



Pastoral Plan 2020 Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church, Lake Ozark, Missouri

In the fall of 2019, Bishop McKnight began the process of forming a diocesan pastoral plan. The initiative was given the title *Better Together*. The planning's framework consists of three pillars: to help our communities deepen their ability to engage in charity and mercy, embrace a stewardship spirituality, and empower an understanding of the co-responsibility of laity and clergy in this effort.

Small reflections groups were given material to reflect upon and themes to discuss during Advent of 2019 and Lent of 2020. The results of the small group discussions were collated and Msgr. Makarewicz drafted a pastoral plan using these insights plus the insights gained while doing the parish needs survey for long-range planning. The plan was submitted to the Diocese to become part of the larger process of completing a diocesan pastoral plan that went into effect Lent 2021.

What follows is the pastoral plan for Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church. This is our response to the teaching of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* and the fundamental pillars that Bishop McKnight has provided as support for our efforts.

Our pastoral plan will remain just words unless we commit to putting them into action and unless we constantly invoke divine assistance in our work. The following commitment statement will assist us in committing to our goal. It should be read at the beginning of all parish meetings. At the end of the meeting, the Prayer for Our Pastoral Plan is recited by all as the concluding prayer. Families and individuals are encouraged to incorporate the commitment and the prayer into their daily spiritual life.

Commitment to Mission

As children of One Heavenly Father,
as brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ
united as a family of faith by the Holy Spirit,
we commit ourselves to the pastoral conversion of our parish.
We gladly accept the work the Lord entrusts to us
as laity and clergy working together in the vineyard.
We resolve to live as faithful stewards of God's grace
in service of the evangelizing mission of the Church.
Charity and mercy will be the first response
we offer to those we encounter on the Way.
Fidelity to the Truth will light our path.
All to the praise and glory of God
with due honor to Our Blessed Lady of the Lake. Amen.

Prayer for Our Pastoral Plan

Come, Holy Spirit.

We have seen the Lord, and we want to bring others to Him who is the Bread of Eternal Life.

Come, O heavenly Light.

Enlighten our minds so that we may know your Holy Will for our parish.

Come Divine Advocate.

Bring to fulfillment the plan you have entrusted to us for bringing the good news of salvation to those who lack the light of faith.

Come, Divine Consolation.

Grant us the fullness of joy as we profess, celebrate, live and pray our faith in You.

Come, Giver of every Good Gift.

Teach us the way of stewardship, affirm us in our vocations, and strengthen our commitment to charity, that others may come to know, as we know, the mercy of God Our Father, and the Truth revealed in Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.

Activity One: The Pastor will work with the chairs of the commissions to charter, promulgate and staff a Stewardship Commission to assume the same type of leadership role currently enjoyed by the existing five commissions of the parish. (Stewardship)

The first pillar of our Diocesan plan for the renewal of a parish is that of Stewardship. The change in culture necessary for the flourishing of stewardship requires a specific team of people whose role is to understand the theology and spirituality of stewardship, educate the parish on stewardship's virtues, provide resources to parish leadership regarding stewardship formation, and to perform the critical role of engagement and assessment necessary for success. A chartered commission will have the resources and authority to change our culture of stewardship to be more in line with best practices, especially as exemplified by the parishes in the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas.

The past six years have seen the flourishing of a leadership and ministry culture founded on chartered and active parish commissions. Each commission went through a months-long process of discernment and planning, resulting in charter documents to guide the staffing of the commissions and provide the values and framework for a commission's work. These chartered commissions (Education, Worship, Administration, Social Concerns, Finance) have

demonstrated a model of leadership based on the co-responsibility of the clergy and the laity for the Church. Each commission consists of six, term-limited core members, and several additional associate members who are the coordinators for the key responsibility areas of the commission. The commissions meet monthly under the leadership of a chair person, and the pastor attends each meeting.

While the commissions have enjoyed great success in bringing new projects and programs to the parish, we have recognized that without greater engagement on the part of other parishioners, our work and ministry will never achieve full potential. Additionally, while each commission engages the parish in recruiting new members or ministers, none of the commissions has as its objective to promote stewardship as a way of life in the measure required for the current reality of our parish. At the core of stewardship is a conversation by parish leadership with the parishioners themselves regarding personal commitment to the Gospel.

In order for our parish to be a place to encounter the mercy of God and the charity of His disciples, we must first be more intentional about who we are and the blessings God has given us. Gratitude is certainly not absent from hearts. Generosity is not missing from our actions. And yet we have been unable as a parish to grow much beyond our customary mission of providing a place for vacationers to go to Mass and access to the sacraments of initiation. We may provide more volunteer hours at the local food pantry than any other church and we have grown as a community as we have welcomed the Hispanic community at the Lake into our parish, yet we are constantly brought up short in our efforts to go outside our parish church and make an impact in our community. A stewardship commission will go a long way toward activating the talents all of us have hidden out of fear, negligence, or selfish individualism.

Assessment will be in light of the following benchmarks:

- Commission will be chartered, promulgated and staffed. (March 1, 2021)
- Each year every parishioner renews a commitment to stewardship of time, talent, and treasure through a formal process overseen by the commission (Fall 2021)
- Transition from an offertory collection based contribution to a tithing model, both for parishioners and for the parish contribution to national collections and other charities. (July 1, 2022)
- Implementation of a robust communications and giving platform utilizing the full array of available technologies to foster both outreach to individuals and access by parishioners to the resources of the parish (July 1, 2021)

Activity Two: The Social Concerns Commission, under the leadership of Deacon Jim Hankins, will take the lead in our parish's becoming a center of mercy and charity. (Mercy and Charity)

Last year, our parish completed a months-long process of problem and need identification as part of the development of a long-range plan for our facilities. One of the most significant problems we identified was the lack of facilities to engage the local community in works of charity in a safe, efficient, and welcoming manner. Aside from sporadic fund raisers for local charities and regular donations to the local food pantry, charity has been limited minimal charity for folks who stop by the parish office. Direct charity was left to the sole discretion of the pastor or managed by office staff, certainly not evidence of a parish founded on the pillar of the co-responsibility of the laity and the clergy.

To become a center of mercy and charity means we must provide a place, the resources, the people, and opportunity where our efforts can be focused. To that end we have reassigned two rooms that had been used for religious education and are in the process of preparing them as an administrative center and providing for storage of the materiel required for outreach.

The Social Concerns Commission has been crucial to expanding our awareness of the many issues that face our community. But we are ready move on from simple awareness and fundraising to direct engagement in meeting the needs of the poor and anyone who finds themselves in need of assistance to meet basic human needs. Matching need to resource, especially the resource of human fellowship and concern, will be a top priority as we go forward.

The Social Concerns Commission will more effectively engage in its chartered objectives of educating the community in regard to the core themes of Catholic Social teaching and highlighting the particular social ills that prevail in our local community. We will especially be examining how our Catholic tradition can guide us in responding to inadequate health and safety for the most vulnerable; inadequate affordable housing for workers especially in the service industry; substance abuse, especially among the young; safe and affordable child care; and the need for mentors to provide life skills especially to members of disadvantaged families.

The following benchmarks will guide the assessment of our efforts:

- The office of Social Concerns will represent the place, people, and resources we have available to engage the public in a direct response to need. This office will have regular receiving hours and be staffed by volunteers (October 1, 2020)
- A robust program to meet individuals who are in need and assist in helping them find the resources they lack. This program will be called *Salvavida* (the Lifesaver), and will consist of personal contact, need assessment, and networking resources. Using a scripted plan of action for each contact and keeping in mind the existing social services in the community, the volunteers will provide a first step for those in need to finding immediate relief and long-term planning. (September 1, 2020)

- The commission will develop and sponsor a public conference that will correct an omission in our local community: an event to bring the organizations, institutions, and people who provide social services in our community into one building to network, inspire, and plan for a more effective response to the sorrow and suffering that surrounds us. (Fall 2021)
- The commission will assist the commissions, staff, and the clergy in reviewing pastoral policies, procedures, and practices—especially in regard to access to the sacraments and catechesis—to ensure that the face we present first of all a compassionate face of a merciful God who welcomes people as they are and walks with them in their own journey of discovering God’s boundless mercy. (Assessment instrument developed and administered to all commissions by September 1, 2021)

Activity Three: The pastor will work with the chairs of the five existing commissions in the development, chartering, and staffing of a Parish Pastoral Council. (Co-responsibility of Laity and Clergy)

Parish council and commission activity had dwindled to minimal participation and leadership during the health crisis of the previous pastor and sudden death of the pastoral minister. The past six years has seen a gradual flourishing of the commissions, but had yet to bring about a formal parish pastoral council. Real and substantial consultation and cooperation between the pastor and the laity, along with planning and assessment, took place through the faithful participation of commission leadership, the reliable presence of the pastor, and the open communication of the proceedings of the commissions. Nevertheless, the absence of a parish pastoral council has meant that parishioners did not have full opportunity to fulfill the goal of co-responsibility of the clergy and the laity for the mission of the parish.

The following benchmarks will guide the assessment of our efforts:

- Parish Pastoral Council chartered, promulgated and staffed. (November 1, 2020)
- Some type of parish assessment instrument such as the Catholic Leadership Institute *The Disciple Maker Survey* will be used to give a clear picture of where the parish stands in relation to best practices. (June 1, 2021)
- There will be a Hispanic presence in all commissions and in the parish pastoral council. (May 1, 2021)
- Proven engagement in Diocesan outreach, faith formation, and leadership programs such as the Missouri Catholic Conference, Diocesan Pastoral Council, youth activity programs such as Camp Maccabee and Camp Siena, Catholic Charities, and retreat programs like Cursillo or White House Retreat (Summer 2021 review by pastoral council).

- Adoption of a long range facilities plan by the Parish, developed by Administration Commission with approval of Pastor and with parish council guiding the parish consultation. (January 1, 2020)

Activity Four: The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church, especially in evangelization of the youth and young families. (Evangelization)

The recent Instruction from the Congregation for the Clergy (7.20.2020) teaches us:

3. Pastoral conversion is one of the central themes in the “new phase of evangelization” that the Church is called to foster today, whereby Christian communities be ever more centers conducive to an encounter with Christ. The Holy Father, in this regard, recommends that: “If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: “Give them something to eat” (Mk 6:37)”.

There has been a 40% decrease in the number of people who attend mass at Our Lady of the Lake according to the October Count from 2001-2019, even as the local population increased. In no area of pastoral life are the deficits of our parish evident as in the engagement of our parish in the lives of the youth and young families.

The average age of those who serve on the commissions is over seventy. During the time when best practices for hygiene and health recommended that ministers be under sixty years of age, we were sorely pressed to find enough people to staff even two Sunday masses. Participation in the Sunday Eucharist by high school aged students is minimal. Families bring children to PSR on Wednesdays but only infrequently attend Sunday mass. Infants are baptized and then not seen again until it is time for first communion. If this is the trend among those who are baptized Catholics, imagine how great the harvest is for those individuals and families who have no interaction with any church. The challenge is especially evident in sustained engagement with young Spanish-speaking families. In the Advent and Lent discernment groups for pastoral planning, engagement with youth and young families was the most consistent concern.

The parish’s long-range plan is coming to the stage where we must prioritize solutions for the many needs we have identified throughout the self-assessment

phase. We are planning new facilities to provide adequate space for the many pastoral activities that are already taking place. We must not forget that the greatest resource that we have to offer is that of ourselves in service of the Gospel. We can no longer build things and wait for people to show up. We must be prepared to go out into the community, engage the people we encounter, and commit to accompany them on their way to encounter Christ.

The truest test of our stewardship goals, the co-responsibility of the laity and the clergy, and the parish's culture of mercy and charity will be in the conversion of our parish into a center for evangelization.

- Work with the local school districts to assist families in meeting educational objectives for their children on virtual learning days, especially at the middle school level, in the light of the change in the educational week due to COVID-19. (September 1, 2020)
- Assess the feasibility of a day care and pre-school program sponsored by our parish to provide families with a safe, cost-effective, and faith-based alternative for child care and early child education. (July 1, 2021)
- Task all commissions to recruit at least two more core team or associate members who are under the age of 45. (January 1, 2021)
- The parish will work toward hiring a pastoral resource person with a primary competency in Hispanic ministry to assist in outreach to the growing number of Spanish speakers in our area, as called for in the parish V Encuentro process. (Fall 2021)
- Assess the feasibility of a Catholic lower elementary school. (July 1, 2022)

Evangelii Gaudium

27. I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself. As John Paul II once said to the Bishops of Oceania: “All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion”.

28. The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”. This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its

people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.

Gaudium et Spes

43. This council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation. Nor, on the contrary, are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age. Long since, the Prophets of the Old Testament fought vehemently against this scandal and even more so did Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament threaten it with grave punishments. Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation. Christians should rather rejoice that, following the example of Christ Who worked as an artisan, they are free to give proper exercise to all their earthly activities and to their humane, domestic, professional, social and technical enterprises by gathering them into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory.

Secular duties and activities belong properly although not exclusively to laymen. Therefore acting as citizens in the world, whether individually or socially, they will keep the laws proper to each discipline, and labor to equip themselves with a genuine expertise in their various fields. They will gladly work with men seeking the same goals. Acknowledging the demands of faith and endowed with its force, they will unhesitatingly devise new enterprises, where they are appropriate, and put them into action. Laymen should also know that it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city; from priests they may look for spiritual light and nourishment. Let the layman not imagine that his pastors are always such experts, that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily give him a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission. Rather, enlightened by Christian wisdom and giving close attention to the teaching authority of the Church, let the layman take on his own distinctive role.