



Parish Leadership Newsletter

Department for Parishes
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Vol. 2, No. 2

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If the Church is to Thrive, Planning is Not Optional



In August word spread throughout the archdiocese that our parishes would be involved in yet another planning process. As a busy summer was winding down and parish staffs were gearing up for the opening of school, religious education programs and other annual programs, the materials for planning began arriving via e-mail from the central offices. It was enough to make pastors’ and staffs’ heads spin! Ready or not, the rush to plan was on.

A series of informative bulletin inserts kicked-off the deluge of information. Training sessions helped parish planning core teams get acquainted with the materials, the goals of this planning cycle and the processes for parishes to use. The timeline was incredibly short. Core teams pleaded for more time to do the process well. The time line gained an extra month.

The Planning Conference on September 27 was a great event. Archbishop Dolan’s talk was both challenging and inspiring. Most agreed, after the archbishop’s talk, the next best part of the day was the district sessions. It was so good to talk with and hear from each other what possibilities were being considered for the future. Some parish core teams discovered for the first time what their neighboring parishes were up to! For others, it was a meeting of old friends and trusted partners.

It’s obvious, no one needs to be hit over the head. We “get it.” The priest shortage is not a figment of anyone’s imagination. We are all experiencing it to some degree. But the effects of the shortage go deeper than how many Sunday Masses are celebrated at any given parish each weekend. The shortage carries good news with the bad news. And there is probably more GOOD than bad!

We stand like those first apostles and disciples after Jesus' resurrection. This partnership of priests, deacons and laity (common priesthood of the baptized) share the same mandate. It is up to all of us to find ways to effectively evangelize as Jesus did, to serve as Jesus served, to be in relationship with God and one another, growing the Church. Like the apostles, we must get ready for some major adjustments. How will we keep the mission of Jesus alive and well? What do we need to be thinking about?

Regarding our priests:

1. What expectations do we have for our pastor's involvement in parish life?
2. Which things can only an ordained priest do?
3. What things does the priest do that a non-ordained person with some training could do?
4. How/does a pastor experience friendship and community within his parish?
5. How does the prayer of the community "feed" his soul? Support his spirit?

Regarding those other than priests involved in parish ministry:

1. How many lay ministers, salaried and volunteer, share aspects of the ministry activity in your parish?
2. What would it take to maintain and grow your parish whether or not a priest was the designated pastoral leader? We have over a 10-year history of parish directors appointed by the archbishop serving as the person in charge of a parish.
3. What could/does your parish do to encourage and support church-related careers to ordained priesthood, diaconate and lay professional ministry?

Regarding you:

1. What would it take for you to share in the work/ministry of your parish? What kind of encouragement? Preparation and training?
2. What would you have to gain by sharing in the ministry of your parish?
3. What do you have to lose by waiting for "somebody else" to step up?

**Please Promote
this Event in Your
Parish Bulletin**

You are cordially invited to attend the 13th Annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Prayer Service. The service will be held on Monday, January 19, 2004, at Gesu Church, 1145 W. Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee. A music prelude begins at 6:30 followed by the service at 7:00pm. Reverend Dr. Trinette McCray, director of the Office for Vocation Development at Cardinal Stritch University will speak about "Love In Action."

For more information, contact the African American Ministry Office at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, 414-769-3411 or allens@archmil.org. A flyer can be found on page 7 of this newsletter and on the archdiocesan website, www.archmil.org

Elizabeth Ministry Morning of Reflection – 'Holiness and Wholeness'

This morning of reflection for women will foster awareness of how to create more balance in their lives, thereby moving toward wholeness and holiness.

Saturday, February 21, 2004

St. Leonard Parish, W173 S7743 Westwood Dr., Muskego, Wisconsin

Registration 8:30am

Program 9:00 am to 11:45 am (no lunch will be served)

Cost: \$15 per person

Registration deadline is February 12, 2004

Keynote speaker: Marianne Skrobiak - a spirit-filled woman of faith who combines the spiritual knowledge of a Masters in Divinity from Sacred Heart School of Theology with 17 years of experience and insight as a psychotherapist. Her reflections on greater holiness and wholeness are both practical and scripturally sound. Through personal assessment and small group sharing, participants will develop their own "recipe" for spiritual growth.

Sponsored by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee: Office for Human Concerns and Office for Women. For more information, contact Thelma Walker, 414-769-3501 or email walkert@archmil.org

Registration information can be found on pages 8-9 of this newsletter.

Parish Planning

by Mark Peters,
Parish Consultant

Those of us involved in facilitating the current round of parish planning meetings have had the opportunity to hear firsthand the reactions of both priests and faithful to our worsening clergy shortage. Priests speak – with resignation, a sense of exhaustion, and sometimes anger – of being asked to take on greater workloads year after year (even in retirement!), and wonder how much longer they can cope. Lay Catholics are concerned both for remaining personally connected to a priest-pastor and, perhaps most of all, for maintaining their current faith communities. This can be merely a desire to hang onto buildings and traditions even when the ability to be a fully-functioning parish that has vibrant ministries of Word, Worship and Service no longer exists. But for many, it is more a matter of wanting a community to which they can feel they really belong – where they know many people and are known by many, and in which they feel valued and cared for as individuals.

I sometimes fear that in our longing to hang on to parishes and parish services as we have always known them, we will unintentionally but eventually burn out our priests completely. While I sense that most Catholics in this archdiocese are no longer in denial of the priest shortage, they are still in quite a bit of denial about what is required of *them* if we are to keep the Church and the priesthood healthy. At base, this involves two things: first, for the 80% or so of us who do not contribute our share of time, talent and treasure to begin trying to do so; second, for all Catholics to become *evangelized*. The need for better stewardship is self-evident. If the laity don't share more of the burden of ministry, our ministers (not only ordained, but lay professionals and volunteers as well) will be overwhelmed; and money problems will only make things all the worse.

But what does it mean for a Catholic to be "evangelized?" After all, we're already baptized and catechized, right? We're pretty sure we're going to make it

to heaven. What else is left? Just this: to be converted to the depths of our being to the message of Christ. Far too many of us are “cultural Catholics” – we were raised in the Church and take it for granted we will be married and buried in the Church, but the faith of the apostles, saints and martyrs rarely if ever informs our social, economic or political lives. To our co-workers, fellow citizens, and perhaps even our families, the fact that we regularly or occasionally go to Mass is the only thing that differentiates us from anyone else in this society. We are just as caught up in the rat race, the search for material security and happiness, the hatred of enemies, and “looking out for #1” as those who profess no faith nor belong to any community of believers.

When I meet Catholics who are fully evangelized, who have truly accepted the Good News and are on fire to live it out and share it with others, they never tell me it just happened by “going to church.” It was usually the result of conscious and deliberate searching, the kind that happens in Renew groups or on Cursillos or retreats, through Bible studies or being an RCIA sponsor, and in soup kitchens, homeless shelters and church-based community organizations like MICAH. When we come into direct contact with the Word of God, or the poor and outcast whom Jesus loved, or sometimes even just other searchers like ourselves, we are challenged to give up our comfortable ideas of Church as a place of security where we come to be affirmed and “fed,” and come to see it as a place of challenge, risk and giving ourselves up as food for others. And once you’ve been evangelized, you become an *evangelizer*. Those who go through the RCIA often get much more deeply involved in other ministries; Cursillistas never tire of inviting others to “come and see”; and those who come to know the poor often become social activists, trying against all odds to change the world out of compassion for those whom Jesus called “the least of these” and with whom he identified his very self. Sadly, though, such Catholics are too few and far between, and until that changes, I fear our current crisis will only deepen as the next generation sees church people as wrapped up in petty parochial concerns and uninvolved in the great issues of the day.

Many at our planning sessions have identified mandatory celibacy as the biggest obstacle to a renewed Church, and worry about how we will make the Church more attractive to our youth so as to “keep them in the fold.” I am far more concerned about the world drowning in poverty, violence, and hopelessness. Celibacy may need some discussion but let’s keep the center of our focus on the challenge of the Gospel. If we want a Church that our children will be loyal to, we need to prove to them that this faith can not only work real changes in us, but in this world as well.

Evangelization

This fall, as part of an important planning process, many parishioners, parish council members, and parish staff members gathered in clusters to discuss Archbishop Dolan's "Letter on Pastoral Planning to the Catholics of Southeastern Wisconsin." In all districts, evangelization was mentioned as a priority. This includes inviting and welcoming new members, and encouraging ushers and hospitality ministers to contact parishioners who have not been to church for some time. There has been discussion about how to approach a family member, co-worker or neighbor about the Catholic church and how to make home visits. Archdiocesan statistics in the past 10 years indicate that the number of adults being received into the church through celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) and those being received into full communion in the Catholic church has increased.

Resources are available for parishes as they take the time to reflect upon evangelization and to work with their mission statement and goals. Parish council / staff retreats and parish "missions" provide excellent opportunities to reflect upon and discuss the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Plan and the Archdiocesan Evangelization Handbook.

Another tool for prayer and discussion is *Disciples in Prayer* - a collaborative effort between the U. S. Catholic Conference of Bishops Secretariat for Evangelization and Oregon Catholic Press. *Disciples in Prayer* is an exciting new resource that guides prayer groups in their reflection on the Lectionary readings throughout the church year. It contains synopses of the Sunday readings, responsorial psalm texts, musical selections and suggestions, and study group questions. It is especially suited for personal reflection by parish councils, committees, staff members, liturgy teams, RCIA and small faith-sharing groups. The cost for ten or more copies is \$3.50 each; 1-9 copies, \$3.95 each. CD \$15. (*Disciples in Prayer* can be ordered through the USCCB Publishing Department, <http://www.nccbuscc.org>)

In 2004 the archdiocese will extend an invitation to all those who are interested in evangelization for a morning of prayer and sharing of "best practices." Details will be sent to parish leaders in January. If you are interested in materials or have questions about evangelization, contact Val Keller, Evangelization, 414-769-3395, 800-769-9373 x395 or kellerv@archmil.org

Office for Women

"Our own wisdom is rooted in God's gift of wisdom to us."

From: *Learning to Trust Our Own Wisdom*, by Jean M. Blemquist.

Webster's New World dictionary defines wisdom as judging rightly following a course of action based on knowledge, experience and understanding. As people of faith, our wisdom is rooted in the wisdom of God. God's wisdom calls us beyond knowledge, experience and understanding and touches all of our relationships. We gain wisdom during our life, accepting ourselves as we are, with all our strengths and weaknesses. Our wisdom develops by experiencing the Spirit working through our lives, our parishes, the Church, and helps us to recognize what is essential and what can change. Every person has unique wisdom to share, and older adults may have more wisdom because they have lived longer, have had more experiences, and look at the big picture.

This wisdom of God is within each person. God's wisdom comes to us through scripture and our faith tradition, giving us guidelines to apply to life today. In what ways is the wisdom of women and men of all ages, all economic levels, and all cultures shared through the parish council, parish committees, and the Parish Planning Process? What issues are facing the Church, the larger community, our country and the rest of the world? Can the collective wisdom of people be applied to solving some of these problems?

Through our wisdom, we can experience the Advent season, the Christmas season and the new year in a new way. How has the way we experience rituals and symbols changed each year? The wisdom of God is with us on our journey as we open ourselves to a deepening relationship with God, and a faith that is rooted in justice and peace.

The Office for Women is a resource for women in the archdiocese. The office provides materials to enhance our spirituality, supports women's groups, maintains a list of speakers, spiritual directors and retreat centers, and empowers women through coalitions including women religious, Saint Francis Seminary, colleges and universities, ecumenical groups and community groups. Domestic violence materials and referrals to Catholic Charities and community agencies are an important role for the office. An advisory council assists the office by providing input from the archdiocese and keeping the office aware of programs and issues in their area.

For information or assistance, please call Thelma Walker, Director, Office for Women at 414-769-3501, 1-800-9373, x501 or e-mail walkert@archmil.org

March for Life

The following message about the "March for Life" comes from the Office for Human Concerns on behalf of Pro-Life Wisconsin:

Pro-Life Wisconsin is again sponsoring a bus trip to Washington, DC, for the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. The 31st annual "March for Life" buses will be leaving Tuesday, January 20, 2004, from Necedah, Wisconsin, and from St. Mary Parish in Elm Grove. Buses will return on Saturday, January 24. Join tens of thousands of people to mark the anniversary of the 1973 Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Price is \$225 from Elm Grove and \$235 from Necedah and includes accommodations at the Capitol Hill Hyatt and bus to Washington, D.C. Space is limited! Accommodations are four people to a room. Contact Pro-Life Wisconsin state office at 262-796-1111 or e-mail info@prolifewisconsin.org for more details and a registration form.

Mass for Life

On January 22, 2004, a "Mass for Life" will be held at Gesu Parish in Milwaukee, with Archbishop Timothy Dolan as presider. The Mass highlights the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision. See the flyer on page 10 of this newsletter. Please help to promote this event in your parishes.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND

**The 13th Annual
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Memorial Prayer Service**

*Reverend Dr. Trinette V. McCray, Executive Director of the
Office of Vocation Development and Adjunct Faculty Member in
Religious Studies at Cardinal Stritch University, Addresses...*

“Love In Action”



*“Love, truth and courage to do what is right should be our own
guideposts on this lifelong journey.” Coretta Scott King*

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2004

PLACE: GESU CHURCH
1145 W. WISCONSIN AVENUE
MILWAUKEE

TIME: 6:30 PM -- MUSIC PRELUDE
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM -- SERVICE

CO-SPONSORED BY: AFRICAN-AMERICAN CATHOLIC MINISTRY OFFICE
GESU PARISH
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY MINISTRY
SACRED HEART SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
SAINT FRANCIS SEMINARY

CONTACT: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MINISTRY OFFICE FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION AT 769-3411 OR OUR WEBSITE WWW.ARCHMIL.ORG.

"May the God of peace
make you perfectly holy
and may you entirely,
spirit, soul, and body, be
preserved blameless for the
coming of our Lord Jesus
Christ. The one who calls
you is faithful, and will
also accomplish it."

-1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

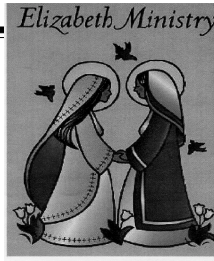
**A Morning of Reflection
for Women
"Holiness and Wholeness"
With
Marianne Skrobiak**



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9:00AM—11:45AM**

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Join us

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at

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Thelma Walker in the
Office for Women, 414-769-3501
or walkert@archmil.org

Registration must be received
by February 12, 2004.

Sponsored by the
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
Office for Women and
Office for Human Concerns

A Morning of Reflection for Women "Holiness and Wholeness"

Registration deadline is February 12, 2004

Please mail your registration and check for \$15.00 per person payable to "Archdiocese of Milwaukee" to: Office for Human Concerns, 3501 S. Lake Dr., PO Box 070912, Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day phone (area code): _____

E-mail address: _____

Parish: _____

MASS FOR

Life

*Anniversary of Roe vs. Wade
Supreme Court Abortion Decision*

JANUARY 22, 2004

**ARCHBISHOP
TIMOTHY M. DOLAN
PRESIDING**

Time: NOON

Place: GESU PARISH
1145 W. WISCONSIN AVE.
MILWAUKEE

*The Mass is co-sponsored by Marquette University Ministry,
the Archdiocesan Department for Parishes, Gesu Parish, Marquette Students for Life,
and the National Office of Post Abortion Reconciliation and Healing.*