



## **OUR FAITH, OUR FUTURE**

**A PLAN FOR THE DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS**

### **VISION FOR VITAL PARISHES**

The idea of “vision” is to illustrate a picture of who we are called to be as church and how we can best carry out the mission that has been entrusted to us. The vision needs to be clear and inspired by God.

The vision document provided here is in the process of being developed. It is an initial draft. Input from many people in the three deaneries (Big Rapids, Grand Haven, Northwest Lakeshore) has led to the current version. The vision reflects the input from these deaneries only, and does not incorporate input from other parishes and Catholic leaders from other areas of the diocese. As planning unfolds, the vision will continue to be refined and sharpened as needed to reflect both local conditions as well as a diocesan perspective.

Elements of a vital parish have emerged through the course of the planning process. These elements are necessary for the building of parish communities that are faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, vibrant in worship and united in purpose. In being true to the Word of God and consistent with the teachings of the Church, the following elements are necessary and desired.

#### **WORSHIP AND THE SACRAMENTS**

- a. Liturgical celebrations are meaningful, carefully planned and well-attended with enthusiastic participation.
- b. Homilies are thought-provoking and challenging. The Word of God is taught with real life relevance.
- c. The Mass and sacraments are available to the parish community with a priest as celebrant.
- d. Sacramental preparation is provided and done well.
- e. The prayer life of parishioners extends beyond the liturgy and the sacraments.
- f. Parishioners are challenged to grow and live as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- g. Music is of high quality.
- h. Worship space is attractive and appropriate.

#### **EVANGELIZATION**

- i. The parish actively reaches out to inactive/non-participating Catholics, non-Catholics and the unchurched.
- j. The parish has an RCIA program.
- k. There is an awareness of a larger world and diocesan mission beyond the immediate parish community.



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- l. The parish creates and lives an environment that is open and welcoming.
- m. The needs of minority and special needs groups are addressed.
- n. The parish collaborates with other local church communities and civic agencies to serve the wider community.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MISSION**

- o. The parish has a clear sense of its mission. The mission of the parish is to be Christ-centered.
- p. Lay leaders are empowered and guided to roles of service that further the mission and vitality of the parish. Laity receive appropriate education and training to be effective.
- q. A priest is available to serve the pastoral needs of the community and lead the sacramental life of the parish.

#### **FAITH FORMATION AND CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

- r. Adult educational programs are provided including opportunities for scripture study and prayer.
- s. The parish enrolls all the children in religious education classes or Catholic schools. These can be offered in collaboration with adjoining parishes.
- t. The parish has ministries that reach the youth of the community. This can be provided within the parish or as a collaborative program with other churches or parishes.
- u. Parents are engaged with the parish and active in the faith development process of their children.
- v. Catholic schools provide a quality Catholic education that is available, accessible and affordable.
- w. Vocations to priesthood and religious life are actively and prayerfully promoted.

#### **PARISH COMMUNITY**

- x. The number of active parishioners is sufficient in size to sustain a complete range of programs serving the needs of parishioners at all ages. Some needs may be addressed in collaboration with other parishes or churches in the community.
- y. Various commissions and groups actively engage and involve the faithful in the life of their parish.
- z. The parish is a welcoming place to belong. Opportunities for fellowship provide a feeling of community for parishioners.

#### **SERVING OTHERS**

- aa. The parish has a vision for outreach to the needs of the wider community and the world, and is engaged through active ministries. The Gospel is lived through these ministries.



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#### **STEWARDSHIP**

- bb. Parishioners understand and live stewardship of time, talent and treasure.
- cc. The parish operates with a balanced budget and has sufficient funding for a full ministry program, facilities and needed staff to meet the needs of the community.
- dd. Operating offertory income keeps pace with increases in operating costs.
- ee. The parish is staffed appropriately or shares staff to provide and lead parish ministries.
- ff. Parish facilities are well-maintained and adequate for parish ministries and programs.
- gg. The cost of facilities is in balance with other expenses and is a reasonable share of the operating budget.
- hh. Financial reporting is done in a timely manner and follows the accounting standards established by the diocese.

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