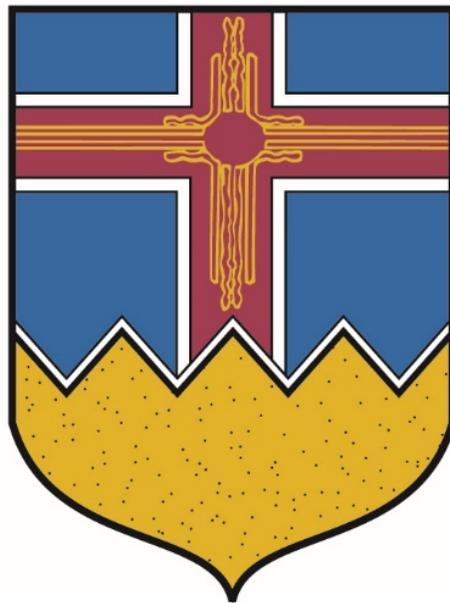


# Diocesan Pastoral Priorities

## Growing in the Qualities of an Engaging Church

Parish Self Study Guide 2015-2016



*Holy Spirit guide us, renew us, and strengthen us  
as we journey together as the people of the diocese.*

Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Las Cruces



## Roman Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces

Most Rev. Oscar Cantú  
Bishop

Greetings and Blessings to the Faithful of the Diocese,

Last winter I asked pastors, parish administrators, and parish life coordinators to gather with parishioners to help determine pastoral priorities for the diocese. The results of these consultations were returned, and what emerged were five priorities for pastoral activity. These five priorities indicate a direction in which I ask our parishes and communities, indeed our whole Diocese of Las Cruces family, to walk together.

It is with faith and trust that I now promulgate the five priorities, one each to be developed over the next five years as follows:

- Year 2015-2016: Priority – Liturgy and Evangelization
- Year 2016-2017: Priority – Stewardship
- Year 2017-2018: Priority – Faith Formation
- Year 2018-2019: Priority – Pastoral Care of Families
- Year 2019-2020: Priority – Youth and Young Adults

The annual Diocesan Eucharistic Congress will be the pivotal event for beginning our concentration on each priority. The Pastoral Center will then provide a Self-Study Guide for our parishes and communities giving an overview of each priority, providing three to five best-practice qualities, and including a template to write SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals for parish development. The process will include an annual parish/community assessment and evaluation in relation to the parish-determined goals.

I pray that the Holy Spirit may guide us in this process, renewing and strengthening us as we journey together through these areas of priority, and entrust our hopes and dreams to the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Francis of Assisi, the patrons of our Diocese.

Yours in Christ,  
Most Reverend Oscar Cantú  
Bishop of Las Cruces

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# **Timeline for Pastoral Priorities**

## **Year 1 (July 2015-June 2016): *Evangelization and Liturgy***

- Parish Self-Assessment and Follow-up Plan
  - July: Distribution of Parish Self Study Guides
  - August-September: Parish Completes Assessment
  - September-October: Parish develops 1-2 SMART Goals and an implementation plan for the *pastoral priorities*.
  - November-May 2016: Implement plan to achieve the SMART Goal
  - May: Evaluate SMART Goals to determine how effectively they were achieved.
  - June: Submit to the Diocese a *Best Practice* the parish has developed in Evangelization and Liturgy which will be shared with other parishes.
  
- *Living the Eucharist*, a pastoral resource from Paulist Evangelization Ministries designed to offer parishioners ways to encounter Jesus Christ and foster the New Evangelization, is to be implemented in Lent 2016 both as a follow-up and lead to the annual Eucharistic Congress and as a tool to evangelize through small communities.
  - Preparation - Fall 2015
  - Implementation - Lent 2016
  - Program will continue for Lent 2017 and 2018

## **Year 2 (July 2016- June 2017): *Stewardship***

## **Year 3 (July 2017-June 2018): *Faith Formation***

## **Year 4 (July 2018-June 2019): *Pastoral Care of Families***

## **Year 5 (July 2019-June 2020): *Youth and Young Adult***

# PARISH SELF STUDY GUIDE

Bishop Cantú has named these diocesan priorities to guide us, the faithful, to build up the Body of Christ that is the Church here in southern New Mexico.

## Assessment Tool:

This *Parish Self-Study Guide* serves as a tool to assist you in assessing your parish in each priority area. Within each priority area, 2-4 attributes will be listed with questions to assess how well your parish emulates that attribute.

For each question, rate your parish on a scale of 0 to 4.

- 0 - If you answer no to the question.
- 1 - If you answer yes, but feel you need significant improvement in the attribute.
- 2 - If you answer yes, but there is room for some improvement.
- 3 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent
- 4 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent, part of parish routine and you would consider it an outstanding attribute of the parish.

## SMART Goals:

Once you have assessed your parish in each priority area, using the assessment response as a guide, develop a **SMART goal** for improvement in one or two aspects for each priority area. **SMART Goals** are:

**Specific:** Well defined! A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal the five “W” questions need to be answered:

- Who:** Who is involved?
- What:** What will be accomplished?
- When:** Establish a time frame.
- Where:** Identify a location.
- Why:** Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

**EXAMPLE:** **General goal:** Provide training for Readers.  
**Specific goal:** To have the Word of God proclaimed with ardor, St. Mary Parish will provide a 3-hour training for new readers twice a year; in February and in September.

**Measurable:** Concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set.

With the example specific goal, there are three concrete areas for measurement – 3-hour training; twice a year; and the number of new readers.

**Agreed Upon:** All the stakeholders (such as the parish staff, pastoral council and finance council) came to a consensus on what the goals should be. The goal will be attainable when all parties agree to its importance and are willing to work towards its achievement.

**Realistic:** The goal represents an objective toward which you are both *willing* and *able* to work.

**EXAMPLE:**

**Unrealistic goal:** To deepen our parishioners' relationship with God, our parish will quarterly sponsor a 3-day mission, offered twice a day by a nationally acclaimed spiritual director.

**Realistic goal:** To deepen our parishioners' relationship with God, our parish will sponsor a 3-day mission during Lent, offered twice a day by a well-known spiritual director.

**Time-Based:** A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. However, if anchored within a timeframe, a mindset is put into motion to begin working on the goal.



## Pastoral Priority: *Evangelization*

*"...The first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life.... As we said recently to a group of lay people, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." [67] St. Peter expressed this well when he held up the example of a reverent and chaste life that wins over even without a word those who refuse to obey the word. [68] It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus- the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity."*

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI #41

Pope Paul VI states earlier in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize." As parish communities then, our deepest identity is evangelization, witnessing to the Good News of Jesus Christ both as individuals and as community in our programs, in our liturgies, and in our outreach. The everyday moments of one's life are opportunities for evangelization when one lives with Christian charity, faith, and hope which provides witness to family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and others who have stopped actively participating in the life of the Church or who do not know the message of Jesus. This witness is essential for reaching others in today's modern world.

### Resources for Evangelization

*My USCCB*

*Evangelization Exchange Newsletter*

*Word on Fire formation programs*

*Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults*

USCCB subscription

Paulist Evangelization Ministries

Word on Fire

Instituto Fe y Vida

## Attribute 1 in Evangelization: WELCOME, HOSPITALITY, ACCOMPANIMENT

**Evangelization** begins as modeled by Jesus himself, through the personal interaction and relationship. It is through personal interactions, in how and what one speaks, in the attitude one portrays and in the presence to the other one displays, that the witness to the faith will be demonstrated. Scripture is steeped in an attitude of welcome and hospitality. And following Pope Francis, we are called to be missionary disciples, meeting people where they are and accompanying them as they journey to a deeper relationship with God and community.

### Rating Scale:

- 0 - If you answer no to the question
- 1 - If you answer yes, but feel you need significant improvement in the attribute.
- 2 - If you answer yes, but there is room for some improvement.
- 3 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent
- 4 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent, part of parish routine and you would consider it an outstanding attribute of the parish.

Rating	Questions to Consider
	When people come to the parish office, are they made to feel welcomed and valued? Do we respectfully greet them and actively listen to their story or request; offering appropriate assistance, even if it is just information on where they can get help? (or are we at times dismissive, abrupt or “all business” forgetting the person before us is a child of God?)
	When people inquire about sacraments (Baptism, Marriage, First Eucharist, and Confirmation) or funerals, do we take time to know their story, and who they are? Do we see these inquiries as moments for evangelization or is our first response the “requirements”?
	Do we foster a sense of welcome to those disenfranchised from the Church, the divorced or separated; families with special needs members; homebound; those who feel alienated from the Church? Do we provide opportunities for the disenfranchised to be supported, to be reconciled to be included in the community?
	Do we have a hospitality ministry which may include: welcoming new parish members with a pot-luck dinner or home visits to get to know them; greeting people as they arrive for Mass; acknowledging people who may be attending Mass for the first time at our parish; providing meals for grieving families or families facing grave illnesses?
	Do we acknowledge, welcome and include our younger members? Do we greet teenagers as well as adults and children? Do we specifically invite young adults to parish events and programs? Do we offer opportunities for the younger members to be mentored in discipleship?

## Attribute 2 in Evangelization: DEEPENING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Lives that witness Christian charity, faith, and hope also draw others to examine their own spiritual life, and for some to discover that spiritual life. As parish communities, our witness of Christian charity, faith, and hope promote in the faithful a desire to deepen their relationship with God.

### Rating Scale:

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- 1 - If you answer yes, but feel you need significant improvement in the attribute.
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- 3 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent
- 4 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent, part of parish routine and you would consider it an outstanding attribute of the parish.

Rating	Questions to Consider
	Does our parish offer opportunities to foster conversion: personal conversion such as retreats; different experiences of prayer; days of renewal?
	Do we use special times in the life of families to provide opportunities for deepening of faith such as blessing of children and youth at the beginning of the school year and providing them with a simple prayer book for the school year; having baccalaureate Mass for those graduating High School or College and providing a bible or prayer book for their new journey; blessing pregnant couples or engaged couples and offering them a prayer partner couple?
	Do we foster the deepening of faith in all our meetings (finance council, parish council, staff, catechists) and other gatherings by taking time to share and reflect on the Scripture and offer prayers for our community?
	Do we provide opportunities for people to share their stories of faith whether in small groups through small Christian communities or with the entire parish in the bulletin, on the parish website; as a reflection at the end of Mass?
	Do we provide opportunities for parish experiences of conversion by offering opportunities to serve the least in our community followed by time for prayer and theological reflection?
	Do we have opportunities for communal prayer such as penance services; Feast Day celebration (ie Our Lady of Guadalupe); Adoration and Benediction; Prayer service for peace; Thanksgiving; or seasonal prayer experiences for Advent and Lent?

## Pastoral Priority: *Liturgy*

*“The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church’s power flows. ... From the liturgy, therefore, particularly the eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain; the liturgy is the source for achieving in the most effective way possible human sanctification and God’s glorification, the end to which all the Church’s other activities are directed.”*

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no.10

The quality of an active, engaging parish is good liturgy. It is the celebration of liturgy, especially the Eucharistic liturgy, which gathers together the people of the parish to give thanks and praise, to be fed and nurtured, and to be in communion as the Body of Christ. It is also the liturgy that sends the gathered community forth as Christ’s evangelizing presence in our world. The liturgy, to create what Pope Francis refers to as missionary disciples, must be the best it can be. For it to be the best it can be, liturgical planning and liturgical ministry formation, all with the goal of assembly participation, must occur.

### Resources for Liturgy

<i>The Roman Missal, Study Edition</i>	Liturgical Press
<i>The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)</i>	USCCB Publishing
<i>Lectionary for Mass: Sundays...</i>	LTP
<i>Lectionary for Mass: Weekdays...</i>	LTP
<i>Annual ORDO:</i>	Paulist Press
<i>Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and the Celebration of the Eucharist</i>	
<i>Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship</i>	USCCB Publishing
<i>Believe, Celebrate, Live the Eucharist: A Program for Study</i>	WLP
<i>The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements</i>	FDLC
<i>Guidelines for a Multilingual Celebration of Mass</i>	usccb.org
<i>Liturgy in a Culturally Diverse Community: A Guide</i>	FDLC
<i>A Fresh Look at the Mass: A Helpful Guide</i>	23 <sup>rd</sup> Publications
<i>Liturgy with Style and Grace</i>	LTP
<i>Preparing for Liturgy: A Theology and Spirituality</i>	LTP
<i>Saving Signs, Wondrous Words</i>	LTP
<i>The Word and Eucharist Handbook</i>	Resource Publications

### Resources for Evaluating Liturgy

<i>Evaluating Your Parish Liturgy *E-Book*</i>	Resource Publications
<i>Whole Community Liturgy: A Guide</i>	23 <sup>rd</sup> Publications

### Resources for Liturgical Training

<i>Diocesan Guidelines and Training Materials for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion</i>	Liturgy Office
<i>Diocesan Guidelines and Training Materials for Readers</i>	Liturgy Office

## Attribute 1 in Liturgy: LITURGICAL PLANNING

**Liturgical Planning** gathers, focuses and tasks the pastor/administrator and representatives of the various parish ministry groups – the priests, deacons, environment ministers, music/choir directors, sacristans, ushers, readers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, hospitality ministers, and lay leaders of prayer - with preparing for, executing and evaluating parish liturgies.

Rating Scale:

- 0 – If you answer no to the question
- 1 – If you answer yes, but feel you need significant improvement in the attribute.
- 2 – If you answer yes, but there is room for some improvement.
- 3 – If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent
- 4 – If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent, part of parish routine and you would consider it an outstanding attribute of the parish.

Rating	Questions to Consider
	<p>Does parish liturgical leadership, including the pastor and/or parish administrator and key ministry representatives, meet regularly – or at least seasonally – to prepare for the upcoming liturgies of a given time period or liturgical season?</p> <p>Are these preparations made with consideration given to attaining the participation of the diverse age, cultural, family and formation groups that make up the parish?</p>
	<p>Does parish liturgical leadership make sure that there is a method and/or system of disseminating the details of their preparations in a timely fashion to the various parish ministerial groups, especially those whose ministries need to be most aware or are most likely to be modified by the details?</p> <p>Are these details, as applicable, also disseminated to the people of the parish?</p>
	<p>Does parish liturgical leadership make sure that a schedule is provided on a regular basis for each of the parish ministries? Are the ministers given the opportunity for input to the schedule? Is there a method and/or system for ministers to request a substitute when they cannot minister as assigned?</p> <p>Is there a back-up plan in place for when a minister fails to appear as assigned?</p>
	<p>Does parish liturgical leadership meet regularly – or at least seasonally – to evaluate the liturgies of a past given time period or liturgical season?</p> <p>Is input solicited from the diverse groups that make up the parish?</p> <p>Are applicable aspects of the evaluation incorporated into the training and on-going formation of the liturgical ministers?</p>

## Attribute 2 in Liturgy: INITIAL MINISTRY TRAINING

**Initial Ministry Training** assures that parishioners are appropriately and well trained before beginning service as a liturgical minister - whether it be as an environment minister, music/choir minister, sacristan, altar server, usher, reader, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, hospitality minister, or lay leader of prayer. This training aligns to the Roman Rite, especially *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), and to USCCB and diocesan guidelines.

### Rating Scale:

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- 1 - If you answer yes, but feel you need significant improvement in the attribute.
- 2 - If you answer yes, but there is room for some improvement.
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- 4 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent, part of parish routine and you would consider it an outstanding attribute of the parish.

Rating	Questions to Consider
	Does parish liturgical leadership have a regular schedule for training those who wish to assist and minister at liturgy? Is what is included in the initial training for each ministry determined with consensus of the parish liturgical leadership? Does the training take into consideration the guidelines set by the GIRM, the diocese and/or the USCCB? Are mentors used as a part of the initial training?
	Is there a method and/or system for determining who will do the initial training for each parish ministry? Is there a method and/or system for training the trainer? Does the method and/or system include the Basic Ministry Formation of the diocese?
	Is there any recurring systematic evaluation of who is currently serving as liturgical ministers in the parish? Is there any follow-up discernment to determine which of the diverse groups of the parish need personal and potentially pastoral invitations to participate in ministry? Are recurring efforts made, especially in training and scheduling, to assure that there are ministers representing the diverse groups of the parish at as many liturgies as possible?

### Attribute 3 in Liturgy: ON-GOING MINISTRY FORMATION

**On-going Ministry Formation** through retreat days, days of reflection, or regularly scheduled renewal sessions, assists the liturgical ministers to deepen their love for the liturgy and their appreciation for the ministry they have undertaken. These sessions give parish leadership the opportunity to voice issues and concerns that may have arisen in each ministry, and in return, give parish ministers an opportunity to suggest ways to improve their ministry and thus, the parish liturgy.

**Rating Scale:**

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- 3 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent
- 4 - If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent, part of parish routine and you would consider it an outstanding attribute of the parish.

Rating	Questions to Consider
	Does parish liturgical leadership have a regular schedule of on-going formation opportunities for those who assist and minister at liturgy? Do these opportunities include time for prayer, reflection and sharing about ministry and liturgy?
	Are readers and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, as required by the diocese, gathered every other year for renewal sessions? Is discernment of attitudes, abilities and length of ministry part of these renewal sessions? Are there consequences and/or mentors available for further training for ministers that that are consistently absent, that arrive late or are inappropriately dressed, or that are unprepared to fulfill their ministry?
	When the liturgical planning results in details that cannot be shared in a timely fashion via ministry meetings, are there methods and/or systems for posting ministry information both digitally and in the sacristy for ministers to review?
	Does parish liturgical leadership let liturgical ministers know when events are happening within the vicariate, diocese, region or virtual realm which may help enrich them in their ministry?

## Attribute #4 in Liturgy: ASSEMBLY PARTICIPATION

**Assembly Participation** – the "full, active and conscious participation" to be considered before all else in the reform and promotion of the liturgy (CSL, no 14) - is reflected by the numbers of members of the assembly who: 1) actively respond to the Mass dialogue; 2) respectfully engage in sacred silence, allowing the Word of God and the texts of the prayers and hymns to sink more deeply inside each of them; and 3) genuinely sing the hymns and psalms.

### Rating Scale:

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- 1 – If you answer yes, but feel you need significant improvement in the attribute.
- 2 – If you answer yes, but there is room for some improvement.
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- 4 – If you answer yes, and this attribute is readily apparent, part of parish routine and you would consider it an outstanding attribute of the parish.

Rating	Questions to Consider
	<p>Is the full, active and conscious participation of the assembly encouraged through welcome and hospitality?</p> <p>Is it reinforced through communications and cues, such as announcements, signs and gestures?</p> <p>Are there periodic, seasonal, or special (wedding, funeral, or sacramental) liturgy explanations of the flow and unique parts of the liturgy?</p>
	<p>Is the church environment welcoming (not overwhelming); does the arrangement and number of items in the sanctuary make clear the importance of the altar, ambo and presider chair; is the temperature of the building comfortable; and can the assembly adequately hear the word proclaimed and see each minister that speaks or leads them in song?</p>
	<p>Are the music directors/choir leaders mindful of developing a common parish repertoire when making musical selections for liturgies, with consideration for the diverse groups of the parish?</p> <p>Do the musical selections, especially of new psalms and hymns, encourage and enable the diverse groups of the parish to sing?</p>
	<p>Are the cantors/choir leaders visible to the assembly and do they graciously invite the assembly to join in the song?</p> <p>Is assembly participation invited by having appropriate resources, whether in print or digital form?</p> <p>Are the parish liturgical leaders mindful of copyright laws when providing print and digital resources for both the assembly and the music ministers, and do they budget accordingly?</p>
	<p>Is the assembly truly sent forth with the instruction and mission to serve, to go be Christ for the world, to share the good news?</p>

# SMART GOALS WORKSHEET

**Priority:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Specific:** What exactly do we want to accomplish? (who, what, when, where, why)

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**Measurable:** How will we know when we have reached this goal?

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**Agreed Upon:** Have we come to a consensus that this a parish goal? Was anyone who is impacted by this goal not included in the development of the goal? How will we include them going forward?

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**Realistic:** Are we willing and able to work toward this priority? What resources or partnerships do we need to have to achieve this goal?

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**Time-Based:** When will we achieve this goal?

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**This goal is important because:**

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**Time-Based:** When will we achieve this goal?

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**This goal is important because:**

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