



MISSION ACTION PLAN 2016 - 2021

INTRODUCTION

Commencing in the fall of 2015, a diverse group of approximately 40 parishioners began the Parish Transformation process led by a facilitator from the Archdiocese of Chicago. With the Holy Spirit as their guide, the Parish Transformation Team (PTT) worked together in a variety of ways including small group and large group discussions as they made their way through the Parish Transformation workbook. The PTT was tasked with developing a Mission Narrative meant to inspire all parishioners, express the essence of St. Mary of Vernon and set an inspirational path for us to follow. The PTT was also tasked with formulating a Mission Action Plan which would be the culmination of the work of the PTT and be used in place of our traditional 5 year Parish Pastoral Plan. To begin, the PTT considered their hopes and dreams for our parish, areas of strength or weakness, and the “Pearls of Great Price” – the aspects of our parish that we are most proud of that we would not want to lose and would want to build upon. At the same time, all parishioners were invited to participate in an online survey to provide feedback to the PTT to consider throughout the process. The PTT was challenged to look at the parish through the following “lenses” to help define a vision for the parish: Charism of our Patron Saint, Demographics, Pearls of Great Price, Scripture, Spiritual Challenges and Composition of the Parish. The PTT then discussed, reflected and prayed about the 7 building blocks to determine which ones would be the focus of the Mission Action Plan. The 7 building blocks are: Missionary Spirit, Evangelization, Prayer and Worship, Call to Holiness, Catechesis, Spiritual Stewardship and Communion.

Through this process of information gathering, reflection and sometimes spirited discussion, consensus was reached that there were 3 building blocks that would become the backbone of the Mission Action Plan: Evangelization, Missionary Spirit and Catechesis. The PTT was then divided into groups representing the chosen building blocks and began the work of surfacing high-level broad based goals and then narrowing them down to specific objectives, with action steps, measurable goals and assigning a prospective timeline for completion.

Each group refined their ideas and all were combined to create the Mission Action Plan which is intended to serve the parish over the next five years. The hope is that this plan will inspire all parishioners to action in furtherance of parish and community evangelization, an overreaching missionary spirit of discipleship and enrichment of the faith in our community. As we work together, we hope to strengthen our own faith as well as encourage and involve newcomers and all God’s people as we seek to live the gospel.



MISSION ACTION PLAN

Having prayed over and studied the components that give life to a parish's mission, we the people of St. Mary of Vernon Parish propose the following description of the MISSION to which God is calling us:

Mary, our Mother, the first disciple, and humble servant of our Lord, inspires the St. Mary of Vernon family. We aim to follow Mary's loving example of service and willingness to surrender to God's love and divine plan. As a parish we are strong in our faith yet strive to be humble in our spirit. We pray together that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide our entire community as we work toward cultivating a missionary spirit and forming disciples who lovingly share their personal relationships with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As the apostles were called, so too are we called to enter into the mission of Christ as we aspire to build the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom grows when we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, counsel the doubtful, and bear wrongs patiently. The Kingdom grows when we show being a Christian matters and our love for Christ underlies everything we do.

Jesus said, *"If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."* (John 13:14-15) We find our strength to carry out Jesus' command through the Word and the Eucharist which feeds us and brings us closer to the Holy Trinity. We aspire to ignite the flame of faith by drawing on the strengths of the parish, the wisdom of our seniors, and the energy of our youth. Our mission carries us beyond our parish walls and calls us to join our Mother Mary in bringing the hope, light, and love of our Catholic faith to the world.

Our community's call to mission complements our call to spread the good news that *"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."* (John 3:16) We embrace our sacred duty to transmit the flame of faith through spreading knowledge of our rich and abundant faith. Sharing our beliefs draws others into our community wherever they are on their faith journey. We seek to continue building on our past, growing from a small community of believers to a large family of faith, while focusing on the future.

The St. Mary of Vernon community will follow the grace-filled willingness and humble efforts of our blessed Mother Mary. We treasure our gift of faith and are motivated by our charge to *"go and make disciples of all nations."* (Matthew 28:19) Our joyful celebration of the Mass fosters a passionate and loving community of disciples capable of honoring this call. With hope we go forth to love and serve the Lord spreading the Good News of our risen Savior.

**ST. MARY OF VERNON OBJECTIVES AND GOALS
2016-2021**

FOCUS AREA #1 EVANGELIZATION

Objective #1 Foster a culture that ignites and sustains a joyful enthusiasm for our faith.

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1.1 | Provide parishioners with opportunities to establish a personal relationship with Jesus through enhanced Retreat experiences. | 2016-2021 |
| 1.2 | Explore alternative floor plans of Narthex to better engage parishioners after mass. | 2017-2018 |
| 1.3 | Provide parishioners with increased exposure to Reconciliation. | 2017-2018 |
| 1.4 | Hot topic night – create forum to address current topics. | 2016-2017 |
| 1.5 | Explore Alpha, Re-lit and other Christian-based program offerings. | 2017-2018 |

Objective #2 Keeping families connected after the sacraments of initiation.

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 2.1 | Initiate teen ministered mass (greeters, choir, lectors, Eucharistic Ministers) to occur at the time that the teen choir sings. | 2017-2018 |
| 2.2 | Organize a forum where Teens talk to PREP students about Catholic Heart Work Camp, Alpha Omega, etc. | 2017-2018 |
| 2.3 | Baptism – explore ways of engaging parents after Baptism. | 2017-2018 |

Objective #3 Grow the 20-40 year old age group at SMV.

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 3.1 | Focusing on singles in this age group: identify official support from SMV, i.e. Deacon. | 2016-2017 |
| 3.2 | Establish small Christian community specifically for singles, e.g. Strength Finders. | 2016-2017 |
| 3.3 | Explore ways of engaging married couples in this age group, e.g. Anniversary mass and social/dinner for couples married 1 - 15 years. | 2016-2017 |

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 3.4 | Explore additional marriage enrichment options (e.g. couples mentoring) to drive increased parish participation post-wedding. | 2017-2018 |
|-----|---|-----------|

Objective #4 Re-propose the Gospel to those who have drifted from the practice of the faith.

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 4.1 | Create Christmas/Easter themed events outside of the parish. | 2017-2018 |
|-----|--|-----------|

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 4.2 | Explore options to create a follow up on Easter book. | 2017-2018 |
|-----|---|-----------|

FOCUS AREA #2 MISSIONARY SPIRIT

Objective #1 Nurture and support a spirit of missionary discipleship.

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 1.1 | Create a Mission Ministry that will serve as the central coordination point for volunteer efforts. | 2016-2017 |
|-----|--|-----------|

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 1.2 | Collaborate on a service event with the larger community including: corporations, other parishes, other faiths and the community at large. | 2017-2018 |
|-----|--|-----------|

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1.3 | Create a method to identify unmet needs of parishioners and non-parishioners. | 2018-2019 |
|-----|---|-----------|

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 1.4 | Implement parish-wide service events for larger community. | 2019-2020 |
|-----|--|-----------|

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 1.5 | Simplify and standardize process for volunteering across ministries. | 2016-2017 |
|-----|--|-----------|

Objective #2 Increase participation and retention in our parish ministries.

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 2.1 | Establish and continue programs to develop new leaders to facilitate continuity for our ministries. | 2016-2017 |
|-----|---|-----------|

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 2.2 | Identify key contacts in each ministry who will be responsible for extending personal invitations to new members. | 2016-2017 |
|-----|---|-----------|

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 2.3 | Create a sponsor program for new parishioners where new parishioners are assigned sponsors to help them with further orientation and participation in parish life. | 2017-2018 |
|-----|--|-----------|

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 2.4 | Establish a parish-wide recognition program to thank volunteers and build disciple community. | 2016-2017 |
|-----|---|-----------|

Objective #3 Identify channels of communication that will enable us to publicize the ministries and activities of St. Mary of Vernon to inspire our parish and wider community to actively serve the Lord by serving others.

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 3.1 | Stronger website design/content including links to sites. | 2016-2018 |
| 3.2 | Explore creation of communication/marketing team and identify appropriate leadership. | 2016-2017 |
| 3.3 | Create a communication strategy across all channels, including webpage and social media. | 2017-2018 |
| 3.4 | Develop a marketing plan. | 2018-2019 |
| 3.5 | Create more Stewardship by creating awareness of stewards in action. | 2016-2021 |

FOCUS AREA #3 CATECHESIS

Objective #1 Foster an environment to enrich the faith of our community

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1.1 | Create a Faith Enrichment Team to explore and implement programs addressing the needs of various age and life situations of the parish. | 2017-2018 |
| 1.2 | Faith Enrichment Team to have 2 or 3 program/events defined and planning started. | 2017-2018 |
| 1.3 | Implementation of Faith Formation programs/events. | 2017-2018 |
| 1.4 | Ongoing Faith Formation program development and expansion of existing programs. | 2018-2021 |

Objective #2 Promote the rich traditions of the Catholic Church.

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 2.1 | Introduce more and different ways for the “Mass Explained”. | 2017-2018 |
| 2.2 | Create a “Q&A” forum to address question of faith, traditions or liturgy, etc. possibly in various forms such as bulletin space. | 2016-2017 |

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 2.3 | Create teaching aides for social event such as Fish Fry and October Fest that can be used as table literature/ brochures/booklets to disseminate Catholic Teachings. | 2016-2017 |
|-----|--|-----------|

Objective #3 Encourage the community to actively participate in the mission of the Church.

Actions:

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 3.1 | Create and staff a new ministry to plan and facilitate weekend after Mass faith formation discussions. | 2017-2018 |
| 3.2 | Implement “Donuts with Disciples”, an informal after-mass program to discuss Church teachings related current events. | 2018-2021 |
| 3.3 | Promote Discipleship opportunities as a way to get people involved, such as expand our current Ministry Fair/ Showcase process to showcase a ministry each week in conjunction with “Hospitality” weekends and/or highlight a ministry in the bulletin, website, etc. on a regular basis. | 2017-2018 |