

GUARDIAN ANGELS PARISH

Copley, Ohio

Parish Pastoral Plan 2025 - 2027



This Pastoral Plan was prepared in accordance with the ten Norms established by the diocesan Bishop in *CHRIST CALLS US TOGETHER*, the Parish Pastoral Council Policy of the Diocese of Cleveland, November 25, 1990.

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Article 1 Plan Name and Purpose

Guardian Angels Parish Pastoral Plan 2025 – 2027

The purpose of this Plan is to address the needs and goals of the parish community in the context of Church teaching and the mission of the larger Church.

Article 2 Purpose of the Parish

The parish exists to carry forward the work of the Church which is the mission of Jesus. It has two basic purposes:

1. To support the spiritual growth of its members through:
 - a. Proclaiming the Word,
 - b. Building up the community,
 - c. Celebrating the liturgy, and
 - d. Serving all God's people.
2. To enable its members to participate actively in the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission of Jesus to the world.

All Christians are called through Baptism and Confirmation to share responsibility for this mission and contribute according to their time, talent, and treasure.

Article 3 Purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is a ministry whose primary concern is the spiritual growth of the parish community.

It is the principal planning group of parishioners, a consultative body, that assists the pastor in developing and renewing this plan for the ministries and life of the parish.

Its members are charged with determining how the parish can be most effective in fulfilling its total mission. The Council discerns what needs to be supported, changed, or developed to make the parish more faithful to the call of God.

In the planning process the PPC focus is on fruitfulness through:

1. prayer,
2. assessing needs,
3. investigating challenges faced by the parish,
4. establishing strategies, goals, and objectives,
5. determining the means and resources to achieve a desired outcome, and
6. evaluating the implementation of the plan.

Article 4 Our Parish Vision Statement

To be a flourishing community of authentic disciples of Jesus Christ.

This is what our community of Christian faithful is striving to achieve. It gives us a shared sense of direction and guides all of our activities. Authentic disciples obey God's commandments and carry-on Christ's mission. They are learners, good stewards of their personal vocations, and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. We believe that our parish will flourish if we make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be authentic disciples of Jesus Christ.

Article 5 Our Parish Mission Statement

To love God deeply; love our neighbor as ourselves; and to spread the Gospel.

The first of all God's commandments is "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." (Mark 12:29) To love God in this way is to love deeply.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" is the second commandment. (Mark 12:31) This means their well-being is as high a priority as our own. Jesus makes clear our love must extend to every person without limit. "But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." (Luke 6:27-28)

The Gospel is the "good news" of God's mercy and love revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the source of all saving truth and moral discipline. Christ's work of redemption accomplished principally by his Passion, death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension stands at the center of the Good News. The parish exists to carry forward the work of His Church to proclaim the Gospel to the world.

The most important thing we can contribute to our society is to become a Christ centered community. Speaking of and sharing the love of Jesus does so much to transform our world. It is a way of life that we are obliged to share with others. We are invited daily to transform our lives by sharing our talents, service, and gratitude for God's many blessings.

Article 6 Long Term Goals

1. To make Guardian Angels parish a flourishing community
2. To support the spiritual growth of parishioners into authentic disciples of Jesus
3. To enable parishioners to fulfill the Church's essential mission of evangelization

Article 7 Strategies To Achieve Long Term Goals

1. Use the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate's (CARA) seven elements of parish life to evaluate the quality of life of our parish and make improvements.
 - a. Community
 - b. Worship
 - c. Leadership
 - d. Formation
 - e. Stewardship
 - f. Social Justice
 - g. Evangelization
2. Develop and execute a parish communication strategy
3. Create a climate that fosters a deep and strong emotional connection with the congregation.
4. Increase members' engagement to build disciples
5. When addressing issues or obstacles apply the Six Step Problem Solving Process explained in [Appendix A](#).
6. Use *root cause analysis* (RCA) explained in [Appendix B](#) to recognize the underlying cause(s) of a problem.

Article 8 Communication Strategy

Good communication makes you think and provokes self-reflection.

Really good communication changes the way you think and your perspective on life.

1. A communication strategy is essential for the parish if we are to communicate effectively to achieve our goals because:
 - a. Change and growth in our spiritual lives largely depend on our thinking.
 - b. Our thinking determines our behavior.
 - c. All of our communication efforts should aim at helping parishioners with the transformation of their thinking so they will understand, accept, and be committed to the mission and goals of the parish.
 - d. Quality communications are the result of careful planning and hard work.
2. Identify and learn about our core audience(s)
3. Build an audience that wants to hear from us.
4. Talk about real issues.
5. Always start with WHY to inspire trust, loyalty, and action.
6. Develop forms of communication that will inform and motivate.
7. Establish a sense of urgency to promote change because people must believe that the status quo is unacceptable.
8. Communicate informational items frequently and in a variety of ways.
9. Apply the Communication Guiding Principles ([Appendix C](#)) from *Why They Follow: Lessons in Church Communication*, by Matthew Warner.

Article 9 Matters of Major Pastoral Concern

1. The number of nonpracticing Catholics is growing.
2. The trend of young members leaving the Church will not only continue but escalate
3. “Business as usual” for the Church means continuing decline
4. Insufficient funds to sustain our parish in the future
5. Obstacles to Discipleship, e.g., personal issues, lack of religious education, faith, or trust
6. Secularization and hostility toward religion.
7. Universalism – the belief that all or almost all people will be saved

“Traditionally Christian and Catholic countries are now under powerful assault by secularist and even anti-Christian forces. As a result, many millions of our fellow believers may still have the name of Christian or Catholic but are no longer living as disciples of Christ or even have an understanding of what it means to do so. This shows up not only in declining church attendance but in the erosion of belief and morality even among those who still do attend.” (*The New Evangelization: Why Bother* by Ralph Martin)

Article 10 Pastoral Needs of the Parish Community

An environment that will motivate members to become engaged, learn, grow in personal faith, and evangelize

For each member to pursue sanctity through spiritual and intellectual formation

Article 11 Priorities

1. Creating a communication plan
2. Building a team of parishioners committed to and responsible for creating and implementing an Adult Faith Formation plan
3. Developing a Stewardship program
4. Increasing engagement (belonging) which drives spiritual commitment (believing)

Article 12 Community

CARA describes the sense of community within a parish as including the sense of belonging at the parish and how it welcomes people in a friendly, inclusive, and non-judgmental way. Also included is parish outreach, i.e., how well the parish reaches out to parishioners and involves them in parish life. Community has an internal focus.

A. Strategies to Achieve Goals

1. Create an effective program to increase the number of engaged members based upon research conducted by the Gallup organization presented in the book *GROWING AN ENGAGED CHURCH* By Albert Winseman
2. Increase the percentage of engaged parish members to build up the community and support their spiritual growth
3. Measure engagement and implement strategies to improve it
4. Finding out what our members think, even if we don't agree with or act on their opinions. This is critical to our effectiveness and success.
5. Follow these guidelines in dealing with change to lessen the impact on engagement.
 - Tell people what they can anticipate from the changes.
 - Tell people early and often.
 - Tell them the reasons for the change.
 - Ask for their feedback after the change occurs.
 - Don't assume you have done too much communicating.
 - People need to hear something at least three times.
 - People need to hear the message three different ways before they understand and remember.

B. Communication Strategies

1. The extent to which members feel engaged in their parishes has a profound effect on their personal spiritual commitment.
2. The not-engaged members are your target audience. Their connections are more social than spiritual.
3. Members need to “feel” they *get* something of value, they *give* something of value, they *belong*, and they together with their fellow members can *grow*.
4. Humans have an innate need to be a part of something bigger than mere existence. A sense of mission should affect everything a parish does. There is a strong need for most parishes to better communicate their mission to their members.
5. Inspire participation in small faith-sharing groups
6. Key messages to be repeated:
 - Involvement is what you *do* in and for your church; engagement is how you *feel* about your church.
 - The expectations of parish membership

C. Goals

Increase the number of engaged parish members

D. Actions

1. Measure current engagement and use the Six-Step Problem Solving Method in Appendix A to improve it
2. Clarify the expectations of membership
3. Help members discover what they do best by developing a Stewardship program
4. Foster formation of small faith-sharing groups, study groups, support groups, etc.
5. Help members establish an emotional bond with the congregation thru worship and experiences other than worship

Article 13 Worship

CARA describes worship as the expression of the sacramental and prayer life of parishioners at Sunday liturgies and other sacred celebrations. This area includes all components of worship, such as homilies, lecturing, distributing communion, and the art and environment of worship. It also includes the fostering of individual spiritual growth, such as that related to personal prayer and private devotions.

A. Worship Strategies to Achieve Goals

1. Create an atmosphere for spiritual development through public and private prayer.
 - *The Worshipping Assembly at Mass*, 2010, USCCB, usccb.org
 - *Journey with Christ: Faith – Worship – Witness*, USCCB, usccb.org
 - *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship*, November 16, 2000, NCCB
2. Create opportunities to receive feedback for expectations for faith-filled experiences of a worshipping community.
3. Embrace attitudes of inclusion to all age levels in areas of worship.

B. Worship Communication Strategies

1. Communicate the purpose, history and traditions of authentic Catholic Worship.
2. Share pertinent resources and local recommendations for worship including Diocesan guidelines, directives, and declared changes for worship.
3. Cite Our Vision and/or Our Mission when appropriate.

C. Worship Goals

1. Increase Mass attendance along with increased participation in and awareness of the traditional life of the Church.
2. Promote the development of the Altar Décor Ministry
3. Foster commitment to the Sacramental Life by participating in Mass each Sunday and on Holy Days of obligation, as well as going to Confession at least annually to confess serious sins.

D. Actions to Achieve Worship Goals

1. Establish a Worship Commission to assist the pastor and Director of Music.
2. Recruit parishioners for the liturgical ministries of the Mass; lectors, altar servers, choir members, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.
3. Encourage attending Eucharistic Adoration, praying the rosary, devotion to the Divine Mercy, praying for the dead, and inviting family and friends to worship.
4. Encourage everyone to make time for God – at least 15 minutes of daily prayer.

Article 14 Leadership

CARA describes parish leadership as including the pastor, pastoral staff, parish council, and other key organizations. Leadership involves forming a vision for the parish, planning for the future, and evaluating the success of the parish efforts. The parish organizational structure & related organizations or activities.

A. Strategies to Achieve Goals

1. Pastor and other pastoral leaders will demonstrate a clear commitment to the practice of lifelong growth in Christian faith.
2. Use the seven Corporal Works of Mercy as a model for how we will treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise. (Feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; cloth the naked; shelter the homeless; visit the sick; visit the imprisoned; and bury the dead)

B. Communication Strategies

To overcome spiritual complacency, leaders need to clearly communicate:

- a meaningful vision of a future that people are motivated to bring to life
- what is truly at stake and why it matters
- in a challenging, inspiring way what the fruits will be, why the cost is worth it, and what happens if they don't achieve the goal(s)
- the connection with your vision, mission, and goals
- that they need to step up and make it happen

C. Goal

Leaders will create a climate for members that fosters a deep, strong emotional parish connection and makes them feel valued.

D. Actions

1. Assess and intentionally shape the culture and procedures of the parish
2. After an event evaluate what happened because of that event, tell the story, and connect it to your vision

Article 15 Social Justice

CARA describes social justice including social action as all parish work directed at advancing social concerns in the wider world, nation, and local community. It also includes all charity, advocacy, and action on behalf of justice.

Social justice is linked to the common good, the exercise of authority, and can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of man which entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature and must be recognized by society. It is the Church's role to remind men of good will of these rights. The duty of making oneself a neighbor to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged. (*Catechism*, Part 3, Section 1, Chapter 2, Article 3)

A. Strategies to Achieve Goals

1. Service within the Church should form and strengthen believers for their mission in the world.
2. Demonstrate our commitment to the Gospel by how we spend our time and money as well as the lessons we teach our children through what we do and what we say.
3. Use the seven key principles of Catholic social teaching as a model for developing the parish social justice program.
 - i. Respect the Human Person
 - ii. Promote the Family
 - iii. Protect Property Rights
 - iv. Work for the Common Good
 - v. Observe the Principle of Subsidiarity
 - vi. Respect Work and the Worker
 - vii. Pursue Peace and Care for the Poor

B. Communication Strategies

1. The social teaching of the Church is an essential part of our Catholic faith.
2. It is the laity's responsibility to form their consciences and grow in the virtue of prudence to approach the many and varied issues of the day with the mind of Christ. (Introductory Note 2023, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB, 2015)

C. Goals

1. Parish members to learn more about Catholic social teaching by exploring the links between faith and life, theology and ethics, what we believe and how we act every day.
2. Find opportunities for increased dialogue on the social justice demands of discipleship in our time.
3. To foster Gospel values in our society

D. Actions

1. Communicate Catholic social teaching more fully to parish members.
2. Build on the good work already underway, e.g., Copley Outreach, Giving Tree.
3. Form a group to study the USCCB document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility* and submit a written report of their impressions and recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council.

Article 16 Stewardship

A. Strategies to Achieve Goals:

1. Create an effective program for the parish based upon the following sources:
Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, USCCB
Fruitful Discipleship: Living the Mission of Jesus in the Church and the World
2. Have the Adult Faith Formation Committee lay the foundation for the development of our Stewardship program
3. Have a separate Stewardship Committee of parishioners create and implement the parish Stewardship program
4. Start by listening to the people to learn their needs, interests, and questions.

B. Communication Strategies:

1. It's a simple fact of human nature that people are more willing to give their time and attention to and become engaged in organizations from which they feel they receive something valuable in return. Receiving spiritually, psychologically, and emotionally establishes the motivation for giving of oneself. *(Growing Engaged Church)*
2. Key messages to be repeated:
 - All Catholics are called through Baptism and Confirmation to share responsibility for the mission of the Church and to contribute according to their time, talent, and treasure.
 - We are called to be good stewards of the personal vocations we receive from God.
 - A steward receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes & tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord.
 - Mature disciples make a commitment to be followers of Jesus Christ that is expressed in an entire way of life.
 - Stewardship is an expression of discipleship. Disciples who practice stewardship are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another.
 - The practice of authentic stewardship inevitably leads to evangelization.

C. Goals

1. To help people discover the calling (what God wants you to do with your life) that God has placed within them
2. To help people discover and harness the power of their innate gifts to fulfill God's purpose
3. To help our parish realize its potential by becoming a flourishing and evangelizing community

D. Actions

1. Create a "job description" for a Stewardship Committee
 - a. Hold adult listening sessions to find out their questions, needs, & interests
 - b. Investigate what the Diocese has to offer to help us build the program
 - c. Research what other parishes are doing
2. Build a team of parishioners committed to and responsible for implementing the Stewardship plan
3. Designate a Stewardship program leader and provide needed training

Article 17 Formation

Adult Faith Formation (AFF)

A. AFF Strategies to Achieve Goals:

1. Create an effective program for the parish based upon the following sources:
 The U.S. Bishops' pastoral plan for Adult Faith Formation, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*
 Deepening Faith: Adult Faith Formation in the Parish by Janet Schaeffler
2. Determine programming and priorities by listening to adults. Ask them if their spiritual needs are being met and what they believe is expected of them.
3. Accept adults where they are in their faith, life situations, experiences, and preferred learning styles
4. Orient learning toward adult Christian living by responding to life needs
5. Apply a comprehensive, multi-faceted and coordinated approach
6. Learn to see and take advantage of every opportunity to help adults grow in faith
7. Recruit competent personnel and provide training if needed

B. AFF Communication Strategies:

1. Always start with Why. Communicating What and Where is not enough.
2. Share relevant content and resources from a variety of sources, e.g. websites, books, articles, videos, etc.
3. Key messages to be repeated:
 - Our Vision and Our Mission statements
 - Being a disciple is a total way of life requiring continuing conversion.
 - Adult Faith Formation is a lifelong journey needed by everyone and it is a parish priority
 - Adult Catholics must be mature in faith and well equipped to share the Gospel.
 - Christians are called to be good stewards of their personal vocations

C. AFF Goals:

1. Intentionally fashion as an occasion for adult faith formation every aspect and event in parish life to support the spiritual growth of our parish members
2. Help adults motivate themselves to learn and acquire an attitude of conversion to the Lord

In the lives of disciples, however, something else must come before the practice of stewardship. They need a flash of insight [conversion]—a certain way of seeing—by which they view the world and their relationship to it in a fresh, new light. *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*

3. Promote and support active membership in the parish
4. Call and prepare adults to share the message of Christ

D. AFF Actions:

1. Create a “job description” for an Adult Faith Formation Committee
 - a. Hold adult listening sessions to find out their questions, needs, & interests
 - b. Investigate what the Diocese has to offer to help us build the program
 - c. Lay the foundation for the development of a Stewardship program
2. Build a team of parishioners committed to and responsible for implementing the Adult Faith Formation plan
3. Designate an Adult Faith Formation program leader and provide needed training
4. Encourage everyone to read in its entirety Bishop Malesic's pastoral letter
A Flourishing Apostolic Church
5. Provide a list of group and individual reflection questions to facilitate small group discussions.
6. Offer more retreats, conferences and camps

Religious Education for those younger than 18 years

A. Strategies to Achieve Goals:

1. Create an effective program for the students under age 18 based upon the following source: *Directory For Catechesis*, 2020, USCCB
2. Determine programming and priorities through consultation of pastor, DRE, and volunteer teachers
3. Orient learning toward children grades K-8, applying best practices, multifaceted and coordinated approaches.
4. Continue ongoing recruitment of volunteer teachers
5. Coordinate Diocesan Virtus guidelines for volunteer teachers

B. Communication Strategies:

1. Fulfill Diocesan course of study appropriate to all grade levels
2. Use purchased learning materials and online resources to support learning.
3. Key messages to be repeated:
 - Our Vision and Our Mission statements
 - Young discipleship requires continuing conversion
 - Faith Formation begun at a young age is the start of a lifelong journey
 - Explore future vocations in support of the ongoing mission of the Church

C. Goals:

1. Create a holistic parish-based engagement component
 - a. Prayer partnerships, guest speakers, vocation and PSR fairs
 - b. Coordinate and maintain intergenerational events for PSR families
2. Help students acquire an attitude of conversion to Jesus
3. Promote and support participation of students and families in the life of the parish
4. Call and prepare students to share the message of Jesus in our community.

D. Actions:

1. Designate a parish Director of Religious Education
2. Maintain weekly PSR class schedule
3. Prepare K-4 students to present a parish Christmas concert
4. Prepare students in grades 5 & 6 to conduct a Stations of the Cross service in Lent
5. Organize and promote programs of giving & sharing to the larger parish community
6. Invite high school students in grades 9-12 to join St. Hilary Youth Group

Sacramental Preparation Programs

A. Strategies to Achieve Goals:

1. Create an effective program for the students preparing to receive and celebrate the reception of the sacraments based upon the following sources:
Sacraments and Sacramentals – Signs of God’s grace in our lives, usccb.org
2. Determine programming and priorities through consultation of pastor, DRE, and volunteer teachers of students in grades 2 and 8.
3. Guide sacramental formation of students in grades 2 and 8 to receive First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation by applying best practices, multifaceted and coordinated approaches.
4. Provide catechesis for families requesting baptism of a child.
5. Provide parish workshop outlining the grace of the Anointing of the Sick
6. Provide individual preparation for those seeking marriage.

B. Communication Strategies:

1. Fulfill Diocesan course of study appropriate for sacrament preparations.
2. Use purchased learning materials and online resources to support learning.
3. Key messages to be repeated:
 - Our Vision and Our Mission statements
 - Young discipleship requires continuing conversion
 - Faith formation initiated at a young age is the start of a lifelong journey
 - Explore future vocations in support of the ongoing mission of the Church

C. Goals:

1. Initiate an attitude of conversion to Jesus through the sacraments
2. Promote and support active participation of students and families in the life of the parish post sacramental experience – ongoing formation.
3. Call and prepare students to share the message of Jesus in our community.

D. Actions:

1. Provide for the communal celebration of the sacraments
 - a. First Reconciliation at the parish and first Holy Communion at a parish Mass
 - b. Joint celebration for Confirmation with a neighboring parish
2. Create opportunities for continuing religious education for families & students.
3. Collaborate with neighboring parishes for Confirmation retreats

Article 18 Evangelization

A. Strategies to Achieve Evangelization Goals:

1. To adopt in every activity undertaken a new style of evangelization marked by enthusiasm and vitality (*The Joy of the Gospel*)
2. To be bold and creative in rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in our community (*The Joy of the Gospel*)

B. Evangelization Communication Strategies:

1. We cannot leave things as they presently are. (*The Joy of the Gospel*)
2. We must communicate a sense of urgency because the eternal destinies of many millions of our fellow Catholics are in grave jeopardy.
(*The Urgency of the New Evangelization: Answering the Call*)
3. Key messages to be repeated:
 - a. Evangelization is the #1 priority of the Catholic Church according to our recent popes. It is the very reason for the Church's existence.
 - b. Evangelizing means bringing the Good News into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel.
(*Go and Make Disciples*)
 - c. The call to evangelization is addressed to each Christian. What is necessary is that evangelization becomes part of the baptized Catholic's fundamental identity and everyday way of life. (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*)

C. Evangelization Goals: (*Go and Make Disciples*)

1. ongoing growth and renewed conversion for those who practice & live our faith
2. re-evangelization for those who have accepted our faith in name only
3. reconciliation for those who have stopped practicing their faith

D. Evangelization Actions:

1. Inspire prayers for the conversion of others
2. Communicate, motivate, and educate to help members change from being passive to actively carrying forward the work of the Church.
3. Create an Evangelization Committee to study *Go and Make Disciples* and make recommendations for further parish actions.
4. Help everyone to develop the ability to give testimony to God's action in their lives.

Article 19 Commissions and Committees

The Council may form commissions or committees to assist in fulfilling its purpose and in carrying out its functions.

Commissions are small group structures organized within the Council to help develop pastoral goals and policies in specific areas of need or concern. The Council will provide each commission with a statement of purpose and a job description including which parish committees or organizations will assist each Commission.

Committees are action groups which can be formed to collaborate with Staff in implementing programs or policies. They may be permanent or temporary *ad hoc*. The life span of an ad hoc committee ends when the goal or task given to it by the Council is attained or abandoned.

Article 20 Plan Amendments

When necessary, this Pastoral Plan may be amended. The process for amending it is:

1. A proposed amendment including the justification for it, will be submitted in writing to the PPC Executive Committee for consideration. It will then be placed on the agenda for the next PPC meeting, and a copy distributed with the agenda to all members.
2. The proposed amendment will be discussed at the next PPC meeting and if approved it will be given to the Secretary to amend this plan and send a revised copy to all PPC members. If it is not approved a written explanation will be sent to the person who submitted the proposed amendment.

Appendix A Six-Step Problem Solving Method

Complex challenges for teams, working groups etc., are usually solved more quickly by using a shared, collaborative, and systematic approach to problem solving.

The SIX-STEP PROBLEM SOLVING METHOD provides a focused procedure for the problem solving group.

- It ensures consistency, as everyone understands the approach to be used.
- By using data, it helps eliminate bias and preconceptions, leading to greater objectivity.
- It helps to remove divisions and encourages collaborative working.
- It stops problem solving groups diverging into different problems.
- It also helps problem solving groups reach consensus.
- It eliminates confusion caused if different problem solving techniques are used on the same issue.
- It makes the decision making process easier.
- It provides a justifiable solution.

All six steps are followed in order – as a cycle. Each step must be completed before moving on to the next step. The process is one of continuous improvement. The goal is not to solve but to evolve, adjusting the solution continually as new challenges emerge, through repeating the Six Step Process.

THE SIX STEPS ARE:

1. Define the Problem(s)
2. Determine the Root Cause(s) of the Problem; “Why is this happening?”
3. Develop Possible Alternative Solutions
4. Select the Best Solution(s)
5. Develop Plan(s) and Implement the Solution(s)
6. Monitor Progress, Evaluate the Outcome(s), Make Improvements

In Living as Missionary Disciples, the USCCB tells us that ministry and pastoral planning requires prayer, leadership, foresight, and discipline. “It requires thinking through and doing things in a prayerful way, an orderly and disciplined way, basing choices on facts rather than assumptions, while retaining a degree of flexibility.” (Pg. 23)

Appendix B Root Cause Analysis

Root Cause Analysis

Root cause analysis (RCA) is a process to help people understand the real causes behind a problem and to learn why that problem arose in the first place.

The goal of RCA is to recognize the underlying causes of a problem.

The primary purpose of the RCA process is to analyze a problem or sequence of events to identify what happened, why it happened, and what can be done to prevent it from happening again.

It is an iterative interrogative technique used to explore the cause-and-effect relationship underlying a particular problem.

The real root cause should point toward a process that is not working well or does not exist.

How to Perform a Root Cause Analysis in 5 Steps

To go through the RCA process, you must be familiar with the following five steps:

1. Define the problem(s). Analyze what you see happening and identify the precise symptoms so that you can form a problem statement.
2. Gather data. Before you can move on to identifying the underlying problems, you must collect and evaluate all aspects of the situation. (Performing a case study, incident investigation, or accident analysis are a few common ways to accomplish this step.)
3. With your data in hand, seek to identify as many causal factors as possible that could have led to your problem.
4. Determine the root cause(s). Using an analysis method is a useful tool to accomplish this task. The 5 WHYS analysis aims to inspect a certain problem in depth until it shows you the real cause. It is a problem-solving strategy that consists of asking “Why did this problem happen?” and then following up the answer with a series of additional “But why?” questions until you get to the root cause of the problem. The answers should be based on facts and real data, rather than on emotional opinions.
5. Recommend and implement solutions.
Once you know the root cause, you can recommend remedial action(s) to address the problem and then develop a timeline and plan for implementing your solution.

Appendix C Communication Guiding Principles

From *Why They Follow: Lessons in Church Communication*, by Matthew Warner

Leaders need to communicate a meaningful vision of a future that people are motivated to bring to life. Create a culture of communicating the big vision because it creates a unity of purpose across the parish. You must patiently and creatively find new ways of weaving pieces of it into everything you do. Make a habit of connecting everything you do to how it fits into the bigger vision.

To overcome spiritual complacency, communicate what is truly at stake. Saying nothing sends the wrong message. A church's lack of communication may actually do harm. A key reason so many people continue to disengage is they feel like it doesn't much matter. When people know something they care about is at stake, they get motivated and engaged. Find something that brings your mission to life in a challenging, inspiring way. Clearly communicate what the fruits will be, why the cost is worth it, and what happens if they don't achieve it. Timing matters.

Much of our work of communicating is in cultivating soil which involves understanding the condition of the soil, e.g. poor formation, people hurt by scandal. Reason rarely moves people to action and sacrifice, emotion does.

Fundamental communication and leadership issues need to be addressed before focusing on the tools of communication. We must earn the right to be heard. Whatever is at stake must be something people care enough about. If they don't, we must either begin with something they do care about or convince them to care.

Start with a small group of people who are truly fired up about what you are doing and find out what they think. Give people something worth sharing and talking about then grow by referral. Stories are powerful.

People need to hear anything that is important over and over without being annoying. It must be something they care about communicated in a clear, direct, convincing way. Find ways to creatively repeat the message in different ways. People should know about it, how important it is to you, and how much you would like to see them there.

People hear what they need. Start with something the person is looking for rather than what you want them to know. Start with where your goals and mission intersect with their self-perceived needs.

Appeal to their hearts and their minds. Present the ordinary as fresh and new. Learn to say different things to different people. Different channels of communication work better with different groups. Texts and email are the most effective communication channels today. The length of your message could be the key factor as to whether somebody reads it. The lead should tell the reader what it means and why it matters so it gets their attention.

Become a student of your people. Ask the people with a short pew or email survey or a poll to better understand the needs of our people, their struggles, and what questions they have so we can better serve them.

Set tangible, motivating goals that clearly communicate what we are trying to achieve and what is at stake. Create a solid strategy and plan to achieve a goal. Who are you trying to reach. What would you like to help this person do? How do you want them to be different? What kinds of activities will help you achieve your objective? What kind of communication channels will help you? Identify and focus most on the metrics that truly measure progress.

When making an invitation start with why it's important. Lead with something they are already looking for, struggling with, or thinking about. A great invitation anticipates barriers and proactively removes them if possible.

Leaders need to connect the dots to the big goal. The community should have a real sense of ownership and affection for their church. They must buy into the vision and your plan. Be clear and honest about the problem you want to solve and what is at stake. Get to the heart of the matter and connect it to your bigger vision and mission.

Good planning gives people confidence in leadership. Make it clear that they need to step up and make it happen.

After an event communicate what happened because of that event, tell the story, and connect it to your vision.

Be patient and don't move too fast. Small gains compounding over time have the biggest impact in the end.

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