



# STRATEGIC PLANNING



## Dear Friends -

St Teresa's has been a spiritual home for thousands and thousands of people for more than 150 years! As you can imagine, a lot has changed over the years to bring us to the place in history we find ourselves today. That shouldn't be surprising because a lot has changed in society as well. Reading (and responding) to the signs of the times is our daily responsibility as a parish and church community as is planning for our future!

Part of the major transformation that has happened in our Church is that the people of God have now been challenged to take on real responsibility for our Church - the days of "pray, pay and obey" are long, and thankfully, gone. Instead, in my years as a pastor, I have come to know how important it is to share the responsibility for our parish with you because real co-responsibility transforms. Co-responsibility is:

- **an interdependent relationship between persons, both lay and clergy;**
- **a willingness of the power wielder to be transformed through relationships and interactions;**
- **the willingness to act with integrity, mutuality and sustainability by all parties; and**
- **the driving force behind consistent communications, engagement and honest feedback.**

To that end, I hope you will take the time to read through what follows. It outlines the process that we will undergo over these next twenty or so months in order to look at where we have been, assess where we are and honestly plan for where we want to go and who we want to be as a people of God under the title of St Teresa of Avila. These days will only be successful if you participate and become co-responsible for our parish.

I am grateful for all that has been, I am pleased for who we are, but I look forward with great hope and expectation for who we can be for our community in the future. I pray for the wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as well as the intercession of our Blessed Mother, but I also ask for your participation and support in this important chapter in our parish history.

**Blessings!**  
**Fr Bob**



# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

1

## GATHERING LOCAL PARISH DATA

- ▶ *Listening Sessions*
- ▶ *Focus Groups*
- ▶ *Parish Survey*

2

## GATHERING NATIONAL PARISH STATISTICS

3

## PRESENTATION OF THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL DATA TO THE CONGREGATION

4

## PARISH PLANNING SESSIONS TO CREATE STRATEGIC PLAN

- ▶ *Identify Strategic Issues*
- ▶ *Determine Strategies*
- ▶ *Create Action Steps*

5

## IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

1. FEBRUARY 2019 to MAY 2019
2. JUNE 2019 to AUGUST 2019
3. SEPTEMBER 2019 to NOVEMBER 2019
4. JANUARY 2020 to MAY 2020
5. JUNE 2020 - ONWARD

# SWOT ANALYSIS

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As our parish begins to initiate a self-evaluation process, the **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)** program will be implemented to guide this review at the listening sessions. In identifying these four elements, these are some guidelines for each of these segments:

- ◀ **Strengths and Weaknesses are internal.** These are also factors of which the parish has greater relative control. Some of these include resources, knowledge base, values, and parish culture.
- ◀ **Opportunities and Threats conversely are external or environmental.** Some of these factors imply those which the parish may have influence but no control over. These may be things such as overall demand, activity and influence of other religious organizations, and national trends in the Church.

Below are some elements of each of the four areas that the parish seeks to identify to get a full understanding of the parish's current state:

# S

## **STRENGTHS:**

- Strengths are those factors that make the parish more attractive than other parishes or churches in the area.
- These are where the parish has a distinct advantage at doing or what resources it has that are superior to other institutions.
- Strengths are in effect resources or capabilities that the parish holds that can be used effectively to achieve its mission.

# W

## **WEAKNESSES:**

- Weaknesses are limitations, faults, or defects within the parish organization that will keep it from achieving its mission.
- These are what the parish does poorly and where it has inferior capabilities or resources compared with other churches.

# O

## **OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Opportunities include any favorable current or prospective situation in the larger Church or the local environment, such as a trend, change, or overlooked need that supports the demand for a service and permits the parish to enhance its mission.

# T

## **THREATS:**

- A threat includes any unfavorable situation, trend, or impending change in this parish' environment that is currently or potentially damaging or threatening to its ability to accomplish its mission.
- A threat may also be a barrier, constraint, or anything that might inflict problems, damage, harm or injury to the parish community and organization.

**St Teresa of Avila Parish will conduct a survey to measure the effectiveness of our programs and to assess the greatest needs of our parish community.** This is an opportunity for all of those who come to this parish to make their needs and opinions known. The results will help the parish better serve all those who attend Mass here. The survey is being conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, a national Catholic research center. The survey will be distributed and collected in-pew during all Masses on a weekend in May 2019. We hope that by sharing this in advance, you will be able to participate, but if you happen to miss it, we encourage you to still participate by contacting the parish office or checking the weekly emails in May for an electronic version.

Our parish will receive a report summarizing our results within twelve weeks of the survey, and the findings will be used as we plan for the next few years. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and participation!

## About the **Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate:**

**CARA** is a national, non-profit, Georgetown University affiliated research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church. Founded in 1964, CARA has three major dimensions to its mission:

- ▶ to increase the Church's self understanding
- ▶ to serve the applied research needs of Church decision-makers
- ▶ to advance scholarly research on religion, particularly Catholicism.



CARA has more than 50 years of experience in quality social science research on the Catholic Church. We offer a range of research and consulting services for dioceses, parishes, religious communities and institutes, and other Catholic organizations. CARA's longstanding policy is to let research findings stand on their own and never take an advocacy position or go into areas outside its social science competence. All CARA researchers have advanced degrees in relevant academic disciplines as well as pastoral experience. CARA researchers are active in the academic community publishing and presenting research about the Catholic Church.

To help enlighten us about the current climate in the national Catholic Church, here are a few main statistics about the Catholic Church in the United States.

The Catholic Church is larger than any other single religious institution in the United States, with over 17,000 parishes that serve a large and diverse population. In spite of its size and influence, the church in recent decades has faced a number of significant challenges, from a decline in membership to a shortage of priests to continuing revelations that some Catholic clergy sexually abused minors and (in many cases) that their superiors covered up these actions.

## Here are seven facts about American Catholics and their church:

- 1. There are roughly 51 million Catholic adults in the US, accounting for about one-fifth of the total US adult population, according to Pew Research Center's 2014 Religious Landscape Study.** That study found that the share of Americans who are Catholic declined from 24% in 2007 to 21% in 2014.
- 2. Catholicism has experienced a greater net loss due to religious switching than has any other religious tradition in the US.** Overall, 13% of all US adults are former Catholics – people who say they were raised in the faith, but now identify as religious “nones,” as Protestants, or with another religion. By contrast, 2% of US adults are converts to Catholicism – people who now identify as Catholic after having been raised in another religion (or no religion). This means that there are 6.5 former Catholics in the US for every convert to the faith. No other religious group analyzed in the 2014 Religious Landscape Study has experienced anything close to this ratio of losses to gains via religious switching.
- 3. Catholics in the US are racially and ethnically diverse.** Roughly six-in-ten Catholic adults are white, one-third are Latino, and smaller shares identify as black, Asian American, or with other racial and ethnic groups. The data also show that the share of US Catholics who are Latino has been growing, and suggest that this share is likely to continue to grow. Indeed, among Catholic Millennials, there are about as many Hispanics as whites.
- 4. Compared with some other religious groups, Catholics are fairly evenly dispersed throughout the country: 27% live in the South, 26% in the Northeast, 26% in the West, and 21% of US Catholics live in the Midwest.** Since many American Hispanics are Catholic, the continuing growth of this community as a share of the US population is gradually shifting the geographic center of US Catholicism from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and the West. Indeed, three-quarters of Hispanic Catholics reside in the South or West, while six-in-ten non-Hispanic Catholics live in the Northeast or Midwest. Overall, the share of US Catholic adults who reside in the Northeast and the Midwest declined by 5 percentage points between 2007 and 2014 (from 53% to 48%), while the share of Catholics who live in the South and West grew by an equal amount (from 47% to 52%).
- 5. Many US Catholics say they want to see the church make significant changes.** For example, six-in-ten say they think the church should allow priests to marry and allow women to become priests. And nearly half of US Catholics say the church should recognize the marriages of gay and lesbian couples. Support for these kinds of changes is lower – though still substantial – among Catholics who attend Mass regularly than it is among those who attend Mass less often.

- Politically, Catholic registered voters are evenly split between those who identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party (47%) and those who favor the GOP (46%). In their partisanship, US Catholics are deeply divided along racial and ethnic lines. Most Hispanic Catholics identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party, while 54% of white Catholics today identify with or lean toward the GOP.
- Large majorities of US Catholics have admired Pope Francis throughout his tenure, but there are growing signs of discontent. In 2014, 54% of American Catholics gave Francis "excellent" or "good" marks for his handling of the church's sex abuse scandal. But in a Pew Research Center poll conducted in September 2018 – shortly after recent reports about sex scandals in the US Catholic Church – the share of Catholics saying this had fallen 23 points, to 31%. The recent survey also found that the pontiff's overall approval rating among US Catholics had dropped to 72%, down from 84% in January of this year.

(SOURCE: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/10/7-facts-about-american-catholics/>)



## NEXT STEPS

As we begin this process and collect more data from our local parish here at St Teresa's, we will present the information we find to the parish. The next step is to take this information and begin to identify what are the three to five strategic issues that our parish faces. In this process, we can together, as a community, seek to find answers to make our parish community thrive and accomplish its mission. We invite you all to come and be a part of this process and come to our parish planning sessions on the following dates:

FEBRUARY

**Thursday, February 21**  
10:00 - 11:30 am  
2:00 - 3:30 pm  
**Friday, February 22**  
12:30 - 2:00 pm  
**Tuesday, February 26**  
6:30 - 8:00 pm

MARCH

**Wednesday, March 27**  
9:30 - 11:00 am  
1:00 - 2:30 pm  
**Thursday, March 28**  
1:30 - 3:00 pm  
4:30 - 6:00 pm

APRIL

**Monday, April 29**  
9:00 - 10:30 am  
1:00 - 2:30 pm  
**Tuesday, April 30**  
7:30 - 9:00 am  
2:00 - 3:30 pm

At the end of this process we hope to have a pastoral strategic plan. This will include a revised mission and vision statements. Additionally, it will identify the strategic issues we hope to address in the next two years. It will also include the strategies of how we hope to accomplish those as well along with action steps that the community will take to bring those strategies to fruition.



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