



PLANS OF HOPE

HOUMA-THIBODAUX PARISH PLANNING

CHAPTER 11

THE LENS TO UNDERSTAND CHAPTER 11



Living as Missionary Disciples as the blueprint for parish renewal

In Pope Francis's 2013 speech to the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, he called for "a shared commitment to a pastoral plan which brings us back to the essential and which is solidly focused on the essential; that is, on Jesus Christ. To get diverted by many secondary or superfluous things does not help; what helps is to focus on the fundamental reality, which is the encounter with Christ, with his mercy and with his love, and to love our brothers and sisters as he has loved us."

This pastoral planning framework suggests six key dimensions to assess the current status or pulse of the parish, establish an effective ministry, and develop a successful pastoral plan:

1. A planning process is permeated with prayer before, during, and after the process. Prayer is the most important work that the planning team will engage in. This is often an afterthought in pastoral planning but must be kept at the forefront of pastoral planning efforts.
2. A parish plan provides a direction focused on bearing fruit not just on having activities. It is intentional, visible, and based on well-thought-out, fruit-producing outcomes. This fruit is clearly rooted in the teachings and pastoral ministry principles of the Church.
3. The parish seeks out effective pastoral leaders who can inspire others with an engaging vision of missionary discipleship. These pastoral leaders, through their own witness of faith and holiness of life, lead people to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, who in turn invites us into a fuller conversion and witness.
4. The content of services and ministries is rooted in the doctrine of the Church and supported by foundational pastoral practices (for example, principles derived from the National Directory for Catechesis) that point parishioners toward and prepare them for discipleship.
5. The parish ministries effectively engage people through welcome, inspiration, and effective communication. Meeting people where they are at and listening to them is crucial in beginning a relationship for the missionary disciple process.
6. The parish commits itself to being a good steward of its human and financial resources, using its resources prudently and responsibly and continually assessing the effectiveness of its efforts.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization*.