



# Results of the Self-Study for St. Christopher Parish



## Purpose of the Self-Study:

- ◆ To educate parishioners on current conditions within their parish community.
- ◆ To provide a means for the active and thoughtful involvement of the faithful to collaborate in charting our course as Church.
- ◆ To develop strategies to address the rapidly changing demographic and economic factors in the diocese.
- ◆ To help us live the mission of the Catholic Church by proclaiming and preaching the Gospel.

## Timeline for Self-Study:

- ◆ Phase I (January - March, 2008) = Preparation Period
- ◆ Phase II (April - August, 2008) = Parish Self Study
  - ◆ Parish report due August 15, 2008
- ◆ Phase III (August - November, 2008) = Deanery Study
  - ◆ Deanery report due November 30, 2008
- ◆ Phase IV (November 2008 - January 2009) = Implementation and Monitoring Committee convenes
- ◆ Phase V (February - April, 2009) = Review by Consultative Councils
- ◆ Phase VI (May, 2009) = Pastoral Letter
- ◆ Phase VII (June 2009-2014) = Implementation and monitored follow-up

## Outline of Self-Study Process:

- ◆ Representatives from Parish Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and Stewardship Committee chosen for Parish Leadership Team.
- ◆ Parish-wide meeting held on Tuesday, August 12, 2008 where over 60 parishioners divided up into focus groups covering the following three topics:
  - ◆ **Sacramental** - How do the sacramental and liturgical practices of our parish effect the worshipping community? How does the parish form people to participate in a meaningful way in the life and mission of the parish?
  - ◆ **Strategic** - Does the parish respond to the needs of its registered members as well as the surrounding community? Does it have adequate, trained staff to provide religious education, youth programs, young adult and family ministries, evangelization, and Christian service outreach?
  - ◆ **Sustainable** - Does the parish generate sufficient income to meet expenses through the offertory collection? Is there leadership to set the mission and vision of the parish and membership to keep the parish functional? Does the parish embrace a stewardship way of life, encouraging members to share their gifts of time, talent, and resources with the parish family? Are there well-maintained buildings and facilities?
- ◆ Parish Leadership team discussed the preliminary recommendations from the three focus groups, identified patterns and trends, chose a priority recommendation for each topic, and developed multiple scenarios to address each priority recommendation. These were summarized in the final Parish Self-Study report turned into the Diocese on August 15, 2008.



# Sacramental



## **Preliminary Recommendations:**

- ◆ Return the Sacrament of Baptism to the Mass. The study team feels this serves to remind us of our Baptisms and to recommit to our faith and each other.
- ◆ Improve our parish hospitality as we prepare to welcome both new members and prodigal members. The study team recommends that new members to the parish be recognized, both in the bulletin and from the pulpit. Also, a better welcome packet of information, and specific activities, should be created to extend the invitation to prospective members, and to welcome them upon registration. Not to be overlooked are departures from our parish family for whatever the reason. Those who are leaving our number deserve to be accorded the same spirit on their departure as when they first arrived.
- ◆ Create a Baccalaureate Mass to celebrate graduations of parish youth.
- ◆ Improve parish communication and reactivate ChrisScript, the parish newsletter.

## **Patterns and Trends:**

- ◆ We need to more effectively provide a means to open the hearts and minds of members of our parish family to encounter Christ in Word, Eucharist, Sacraments and one another.

## **Priority Recommendations:**

- ◆ “We the people of God of Saint Christopher Parish strive to bear the presence, the teaching, and the love of Jesus Christ to all in our community and the world in which we live.” [Parish Mission Statement]
- ◆ Our priority is to fully live this mission statement.

## **Scenarios (ranked in order of importance):**

1. Publish and promote the parish mission statement.
2. In order to foster a more welcoming and loving community, identify and publish the names of those who are new to the parish, as well as recognize the sacramental celebrations, spiritual and secular milestones of parishioners lives.
3. Develop a welcome packet for all new parishioners, and educate parishioners on the importance of encouraging their sons and daughters to register separately on the occasion of their 18th birthday.



# Strategic



## **Preliminary Recommendations:**

- ◆ Formation of welcoming committee, need recruiting and outreach for Catholics new to the area, but ensure we have ways to engage them when they do join.
- ◆ Encourage and foster vocations in our parish.
- ◆ Formation of young adult and young family ministries.
- ◆ Have current ministries define their purposes and goals and communicate those with the entire church family.
- ◆ Better organization for conveying needs of those who are home bound or sick, and people who are marginalized.
- ◆ Promote the growth of faith of the parish community through renewals and small groups (adult retreat program).
- ◆ Find ways to communicate more effectively (use the bulletin and the website more effectively; as well as a parish newsletter).
- ◆ The parish should be a stronger part of the deanery - reach out to other parishes for resources, partnership and collaboration opportunities. St. Christopher needs to be more connected to other parishes.

## **Patterns and Trends:**

- ◆ We need to find ways to communicate, welcome, collaborate -- both intra-parish as well as inter-parish -- to reach out more effectively to our parish family and all those with whom we meet.

## **Priority Recommendations:**

- ◆ Reevaluate our current methods of communication and adapt them to the needs of our parish family and extended community.

## **Scenarios (ranked in order of importance):**

1. Get the new interactive website up and running.
2. Encourage ministries to create mission statements and to create a network that encourages communication with each other.
3. In order to foster continuity, develop effective leadership training and opportunities for spiritual growth for all ministries.
4. Explore opportunities to collaborate with neighboring parishes in various ministries such as youth ministry, religious education and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.



# Sustainable



## **Preliminary Recommendations:**

- ◆ Invest in developing our infrastructure, as it pertains to the physical layout and improvements needed to create a campus that will ensure St. Christopher's sustainability for the next 20 years.
- ◆ Survey the parishioners, school parents, and teachers for their opinions pertaining to resources that may be available to help reduce parish/school expenses through talent, time, and resources.
- ◆ A survey should also include the proposed development of a multi-purpose center. Those surveyed should also offer their input for a center's potential uses.
- ◆ Replace lost bingo revenue with other fund raisers, such as a pasta dinner after Saturday Mass once a month, another " festival " function, etc.
- ◆ Invest in a space study of the rectory, school, outdoor facility, and a potential multi-purpose building.

## **Patterns and Trends:**

- ◆ We need to invest in our infrastructure (buildings and grounds) so that we meet the current and future needs of the parish family.

## **Priority Recommendations:**

- ◆ To create a Christ-centered environment in which all members of the parish family will be comfortable investing their talents, treasure and time as well as their hearts.

## **Scenarios (ranked in order of importance):**

1. Create a collaborative environment for the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and Stewardship Committee, on a quarterly basis, to provide strategic vision for the benefit of the parish.
2. Create a buildings and grounds committee to assess parish needs and future expansion.
3. Explore opportunities to enhance parish resources and revenue