



## ST ISIDORE PASTORAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

### **OVERVIEW OF THE JOURNEY**

In December 2007, the St Isidore Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) was presented with a proposal from Tabula Rasa, an external consultant that has worked with several other parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit, on the pros and cons of preparing a strategic plan for the St Isidore Catholic Community. After some discussion, the PPC agreed to proceed, contracting with Tabula Rasa to guide us and lead us through the strategic planning process. Father Mike Hrydziuszko, Pastor of St Isidore, then invited a group of parishioners and staff to form the Steering Committee for this project in Summer 2008. The Committee was given the task to begin the process of preparing a 3 – 5 year strategic plan for the St Isidore Catholic Community.

The Steering Committee then asked for a group of volunteers within the parish to step up and become part of the core Planning Committee. After having developed a special prayer and logo for this project, this group of individuals then began the process of preparing the Vision statement, Mission statement and Values statement for the plan in the fall of 2008. In addition, this group reviewed and analyzed a number of external data, statistics and information obtained from multiple sources that would eventually lead to the foundation for the long term plan. Some of the data that were included in this process are as follows:

- 2007 St Isidore Parish Survey
- 2008 Macomb Township Master Plan
- US Census Bureau data
- Macomb County Real Estate data and demographics
- St Isidore parish data, demographics and statistics
- Percept Group data for zip codes 48042 and 48044
- Together in Faith Parish Evaluation
- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) data
- Archdiocese of Detroit (AoD) survey results

During this review process, the Planning Committee was asked to look for the following items during their individual and group analysis:

- What are the major findings?
- What are the conclusions?
- What patterns and trends can be found?
- What are the major focus areas?

After further review, discussion and analysis, the Planning Committee consolidated all of the data and came up with a list of over 100 concerns for consideration. The Planning Committee then went through a detailed process to add, delete and combine those concerns and eventually consolidated them into 8 key strategic areas in February 2009. The 8 key areas of focus were identified as follows:

- Community Building
- Development of Person
- Ministry Development
- Stewardship/Finance
- Worship Experience
- Senior Needs
- Teen Needs
- Young Adult Needs

All of our findings, along with a Planning Committee progress report, were then published in the St Isidore Harvest News bulletin for several weeks during the Spring 2009. At that time, the Steering Committee again asked for a new group of volunteers within the parish to assist us in the next step of the process - the formation of the Focus Area Task Teams (FATT). These groups of individuals then took each of the 8 key strategic areas and answered the following questions associated with each area:

- Where have we (St Isidore) been?
- Where are we now?
- What should be kept or maintained?
- What should be changed or developed?
- What are some of the possible recommendations?

Each of the Focus Area Task Teams worked together in small groups to complete this portion of the process during the summer of 2009. The findings were then presented to the Steering Committee for further review and discussion. The Steering Committee then classified each of the responses and assigned a code to each concern using the following ranking system:

- Code 1 = Recommendation is currently in place
- Code 2 = Recommendation is currently in process with the intention of becoming part of the parish
- Code 3 = Recommendation will be assigned to the appropriate individual/committee/commission for further action with the intention of becoming part of the parish
- Code 4 = Recommendation will be assigned to the appropriate individual/committee/commission for further analysis to determine if and how this could become part of the parish
- Code 5 = Recommendation will not receive further consideration

All of the findings from the Planning Committee were then presented to the Pastor and Parish Pastoral Council in December 2009. It is expected that both the Pastor and the PPC will spend the 2009 holiday season reviewing, analyzing and sorting through all of the findings so when they reconvene in January 2010, detailed discussions will take place on how and when to begin implementation of the plan.



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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

One of the recurring themes that came out loud and clear throughout this process was the word "community". Everyone expressed an interest in being part of our faith based community one way or another, regardless of age, ethnicity, marital status or vocation. As a parish community, we gather together to celebrate both the word and the sacrament in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Our parish community exists to worship and praise God, to thank Him for his many gifts and graces and to live the Commandments. The parish community is responsible for spreading the good news of the Eucharist to the surrounding area in which we live and work. We are asked to build community and support each other both within and outside the church. Our parish community gathers so that we can get to know one another, help one another and give praise and thanksgiving for our many blessings. It is in the spirit of community that we present this Parish plan.

As previously noted, each of the 8 key areas were individually and collectively reviewed to come up with a broad overview of what needs to be accomplished over the next 3 – 5 years. A consolidated summary of the main points of each key area is noted below in no particular order:

### **Community Building**

- Develop a new Social/Outreach/Fellowship Committee that addresses the social and recreational needs of all parishioners
- Identify new activities, events and programs that will help build a stronger parish community
- Explore how the Committees, Commissions and parish organizations (i.e. Ushers Club, Altar Society, Knights of Columbus, etc) can work together and utilize the talent, knowledge and experience of these important assets of the parish
- Investigate new ways to work with parishes within the North Macomb Vicariate and collaborate with neighboring parishes within the local community, regardless of denomination
- Identify new business and social opportunities that address the multiple ethnic and cultural differences within the parish
- Explore the possible development of a Volunteer Committee which would be responsible for recruiting, retaining and recognizing volunteers and finding ways to increase volunteerism
- Enhance the communication channels currently in process such as the weekly bulletin, parish website, kiosks, newsletters, banners, etc
- Identify new ways to becoming a more open and welcoming parish
- Examine the registration/new orientation process and look for ways to identify, welcome, educate and recognize those who are new to the parish
- Develop new liturgical or social events that celebrate our cultural and ethnic diversity
- Explore how parish members can barter their time and talents with others in the parish

### **Development of Person**

- Explore hosting a series of seminars/workshops/conferences that address the constantly changing lifestyle needs of a diverse parish (e.g. resume writing, financial management, career changes, healthy living, stress management, budgeting, coping with changes in family life, charitable giving, etc)
- Identify how we can incorporate technology and social media into our processes and systems that reach out to more parishioners utilizing Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc
- Consider the development of a parish resource library

### **Ministry Development**

- Develop a new Education Commission that addresses the educational and spiritual needs of all parishioners

- Explore developing an Adult Formation group that focuses on going deeper in spreading the word to our targeted groups (i.e. Seniors, Young Adults, Teens, Divorced, Widowed, etc)
- Provide a detailed job description for each of the parish ministries in order to inform, educate and motivate our parishioners to fully participate in parish activities
- Explore how we can utilize the experience and knowledge of the parishioners to mentor one another and those in search of guidance, support and leadership
- Differentiate the sacramental duties of the Clergy versus those duties that can be conducted by the lay ministers and staff who assist in running the parish
- Explore how best to support "mixed religion" households
- Consider how our parish Evangelization Committee can work along with other parishes in the North Macomb Vicariate to maximize our effectiveness in gaining new members to the church

### **Stewardship/Financial**

- Explore different ways to change the mindset of the parishioners that addresses the true meaning of being a steward of the church and what Christian Stewardship is all about
- Continue to closely monitor the parish budget and look at new potential sources of revenue to assist in balancing the budget
- Work with the parish leadership to identify cost cutting opportunities and ways to improve the efficiencies of the parish operations
- Develop a detailed plan which focuses on the many ways parishioners are able to share their time, talent and treasures with others within the parish
- Explore new fundraising opportunities that include all parish groups (e.g. festivals, dinners, auctions, etc)
- Identify new ways to solicit collections from all parishioners either manually or electronically
- Enhance the communication process regarding the financial status of the parish to all parishioners, using technology and different communication vehicles
- Identify new ways to recognize those that volunteer their time and talent but do not have the capacity to share their treasures

### **Worship Experience**

- Develop a plan to ensure a smooth and workable transition if and when we are led by only one Pastor and no Associate Pastor
- Develop an understanding of individual spirituality and communal spirituality
- Look at the various ways spirituality can affect us both publicly and privately and how this can help grow the parish
- Explain the parts of the Mass and its significance so parishioners have a better understanding why things happen the way they do
- Explore how we can become a more welcoming parish to all who come to worship
- Ensure that our homilies are understood and practical, our music is inviting and participatory and our parishioners are inspired to face the rest of the week
- Consider age specific liturgies (e.g. Teens, Young Adults, Seniors) to attract more parishioners

### **Teen Needs**

### **Young Adult Needs**

### **Senior Needs**

- Develop or enhance a committee within each age group to address the specific wants and needs of these ever changing and constantly growing groups within the parish

Finally, the topics of Communication and Technology were mentioned consistently as being very important and applicable to all of the 8 key focus areas. Some of the more specific recommendations for each of these topics are noted below:

## **Communication**

- Explore how to update the parish database to include e-mail addresses, vocations, skill sets, talents, etc for parish use only
- Develop a monthly activities/events calendar to be inserted in the parish bulletin
- Explore using more visuals (e.g. graphs, charts, etc) to communicate the parish financial status
- Explore how we can tap into all forms of media (print, radio, cable TV, internet, websites, etc) to enhance our parish communications
- Consider redesigning or reformatting the parish bulletin by allowing each Committee or Commission to share their message on a consistent basis
- Consider running announcements or messages on the projection screen prior to Mass
- Consider adding an electronic message board in the Gathering Space or Social Hall
- Incorporate more messages from the pulpit delivered by the parishioners

## **Technology**

- Consider the creation of a parish CD, DVD or information packet to be distributed at time of registration/orientation
- Consider use of e-mail for Commissions and Committees to save on postage and communicate more efficiently and effectively
- Consider electronic debit card/credit card giving as an option to all parishioners
- Enhance the parish website by including all registration forms online
- Enhance the parish website by allocating designated space to each of the targeted groups (e.g. Seniors, Young Adults, Teens, etc)
- Identify how to incorporate webinars, podcasts, videoconferencing, etc into our parish life
- Explore how the younger members of the parish can assist and train the older members of the parish (and vice versa)
- Enhance the parish website to allow for periodic online surveys
- Identify if there is a need to assist those with visual or hearing impairments

## **CONCLUSION**

As previously noted at the end of the Overview, the completed plan has been presented to the Pastor and Parish Pastoral Council for their review and approval. Once approved, the PPC will take the lead role, in conjunction with the Pastor, and prioritize the key areas for implementation. The PPC will also review the parish Vision statement to describe our purpose as a parish as we move into the future. Once the Vision statement is in place, the current Mission statement will be tested and revised, if necessary. It is important that both the Vision statement and Mission statement be consistent and in place prior to taking any formal action on the recommendations of the Planning Committee. Once this has been completed, the assignment of several Implementation Committees will take place for each of the key areas of concern. In addition, a Tracking Committee will be established to track and monitor the progress of the plan.

It is our intention to report all of the activities and actions on a quarterly basis to all the parishioners of St Isidore so everyone is kept in the loop as we move forward with this strategic plan. Everyone needs to keep in mind that some of the ideas are very simple to rollout and can be handled rather quickly in the short term. However, there will be many ideas that require further analysis and may or may not be implemented depending on the final recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council.

All of our supporting data, findings, reports and analysis are available for review upon request. In conclusion, on behalf of the entire Parish Planning Committee, we thank you for your continued support, thoughts and blessings throughout our journey. It has been a very long and time consuming process for all of us but it has helped each of us to grow both personally and professionally. Our plan was to plant the seeds for tomorrow for St Isidore. Now, we stand ready, willing and able to be with you and work with you as we reap the benefits of our harvest.

Sincerely,

St Isidore Parish Planning Committee