

Saint Joseph Church Parish Pastoral Plan 2017

Dear Parishioners:

Where there is no vision, the people perish. (Proverbs 29:18)

There are two framed documents hanging under the choir loft in our Church. They declare a Mission Statement for St. Joseph that has served us for the past 15 years.

The People of God in any parish, like individuals, are constantly developing and living in a world that is changing. To continue to be faithful to God's summons to be a blessing or beacon for others, a parish is called periodically to update its Mission Statement and develop a pastoral plan.

St. Joseph has begun this process of revising its Mission Statement. As pastor, I have invited a variety of parishioners -- members from our ministries and organizations to be the ***Parish Pastoral Plan Team***. There are men and women, English speakers and Spanish speakers, couples with young children and couples with adult children.

The team has been hard at work to name and define the core beliefs of St. Joseph's Church. These core beliefs become the "***Pillars***" of our parish and will serve as a guide for developing an organizational structure. They are also the foundation for articulating a "***Vision***" for our parish, which is another way of expressing what we hope to be as a parish in faithfulness or alignment with God's Word, the priorities of Pope Francis for the universal church, and the hopes of Archbishop Jose Gomez for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

How will we accomplish or live up to vision? We will develop a "***pastoral plan***" and allow God's Spirit to be at work in us.

The team will seek your input – asking you to name one way in which St. Joseph can better serve you and your family, requesting you to prioritize the goals and strategies of the pastoral plan, and finally calling on you to affirm the ***Vision*** and ***Pastoral Plan***.

In the upcoming weeks and months, this column will present our six ***Pillars*** and discuss our new parish ***Vision***.

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Dear Parishioners:

As promised, in this column we will continue to share with you how we are working and striving to develop our new **Vision**.

We don't make up the vision for St. Joseph Parish out of our whims and desires. Rather the vision develops in alignment with

- The mission that Jesus Christ gave to his church as revealed in the Bible;
- The reflections by Pope Francis on that mission for the current time; and
- The priorities of Archbishop Gomez for that mission in our Archdiocese.

What do these three points of alignment reveal to us?

A parish plans for “discipleship,” inviting people to live in Christ and helping them to mature spiritually. Jesus says in the bible:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”[\[Mt 28:19-20\]](#)

The Church exists to “evangelize.” Pope Francis says:

“In virtue of their baptism, all members of the church have become Missionary Disciples... All the baptized are agents of Evangelization... every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization... anyone who has experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. [The Joy of the Gospel, 120]

A parish family celebrates that God's saving love transforms lives. Archbishop Gomez has written:

Dear lay people: the faith you profess on Sundays must be lived out in the world during the rest of the week!... you need to see your daily activities as the place where you meet and walk with Jesus, seeking holiness and the Father's will... We have to live the Mass! [A Pastoral Letter to the Family of God in Los Angeles on the New Evangelization and our Missionary Call, #9]

The Church's mission is ever ancient and ever new. Since all of us in the Church have responsibility for this mission, Archbishop Gomez has asked parishes to focus anew on the following five priorities:

- Education in the Faith
- Vocations to the priesthood, and to religious and consecrated life
- Universal catholic identity and cultural diversity
- Proclaim the Gospel of life and promote a culture of life in our society.
- Defend and strengthen marriage and the family based on the permanent and exclusive union of one man and one woman.

The Parish Plan Team has diligently and faithfully articulated the **core beliefs** or **pillars** which flow in alignment with God's revelation in Jesus as well as the universal and local church. Next week we will begin to look at these **pillars**.

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Dear Parishioners:

The end product of the endeavors which this series of articles presents is a **pastoral plan** and a determined future course for St. Joseph Church for the next three to five years. I am still presenting the building blocks for that plan. In this column I introduce you to the first of our core beliefs or Pillars.

Last week we reflected upon the alignment that guides our parish mission statement. This alignment leads us to articulate six (6) core beliefs or Pillars upon which our plan will be based:

- Evangelization
- Worship
- Family Life
- Faith Formation
- Service
- Administration

The first of these pillars is **Evangelization**. Last week we learned that the Church exists to evangelize. We welcome this reality and we adopt it as one of our core beliefs, namely **we believe in inviting people by word and example to a personal encounter with Christ and to become his disciple**. In other words, we want to help people meet Christ and to follow him. Didn't we seek this as we recited the *Prayer for St. Joseph Church*? We prayed that we would "inspire people to meet Christ and to commit themselves to follow him."

Pope Francis reminds us of the joy of experiencing God's saving love. Think about our human experience. Isn't it delightful when you know that another person loves you? Taking the chance to say the words, "I love you" becomes thrilling when the sincere response is, "I love you too." And even better when it is backed up by actions. I have witnessed the profound effect that a parent's love letter can have upon a teenager on retreat. It is as if the teen "hears" the words "I love you" from their parents for the very first time. Knowing that you are loved for who you are, knowing that you are loved just the way you are –flaws and all, is to experience love.

There are moments in our lives when we experience the love of God. It can energize us; it can heal us; it can change us. Whether we are shy or very outgoing, each of us can learn to verbalize our experiences of God's love.

This first pillar of **Evangelization** acknowledges that what we have experienced is worth inviting others to experience. It might energize them; it might heal them; it might change them in beneficial ways.

The Parish Pastoral Plan Team will be discerning goals for this particular pillar. Whom should we be inviting at this time? How can we best inspire people to meet Christ and follow him?

Let us walk in the ways of the Lord,
Fr. Dick Martini

Saint Joseph Church Parish Pastoral Plan 2017

Dear Parishioners:

This is the fourth article in a series about articulating a **mission statement** and preparing a **pastoral plan**. In this week's installment we shall examine another of our core beliefs or **pillars** of our mission. Last week we reflected upon the pillar of **Evangelization**. This week we will look at **Liturgy**.

One of the points of alignment of which I wrote two weeks ago revealed that "a parish family celebrates that God's saving love transforms lives." This occurs through sacraments, personal prayer, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and most especially Mass.

- **Liturgy: We believe in celebrating the Mystery of Christ as we gather to praise, give thanks, and deepen our relationship with God and one another.**

"Christ is present in our midst when we are gathered by his love, and when, as once for the disciples, so now for us, he opens the Scriptures and breaks the bread." (New Roman Missal) The Mass recalls the past but it is about the present. We want Christ to open the scriptures for us in a way that applies to our lives. We hear God's plan to reveal his love through Jesus Christ who died and rose to save us. We want Christ to break bread for us in a way that we have the nourishment needed to enjoy our lives and to confront the many circumstances of our lives. By reflecting on the Word of God and by receiving Holy Communion we deepen our relationship with God and one another.

Mass affords us the opportunity to praise and give thanks to God for what has transpired in our lives during the previous week – for the ways that God's Spirit has been alive in our lives and in our world. In this sense Mass is the summit of our week. We bring something to it. At the same time Mass is the source of Christ's presence for us. We want to be animated by all that is part of liturgy so that it carries through the week and positively affects the way we live our lives.

Archbishop Gomez wrote, "the faith you profess on Sundays must be lived out in the world during the rest of the week... We have to live the Mass!" I'll explore this exhortation more next week as we look at the pillar of Family Life.

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Dear Parishioners:

You might recall that last week's article ended with Archbishop Gomez' exhortation that "we have to live the Mass!"

Most of us live in some sort of family situation. It is within family that most of our lives are spent. Archbishop Gomez encourages us "to see our daily activities as the place where (we) meet and walk with Jesus." Part of our parish mission is to support families in living a life of faith in the midst of a post-modern, secular society.

One of Archbishop Gomez' priorities for the Archdiocese is to defend and strengthen marriage and family life. We are called to pursue this area of ministry, so **Family Life** is one of our pillars or core beliefs.

Family Life: We believe in serving God and others to further Christian life and support families in living a life of faith.

What might this mean? A number of practical questions come to mind:

How might we help parents inspire their children to meet Christ and to experience God's saving love?

How might we support values and the development of character?

How might we encourage family members to aspire to wanting what is best for one another?

How might we inspire parents and children alike to ever greater virtue, thinking of the needs of others before their own?

How might we affirm and guide teens through their adolescent years?

How might we help people deal with setbacks, addictions, sadness, and grief?

How might we defend and strengthen marriage and the family?

How might we encourage couples to become sacraments of God's love and to be married in the Church?

How might we welcome and support immigrant families?

How might we support adult children who are taking care of their elderly parents?

How might we accompany parishioners as they near the end of life?

The pillar of **Family Life** challenges our parish to minister to families so that they might meet and walk with Jesus in the daily activities of their lives. Our pastoral plan will discern and prioritize goals related to these questions

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Dear Parishioners:

For the past three weeks, we have been presenting the Pillars of the mission of our parish. This week presents the pillar of **Faith Formation**. The following story illustrates its value.

An eight-year-old boy was coloring a picture for his religious education class. He showed his teacher the finished product: a side view of an airplane. There were three windows in the body of the plane and one window in the front. On the tail were the words "Egypt Air." There were faces in each of the four windows. The teacher asked the child what he had drawn. He responded, "The Flight to Egypt." "And who are these people in the windows of the plane?" asked the teacher. "That's Joseph and Mary and Jesus," said the boy. "But who is this face in the front window?" the teacher wondered. The boy answered, "Oh, that's easy. That's Pontius the Pilot!"

The little boy had heard the Gospel story about the holy family fleeing to Egypt. His imagination simply mixed up a few details in a humorous way.

Jesus wants us to teach the Gospel and pass on our faith. At the end of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, He sends his apostles to make disciples and then to teach them to observe all that he had commanded them.

The church has always taken this commission very seriously. But it is not sufficient any longer to merely teach children. A childhood knowledge of the faith may form a good foundation, but it hardly serves adults who confront a world that often challenges the teachings of Jesus.

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Dear Parishioners:

So another of the Pillars of our Mission is

Faith Formation: We believe in guiding and inspiring spiritual and human growth that transforms lives and society through Jesus Christ.

This aligns well with one of pastoral priorities that Archbishop Gomez has asked parishes to focus anew on, namely, *Education in the Faith*.

The hopes and dreams for St. Joseph Parish include the effort to educate parishioners of all ages in the faith. We don't simply want to share information, but we are called to form Catholics of all ages into true disciples. We hope that education or "formation" in the faith will lead individuals to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. In turn we hope that education or formation in the faith will support each parishioner in making a difference in society. In fact just as individuals who meet Christ are transformed, we hope that our presence in the work place will transform the lives of others ultimately leading to a transformation of society.

Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus. God so loved the world that in the fullness of time he sent his only son to be our savior. St. John calls the very life of Jesus "the light of the human race." He writes, "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

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Dear Parishioners:

As we continue the series on the **Pillars of our Mission**, let's reflect on the fifth pillar of our mission, namely

Service: We believe in demonstrating love and mercy through our service to all.

In the Bible we see Jesus showing the love of God the Father and performing works of mercy through his miracles. For example, he aids a family in providing wine for wedding guests; he raises the only son of a widow; he heals the daughter of a centurion; he cures a paralytic; he forgives a woman caught in adultery; and he restores lepers to health. In the gospel according to Matthew he tells us, "Whatever you do to the least one of these, you do it to me." We, as a parish church, are called to perform works of mercy – to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead, and welcome the stranger. We are also called to comfort the sorrowful, admonish the sinner, forgive injuries, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the living and the dead.

St. James in his letter encourages his listeners to put their faith into action. He asks, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?" "Be doers of the Word and not hearers only!" he exclaims.

Although we have just finished the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which helped us focus on what it means to bring the love and mercy of God to others, we, nevertheless, continue to demonstrate God's love and mercy. We are called to it as a parish church. We are called to be the light of Christ. We are called to bring more light to those who are experiencing darkness. Let us shine this light by demonstrating love and mercy through our service to all.

I wish each of you a very blessed and holy Merry Christmas!

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Dear Parishioners,

Some time ago, a man named Joseph took an unattended yard and in two years, turned it into a fabulous garden. People came from everywhere to see it. One of the onlookers was Pedro who saw the garden and thought it was exquisite, but he wanted to make sure the gardener did not take all the credit. He had this deep feeling inside that a lot of people leave God out.

So Pedro toured the garden to have the chance to meet Joseph, the gardener. He eventually found him, shook his hand, and said, “Joseph, you and the good Lord together have made this beautiful garden.”

Joseph immediately understood his message and his point. So he replied, “I think that’s true. If it had not been for the sunshine and the rain, and the miracle of the seeds and the soil and the seasons, there would be no garden at all.” Then, with a glint in his eye, Joseph added, “But you know, you should have seen this place a couple of years ago when God had it all by himself.”

We are called to play our part in the mission that God has given our Church while God is playing His. The sixth and final Pillar of our Mission is like our part in the garden. Our parish has an organizational structure that demands personnel—some paid but most who are volunteers. It also has grounds and buildings in which we meet to pray and worship, to develop our faith, to enjoy our community and to do works of charity. Maintaining and expanding ministries rely on resources. If left alone, our parish would look like the unattended yard. But if we attend to our “garden,” with God’s help it will flourish beautifully.

The “gardening” is the sixth pillar of our mission, namely

Administration: We believe in caring for our parish’s human, physical, and fiscal resources to support and develop the mission of all parish ministries.

This is the pillar that supports the other pillars and all their ministries as well as the people who are involved in them. This is the pillar that invites us to be good stewards with our money and calls the administrators of the parish to be transparent as they manage and account transparently for all of your donations.

Thank you for being like Joseph for so many years now. With God’s help we will become a fabulous garden.

Happy New Year! May 2017 be the year of favor for each of you!

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Dear Parishioners:

Realizing that the mission of our Church rests upon the six pillars of **Evangelization, Liturgy, Family Life, Faith Formation, Service, and Administration**, we are now ready to articulate our Parish Mission Statement.

St. Joseph Mission Statement

We, St. Joseph Church, welcome all to our caring, Catholic family.

We have gratefully experienced God's saving love through a personal encounter with the living Christ.

This saving love of God inspires us to

- .. listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the mystery of Christ, especially at Mass;*
- .. follow Christ more closely in our lives;*
- .. guide and inspire human growth in the Spirit;*
- .. support one another in living out the realities of our lives;*
- .. demonstrate the love and mercy of God to others; and*
- .. invite others to experience the saving love of God.*

A mission statement allows us to envision what we could become as a parish. We try to say it in one phrase or sentence. Our planning team believes that we are called to proclaim the following vision:

Vision for St. Joseph Church

Welcome Home! Christ's love and mercy awaits!

If someone around Carpinteria asked you what St. Joseph Church is all about, it might be difficult to recite the complete **Mission Statement**, but it would certainly be possible to tell them our vision. I encourage you to memorize the vision, which is both a challenge and a consolation. It is a challenge to each of us to become the very meaning of our vision. And it is certainly a consolation for those who find in us both a welcome and Christ's love and mercy.

Next week we will attempt to summarize in a more graphic fashion the values and Pillars that lead to our Parish Mission Statement.

Let us walk in the ways of the Lord,
Fr. Dick Martini

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Dear Parishioners:

It is important to keep in mind the end product of our visioning endeavors, namely a pastoral plan and a determined future course for the next three to five years. Over the past several weeks we have looked at the 6 pillars of our Mission. Beginning this week we want to identify 3-5 possible goals for each pillar or key area of ministry. Eventually this will help us allocate staff, volunteers and resources appropriately.

The first key area of ministry is **EVANGELIZATION**.

We hope that St. Joseph Church will

Invite people by word and example to a personal encounter with Christ in order to become His disciple.

Some possible goals that we might pursue to reach this hope are as follows:

WELCOME HOME:

GOAL: *To welcome 15 - 25 Catholics to St. Joseph Church by Easter 2018.*

PRAYER:

GOAL: *To animate prayer commitments in 50 - 75 parishioners to deepen their personal encounter with Christ beginning in Advent 2017.*

RETREAT:

GOAL: *To increase attendance at some form of Kerygma retreat to include 90 - 100% of Parents and Sponsors of Children in Religious Education, Confirmation, and Quinceañera preparation and 90 - 100% of people involved in ministries at St. Joseph Church.*

Mission:

GOAL: *To invited 30-50 unchurched persons to a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ.*

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BIBLE STUDY and SMALL GROUPS:

GOAL: *To accompany 25-35 people in deepening their discipleship in Jesus Christ.*

Have a say in your parish's future! The Parish Pastoral Planning Team would like your feedback on what has been presented above. You will have an opportunity to comment upon and prioritize the goals at a parish gathering on Sunday, March 12, at 1 p.m.

Let us walk in the ways of the Lord, Fr. Dick Martini

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Dear Parishioners:

This week's column presents the possible goals for the pillar or key area of ministry called **Liturgy**. This pillar includes Mass, the sacraments, and prayer.

Recall that we are discerning a future course for the next three to five years so that we will be able to make appropriate decisions about personnel and financial resources.

The second key area of ministry is **LITURGY**.

We hope that St. Joseph Church will

celebrate the Mystery of Christ as we gather to praise, give thanks, and deepen our relationship with God and one another.

Most parishes achieve this by focusing on improving the environment, hospitality, the message and/or the music at Mass. Our parish pastoral planning team has discerned the following possible goals for our parish to pursue:

RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

GOAL: Implement 7 to 10 strategies that would create a respectful environment at Sunday Mass

HOSPITALITY:

GOAL: Develop and implement 5 – 8 strategies that allow those who attend weekend Mass to know that they are welcome.

PRAYER:

GOAL: Organize 5 – 8 prayer experiences that will enhance people's personal relationship with Christ.

SCHEDULING:

GOAL: Provide convenient times for the community to worship God at Mass and to celebrate the sacrament of confessions.

Have a say in your parish's future! We need to hear from you. The Parish Pastoral Planning team would like your feedback on what has been presented above. You will have an opportunity to comment upon and prioritize the goals at a parish gathering on Sunday, March 12 at 1 pm.

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Dear Parishioners:

This week's column presents the possible goals for the pillar or key area of ministry called **Family Life**. This pillar follows one of the priorities of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, namely to defend and strengthen marriage and family life.

Recall that we are discerning a future course for the next three to five years at St. Joseph parish so that we will be able to make appropriate decisions about personnel and financial resources.

The third key area of ministry is **FAMILY LIFE**.

We hope that St. Joseph Church will

serve God and others to further Christian Life and to support Families in living a life of faith.

Since most of our lives are spent connected to a family, Archbishop Gomez has encouraged us "to see our daily activities as the place where (we) meet and walk with Jesus." Therefore, our Parish Pastoral Planning Team has discerned the following possible goals for our parish to pursue:

BRIDGE LANGUAGE GROUPS AND FAMILY:

GOAL: Invite members of our two language groups to conduct 5 to 10 community activities that allow them to mingle and work together.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT, END OF LIFE, HEALING, AND WOMEN'S MINISTRIES:

GOAL: Assist 25 to 30 individuals to cope with difficult family situations by December 31, 2017.

ENGAGED COUPLES AND TEENS:

GOAL: Prepare 90 to 100% of engaged couples and 90 to 100% of quinceañeras and their chambelanes for their respective vows and dedications.

RESPECT LIFE:

GOAL: Instill a respect for life in the hearts of 75 to 100 parishioners at St. Joseph church.

Have a say in your parish's future! We need to hear from you. The Parish Pastoral Planning team would like your feedback on what has been presented above. You will have an opportunity to comment upon and prioritize the goals at a parish gathering on Sunday, March 12. The festivities begin with Mass at 10:00 AM. The town hall meeting will immediately follow the Mass. And then we'll have plenty of food and drink for you and the whole family.