

## **State of the Parish Homily**

### **September 15, 2018**

Jesus constantly challenged his disciples to grow, to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and to follow him. This is a life-long journey of conversion and growth.

#### **Slide one: Mission Statement**

Our mission statement is a reflection of what Jesus called his disciples to do in today's gospel. Peter had to "ignite his faith" and learn what it meant to think now like human beings do, but as God does. "Witness God's Love" is what it means to live not for ourselves, but for Christ.

**A year and a half ago we restructured our parish so that we could better get to the goal of growing mature disciples. Parish Leadership Structure: Worship, Community Life, Evangelization, and Parish School.**

**Worship** focuses on our community offering praise and worship of God. First and foremost, our worship focuses on the celebration of the Mass. This is what sets apart from any other community or service organization. Jesus Christ called the Church into being when he poured out his Holy Spirit upon the disciples. Worship includes more than our public and private prayer, but also every way we grow spiritually. (During the Mass) You are looking at a screen that is really outdated technology. Imagine digital screens that would be easier to see, with the words for the responsorial psalm, numbers or words of the songs on them. Also the Worship Commission is working on enhancing time for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

**Community Life:** toward ensuring that each member of the parish body experiences belonging and connection. It begins with the catechesis of parents of infants who are to be baptized and for children through sixth grade as well as activities that bring the community together. People in our society can feel isolated from one another, often times spending more time looking at a screen than have face to face contact with real people. This need is even more urgent than before. In the past year we have offer special gatherings for new parishioners and made a dramatic change for our parish picnic celebration, which was a ton of fun! We are gearing up for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our parish.

**Evangelization:** All programs for Faith Formation, middle school to adult. To grow as mature disciples and to live our faith, “go out”. We heard in the letter from St. James that faith without works is dead. Evangelization includes every way that we reach out to the poor, uphold the dignity of every person, and protect human life from its natural beginning to its natural end.

**School:** Before all else, St. Louise School is a ministry of the parish, another way to form mature disciples, parents, faculty and staff as well as students and to provide the best education possible. Our teachers are more than teachers, they are catechists, our staff are more than staff, they are models of faith. We have seen a slow and constant decline in enrollment in the past few years so we want to turn that around. As you know, the public schools have seen a dramatic increase in annual salaries for teachers of 10% or even up to 17% which makes it an extra challenge both to retain teachers and recruit new ones.

**Christ Renews His Parish retreats** are the main way that we grow mature disciples at St. Louise. Already we are seeing good fruit from the 10 of CRHP retreats that we have offered through. Here are what some of our past participants say about their experience: “One of the best weekends of my life” and “A powerful experience”. Men, I have a special challenge for you: Many of you are naturally competitive. Don’t let the women beat you! Thus far every women’s retreat has filled up, but not the men’s. Women, your next retreat October 13-14 and men, yours is November 3 & 4. You will have the opportunity to sign up after Mass.

### **Challenges for the Future:**

**Staffing, aging buildings, and *Called to Serve as Christ* campaign.**

We have a great staff. Even though we heard from parents and youth that they would like a Jr. High Youth Minister, we were not able to do so financially. In addition, by and large, our parish could afford only a 1% increase of salary for our staff. As you know, that meager increase will not keep up with increase of cost of living. Are staff here to serve, they work hard, they are not here to get rich, but this is a matter of justice. The old school and Parish Center might look OK

from the outside, but our building committee as let me know that they are failing and it would be financially foolish to try to renovate them. We are not as strong financially as we were when the new School and Faith Formation was built, so we will need to look carefully at how to best move forward. In addition, we also participate in the Archdiocesan Campaign called, "Called to Serve as Christ" to make sure that priests and sisters have the support that they need as they move into their retirement years both now and for many years to come. The total goal of the campaign is \$100 million. 15% of what we collect toward our goal will come back to our parish. Our goal is very ambitious, \$2.3 million. If we go beyond our goal, then we will receive 85% back to our parish. A successful campaign could help our parish to address the financial challenges we face.

We have some real challenges, and with faith in God we have reason to hope. I look forward to another great pastoral year together. It is my honor to serve you as your pastor. Thank you for your commitment, your love, your faith and your prayers. I always welcome your comments and feedback. Thank you for your support.