

History of the *Pray for Me Servant Leadership Initiative* at St Luke Catholic Parish

Father Andy had a vision of St. Luke Parish becoming a vibrant, welcoming community that was the “Catholic anchor” in Middleburg. From this vision the Servant Leadership Initiative was born. The genesis for the new initiative grew within him on a few levels:

He was introduced to the book “Servant Leadership Models For Your Parish” by Dan R. Ebener and was inspired by its contents to bring the concept of Servant Leadership to our Parish as a foundation for our worship, community building and evangelization.

He participated in a Diocesan Leadership Program for Priests entitled “Good Leaders, Good Shepherds” for three years.

The inspiration for the title of the program came from our Holy Father, Pope Francis’ first words to us, his people, following his election to the Pontificate: “Pray For Me”. His example of humility while seeking our prayers for his success in serving the entire Catholic Church displayed the precise qualities Father Andy envisions as an outgrowth of the St. Luke “Pray For Me” Servant Leadership Initiative.

This initiative is a wide-ranging, yet highly focused project to assist the Parish in responding to the 21st Century vision for the Catholic Church and the New Evangelization as articulated by our current and two former Popes. It focuses on bringing the concept of Servant Leadership, based on the model of Jesus Christ, to our St. Luke Faith Family. The vision is to further enliven the parish, attracting an ever-growing number of parishioners in the ministries, activities, events and life of the Church. The “Pray For Me” Servant Leadership Initiative also entails structural and organizational changes in the ways we communicate and fulfill the many roles and responsibilities inherent to our Parish and as the face of the Catholic Church in Middleburg.

The “Pray For Me” Program Vision, which was incorporated in our Parish Mission Statement contained in this issue was:

Develop a Life of Faith rooted in our response to the leadership model of Jesus Christ.

Respond to our Stewardship Calling of sharing our time, talent and treasure.

Instill a Parish-wide desire to live the Gospel message of humble service and evangelize others to come and join us.

From this basis, enable a cultural transformation of the parish toward living as Jesus commands with an additional focus of personal spiritual development.

Congruence between our “Pray For Me” Leadership Initiative and the “Good Leaders/Good Shepherds” Program model adopted by our Diocese.

We have chartered a Pastor’s Advisory Team as the primary advisors and ‘brain trust’ of Father Andy, and it replaced the Parish Council on October 18, 2015 during our St. Luke Feast Day Celebration. We have formally chartered 7 Foundational Ministries Teams, embracing all the ministries and groups in the Parish, as part of the structural change process. A chart of the new structure is in this issue of Link. A Core Team of 55 Parishioners has also been trained and forms a critical mass of energized leaders for the initiative. Our ongoing focus is on a re-engagement and expansion mentality and activating a “spider-web” effect to spread the word and the energy so evident in this Core Group. Our hope is to engender a “fire in the belly” attitude throughout the parish as we all strive toward becoming-the best-version-of-ourselves, making the parish a vibrant beacon of spirituality and service to one another and the community.

If the entire leadership structure of the Parish supports the “Pray For Me” Servant Leadership Initiative vision, an amazing transformation of the entire parish will begin to occur, such that: We will embrace the concept of “Love One Another As I Have Loved You” as taught by Jesus, and we will be transformed as a team to be servant leaders in the modern church of the 21st century as we strive to become a “Civilization/Culture of Love” as Cardinal O’Malley encouraged all Catholics during his visit to St. Augustine during its 450th Anniversary in September, 2015.

There are MANY untapped gifts within all of us here at St Luke Parish. We are inviting all parishioners to become proactive catalysts for success of our Parish by inviting others to journey with YOU! Our behaviors and attitudes will draw others to want to be a part of the initiative, which throughout its development has invoked the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The St. Luke “Pray For Me” Servant Leadership Initiative was formally implemented on October 18, 2015 in conjunction with the St. Luke Feast Day Celebration and Annual Picnic. Bishop Estevez presided over the 11 am Eucharistic Celebration during which the Pastor’s Advisory Team was commissioned into service of St. Luke Parish.