

Commentary to go with Parish Assembly Power Point

For Shared Ministries Slides

Over the past year and a half since we have come together as a parish grouping, there have been quite a few ways that we have worked together and joined in ministry with one another.

Liturgy and Worship

In regards to our Liturgy and Worship, we have come together on several occasions. The first combined Mass we had was on Holy Thursday at St. Thomas A' Becket. There was a combined choir, which was absolutely beautiful. Liturgical ministers served from each Church, creating a new sense of community. There have been several other combined Masses like this including the Easter Vigil, one Thanksgiving Vigil Mass and the All Souls Memorial Mass. More often, liturgical ministers are serving at a church where they have not served prior. For instance, just recently we needed an altar server for a Funeral Mass at St. Thomas A' Becket. One of the adult servers from Holy Spirit willingly assisted in this ministry.

Parish Events

There have been many parish events that have involved parishioners from the four churches in our grouping. This includes the planning and the attendance. Some of the highlights have been the Christmas concert with the combined choir, Vacation Bible School, fish fries and parish festivals.

For the second year, we had a family Mardi Gras event which involved a committee with women from all four churches and those in attendance were from all the churches in our grouping as well.

It's been great having parishioners from all four churches working together in the planning of these events, and as some have commented, *"They love it because they have made wonderful new friends."*

Adult Faith Formation & Evangelization

The Adult Faith Formation programs have included people from each of the churches in our grouping. Over the past year, it's been clear to see how people have come to know each other better through ongoing programs such as Bible studies, Lenten series such as "No Greater Love".

Last spring we implemented an evangelization program called Alpha, which involved 125 people from our parish grouping. This 8-week gathering involved small groups in which people shared and discussed their faith and how to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. This was our first program like this as a grouping, and we plan to offer this or something similar in the near future. It is our hope to reach out to some of those people who are Catholic but not attending Church, as well as those who are searching to find meaning in their lives and a deeper relationship with our Lord.

Youth Faith Formation

Our Youth Faith Formation has merged in many ways. This past year, students were presented with a variety of options for Faith Formation and were encouraged to make a choice to sign up for classes based on day or time (rather than location). Many in fact, did follow this path and attended Faith Formation at a church other than church where they are registered. In addition, there is a uniform curriculum and activities at each of the sites where Faith Formation has been offered.

Youth Ministry

We have a recently formed Youth Ministry program which is growing and includes students from various geographical areas throughout our grouping. The teens are involved in a variety of service activities including making sandwiches for the homeless, volunteering at the Fish Fries, parish festivals and Vacation Bible School.

Service

We have come together in service through the homebound ministry. Several Eucharistic Ministers to the homebound have gone to bring Holy Communion to parishioners from a different parish. This is a growing need as we have more elderly and homebound parishioners. In addition to the ministry to the homebound, parishioners throughout our grouping come together to volunteer at the Cloverleaf Food Bank on Tuesdays.

Shared Ministries

As we move closer to our anticipated merger date of July 2020, the goal is that when ministries meet together and extend to include people from each of the churches. This has happened across several ministries:

- The Ladies of Charity have already met together on several occasions
- The Knights of Columbus is one combined council
- The Apostolate and Hospitality ministries have been working together regularly
- Other combined groups include the Senior Citizens and wedding coordinators
- There are several ministries which have extended to include people from the other churches in the grouping. Two such ministries are GRACE Women's group and Martha and Mary Ministry.

Sacraments

Sacramental preparation is unified at all locations where Faith Formation is offered. First Holy Communion, First Reconciliation and Confirmation are combined with students from each church in our grouping. Likewise, RCIA is one group with a unified team of catechists.

These are some of the ways we can see the significant progress we have made in coming together as one. It is our hope that more people will recognize the many ways that they can be involved to serve, for fellowship and to grow in their spiritual life. In all of these ways, we do indeed, build up the Body of Christ.