the Lord…”*

~ St. John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* (On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World), 14

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL COMMITTEES

**Social & Outreach**
Lynne Kuczewski, Mike McCormack, Norm Audette, Esmeralda Braga, Ed Gall & Rick Rezendes

**Evangelization & Vocations**
Eric Corrie & Manny Ribeiro

**Education & Enrichment**
Barbara Bonville, David Beaulieu & Norma Fredette

**Sacraments & Worship**
Barbara Bonville, David Beaulieu & Norma Fredette

**Governance & Finance**
Finance Council (Norm Audette), Marty Flinn & Eric Corrie

CONTACT INFORMATION

PARISH STAFF

Very Rev. Daniel W. Lacroix, VF, Pastor
RevDLacroix@aol.com

David Beaulieu, *Director Faith Formation*
Barbara Bonville, *Director of Ministries*
Suzanne Beaulieu, *RCIA Coordinator*
Tom Leman, *Catechetical Assistant*
Patricia Ferreira, *Director of Music*
Peggy Lenihan, *Administrative Assistant*
Marty Flinn, *Custodian & Groundskeeper*
Tobey Burke, *Facilities Manager*