



## **2017-2019 Pastoral Initiatives**

**As recommended by the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council  
And accepted by Archbishop Alexander K. Sample  
November 2017**

*At the heart of each of these pastoral priorities and concrete initiatives is a desire to help the people of western Oregon live in a manner worthy of their call in Jesus Christ. These initiatives are primarily focused on leading Catholics to a deeper faith and relationship with Christ and the Church so that we may become missionary disciples and compelling witnesses of the Gospel who bring the saving message of Jesus Christ to the world.*

*These concrete pastoral initiatives should be seen in the context of the Church's overall mission of evangelization. While not exclusive of the many other pastoral needs which require ongoing attention, these initiatives are intended to be points of special focus and unity for our life and work together in western Oregon throughout the upcoming three years. While the Pastoral Center has particular responsibility for implementing these initiatives, it is anticipated that Catholic communities will lend support and begin their own creative work to implement the initiatives where they apply at the local and regional levels.*

### **PASTORAL PRIORITY: Catechesis and Faith Formation**

**Initiative A:** Provide comprehensive formation and training for catechists and make the formation programs more readily available across the Archdiocese.

**Focus:** Strengthen and enhance the Archdiocesan programs for initial and ongoing catechist formation to address all four pillars of formation (human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral) in harmony with the Magisterium. Make these formation programs available regionally and electronically.

**Initiative B:** Create a common set of catechetical standards and expectations for various age levels, and a core curriculum for sacramental preparation programs, to ensure Catholics in the Archdiocese are receiving similar, good quality instruction in the faith. Create standards for RCIA and the formation of RCIA instructors. Develop a list of approved catechetical materials for various age levels. Allow flexibility within the developed standards and approved materials so that parishes and instructors can employ the programs, methods and approaches they find most effective for teaching the faith.

**Focus:** Develop and communicate a standardized curriculum framework with age-specific materials to use with sacramental preparation, youth and young adult catechesis and Catholic grade and high school religion programs. Evaluate all available catechetical programs and materials and post to a website the programs

that are acceptable for use in the Archdiocese. Programs and materials should consider the spiritual, theological, multicultural, and age-specific needs of the laity. List and provide resources for catechists, school religion teachers, youth and young adult ministers, RCIA instructors, marriage preparation instructors, and all who teach the Catholic faith.

**Initiative C:** Provide materials, experiences, training, resources and role models to support and strengthen parents in their role as primary teachers of the faith.

**Focus:** Support all parents to authentically live and communicate the Catholic faith, including parents of pre-school children and home school parents.

**Initiative D:** Provide access to sound catechetical materials and programs for non-English speaking and special needs communities.

**Focus:** While included in above goals, a special emphasis is to be placed on locating, approving and promulgating catechetical materials for the various multi-cultural groups in the Archdiocese.

**Initiative E:** Provide tools to Catholics for ongoing faith formation and encouragement to live a life of faith in Christ.

**Focus:** Create an Archdiocesan web-based resource that provides weekly evangelization and faith formation materials in small bites suitable for homily ideas, social media, bulletin inserts, and direct electronic delivery to lay faithful who sign up to receive them. In keeping with the call to personal and corporate conversion contained in *Evangelii Gaudium*, these weekly materials should also include success stories in local works of mercy projects, and personal testimonies and other evangelistic topics that encourage the faithful and challenge all to grow closer to Christ.

## **PASTORAL PRIORITY: Divine Worship**

**Initiative A:** Increase the quality of and provide access to recommended liturgical music. Offer education to build the skills of liturgical musicians in the Archdiocese.

**Focus:** Develop an Archdiocesan program or institute to train and inspire music ministers in a way that draws new people into the ministry of music, builds the skills of the music ministers and worship leaders, and encourages more participation in the liturgical music by those attending Mass. Provide resources and guidelines to assist music ministers in selecting appropriate music for the sacred liturgy. Deliver this program regionally in person – on a vicariate basis if possible.



**Initiative B:** Increase the knowledge, reverence and effectiveness of all liturgical ministers.

Focus: Develop standardized training and education programs that can be delivered regionally, locally and electronically for liturgical ministers, including extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, readers, sacristans, altar servers, and hospitality ministers (greeters and ushers). Work to help develop in all liturgical ministers a deeper understanding of their ministry and a greater appreciation and reverence for their faith and the liturgy. Work to encourage more participation in these ministries. Provide Archdiocesan policies and guidelines.

**Initiative C:** Increase the lay faithful's knowledge of and appreciation for the Mass.

Focus: Evaluate, select and share information and resources that parishes can use to help parishioners better understand the spiritual richness of the Mass, the meaning of the parts of the Mass, and the history and tradition of the celebration of the Mass.

**Initiative D:** Promote more consistency in the Mass experience and ensure that it is in accord with the Church's faithful celebration of the sacred liturgy. Educate the laity on the various required and optional elements within the Mass.

Focus: Provide guidance and expectations, publicly promulgate standards and update the training for clergy to clearly define the range of acceptable practices in saying the Mass to enhance parishioner understanding and participation in the Mass, eliminate confusion and set aside practices that are not in accord with the faithful celebration of the Mass as it is handed on by the Church.

**Initiative E:** Promote a culture of hospitality in our parishes.

Welcome and evangelize those who come to visit us and create the "open doors" in all our parishes as referenced in Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 47).

Focus: Provide resources and develop a program of hospitality training that can be delivered regionally, locally and electronically to help parishes create a welcoming and inviting atmosphere that encourages repeat attendance at Mass, conversion and reversion, and connection with longtime parishioners. Provide resources (including web links) that can be provided to seekers and visitors to learn more about the Catholic faith.

## **PASTORAL PRIORITY: Marriage & Family Life**

**Initiative A:** Prepare Catholics for entering into the Sacrament of Matrimony.

**Focus:** Evaluate existing parish marriage preparation programs for quality and content, and develop and promulgate best practices to all parishes, including evaluating and posting approved programs and materials on marriage preparation. Connect marriage preparation programs with vocational awareness training to reinforce the understanding that marriage preparation begins in the family, and is integral in all stages of development.

**Initiative B:** Assist and support couples in struggling marriages. Provide a reliable resource to Catholics seeking the services of counselors and mental health professionals that will assist them in their struggles while supporting their life of faith. Reach out to those who are divorced. Reach out to those divorced and civilly-remarried; assist them and encourage them to approach the tribunal so they can return to the sacraments.

**Focus:** Develop and promote awareness of a list of counselors and mental health professionals who respect the Church's teachings and can faithfully assist Catholic families that have struggling marriages and/or are dealing with issues such as depression, addiction or other emotional or psychological challenges.

**Initiative C:** Provide excellent, current and approved resources to assist parishes in building and maintaining solid marriages and raising children in faith-filled environments.

**Focus:** Evaluate and post effective materials and resources that support and encourage marriage and family life. Find effective ways to communicate the existence of these resources to the lay community.

**Initiative D:** Provide excellent, current and approved resources to assist parishes in providing ongoing support to young married couples and families during their first five years of marriage.

**Focus:** Evaluate and post approved programs and parish best practices that support married life in the first five years of marriage. Work with local parishes on a vicariate level to develop and build these programs.

**Initiative E:** Provide guidance to Catholics on the issues of same sex marriage, same sex attraction, gender identity and the LGBTQ culture. Reach out in love and support with respect for the dignity of each person, and meet people where they are at



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with the goal of leading them to a full life in Christ. Clearly articulate the Church's position and teach Catholics how to provide pastoral care and respond to these issues in our own families, parishes and the larger culture. Provide resources to those who are on the front lines in dealing with these issues.

**Focus:** Develop programs and provide up to date resources on the Church's teaching on and proper response to the sexual and gender issues prevalent in our culture today. This includes identifying and posting age-appropriate materials for our catechists, school religion programs, and youth and young adult ministers to assist them in their ministries; providing solid information for lay Catholic parents and adults who are trying understand and communicate with family and friends on these issues; and developing and maintaining a list of qualified, faithful counselors to support families and individuals in need of professional guidance and support.

### **PASTORAL PRIORITY: Vocations**

**Initiative A:** Get local parishes energized about vocations by hearing the real-life stories of men currently pursuing a vocation to the priesthood.

**Focus:** Create a program and linkages where parishes can invite/host seminarians to share their faith stories.

**Initiative B:** Connect lay people in parishes to those living out religious vocations in order to increase vocational awareness and inspire deeper faith.

**Focus:** Arrange encounters with those in religious life through field trips, retreats, parish missions, visits to schools, vacation bible schools, parish events, Confirmation programs, etc.

**Initiative C:** Increase awareness of the various religious orders in the Archdiocese and encourage vocations by providing opportunities for lay people to interact with members of the various religious communities.

**Focus:** Coordinate vocation fairs of religious orders at the vicariate level.

**Initiative D:** Provide comprehensive formation on discerning a vocation (whether as a consecrated person, married, vowed religious, deacon or priest) to Catholics of all ages from pre-school to adult. Provide the tools and resources to help young adults to discern their own vocation.



**Focus:** Evaluate, approve and post age-appropriate vocational formation resources. Require that training on what a vocation is and how to discern a vocation is included in all phases of religious education, youth ministry, and young adult ministry. Make materials available for parents to begin teaching about vocations with their pre-school age children.

**Initiative E:** Train and equip youth and young adult ministers to help others properly discern their vocations.

**Focus:** Create a standard curriculum and provide training in vocational awareness for youth and young adult ministers, as many of them are in the process of discerning their own vocations, and they are directly working with others who are in the process of discerning their vocations.

### **PASTORAL PRIORITY: Works of Mercy**

**Initiative A:** Increase participation in local works of mercy programs. By the end of three years, identify strengths and weaknesses in the various works of mercy programs throughout the Archdiocese, summarize and report on them to priests, parishes, laity and the general public in order to raise awareness and improve our outreach.

**Focus:** Continue to develop, support and promote the Archdiocesan Mercy website so that parishes can submit events related to Works of Mercy to promote wider participation, and clergy and laity have an approved resource for materials and teaching on the social doctrine of the Church including the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Work with parishes at a vicariate level to identify trends and needs in vicariates and act on them. Periodically report successes.

**Initiative B:** Create a culture of mercy at the vicariate and local level that will inspire servant leadership and witness to Christ through the works of mercy. Identify pressing needs, improve existing outreach, and develop new outreach.

**Focus:** Host conferences at the vicariate level on the social doctrines and teachings of the Church to raise awareness and understanding of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and develop local ideas and energy to increase the amount of outreach being done.

**Initiative C:** Identify and promote the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as an integral part of family life.



**Focus:** Develop programs, training and family-friendly activities by which families can experience their Catholic faith in action through spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Work with vicariates to identify ways and places these activities can be practiced and connect families to these opportunities via parishes.

**Initiative D:** Expand prison ministry and increase the number of people involved in prison ministry activities in the Archdiocese. Reach out to inmates, families of inmates, victims, and those re-entering society, especially after serving extended sentences.

**Focus:** Provide leadership and guidance on vicariate-by-vicariate basis to expand prison ministries (correctional facilities, youth and adult, male and female). Clergy should make it a priority and determine the most effective ways to make an impact. Help vicariates create relevant training and awareness of this ministry.

**Initiative E:** Heighten awareness of the growing epidemic of suicide. Assist with suicide prevention, and promote a loving, pastoral response from the Church when a suicide occurs.

**Focus:** Evaluate and provide educational materials, programs, and resources to identify suicidal behavior and ways to support families who have experienced suicide, suicide attempts, or assisted suicide situations. Provide guidelines and training programs for clergy and parishes on how they should respond to suicide and suicide attempts both practically (when an event happens) and pastorally (how to identify and prevent suicide, and how to help families who have a member who committed suicide). Make suicide prevention and response materials readily available for families.

### **PASTORAL PRIORITY: Catholic Young Adult Ministry**

**Initiative A:** Establish networks of support for Catholic young adults so they can live out their faith more fully in various states of life (e.g. in school, working, single, married, married with children).

**Focus:** Build a web and social media platform to improve connections between young adult groups. Allow posting of activities by areas of interest and state of life. Build and maintain a database of contact information for young adults. Use social media tools to communicate with various groups. Provide links to online resources to access spiritual formation programs (e.g. formed.org).

**Initiative B:** Increase participation and deepen the interest and appreciation of young adults in the Mass.



Focus: Organize young adult liturgy conferences to inspire young adults on the beauty and power of the Mass (see: [betransfigured.com](http://betransfigured.com)).

**Initiative C:** Encourage and work to increase the involvement of young adults in parish life during their student experience and promote continued involvement beyond graduation.

Focus: Make it Archdiocesan policy that parish grade schools, Catholic high schools and colleges and Newman Centers form students to be part of a parish and to create faith experiences for their students in the local parish setting. Help local pastors to collaborate with the schools in their area to make this happen.

**Initiative D:** Involve young adults from various stages of life, in the development of Archdiocesan outreach programs that will meet young adult needs.

Focus: Create a process to gather young adults, listen to and survey their needs, problems, etc. and engage them in finding the best ways for the Church to connect with, support, and encourage them in living out their faith.

**Initiative E:** Create excitement and engagement in Catholic young adult community by gathering them together, building relationships, and helping them to support each other and grow spiritually.

Focus: Host regional quarterly young adult events with dynamic speakers (like Matt Fradd) and Catholic musicians (like The Thirsting).