



Parish of Saint Monica

Atlantic City, NJ



Pastoral Plan

July 2016 - June 2021

This pastoral plan explains what we hope to accomplish in the next five years. The plan is arranged by types of pastoral activity. Most are found in every parish; others, like "Visitor Services," are less common. Under each type of pastoral activity, we list clear ways by which we intend to further it.

Sunday Mass

The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life" (*Lumen gentium*, no. 11). Therefore, the first and greatest element of the pastoral plan is the preparation and celebration of Sunday Mass. Sunday Masses will be celebrated in a welcoming atmosphere with good music and good preaching.

1. At Mass time, our churches will have a welcoming atmosphere which makes visitors feel they are entering a home to which they already belong in some degree (due to the universality of the Catholic Church).
 - a. A welcome desk will be built in each church and staffed by a new ministry.
 - b. The ushers will select new members of the assembly to present the gifts at the offertory.
 - c. Parishioners and even visitors will be encouraged to ask for special blessings at Mass, including significant birthdays and wedding anniversaries.
2. Our Masses will have good music which encourages participation.
 - a. Good music has the potential to encourage the assembly to participate more actively but too much music will turn some people away. Therefore, a balance will be achieved, keeping in mind the people at each Mass.
 - b. Cantors will be chosen who understand their role to lead the assembly in song.
3. Our Masses will have good preaching which delivers a clear message to the assembly.
 - a. The pastoral staff will take turns providing questions for reflection, prompted by the Sunday readings, for the bulletin.
4. A Liturgy Committee will be created to enhance liturgical life by bringing together representatives from each liturgical ministry.

Christian Formation

The parish clergy will promote a plan for a renewed Catholic lifestyle among parishioners with four simple points:

1. *Fully conscious and active participation in Sunday Mass* - a booklet about the Mass will be made available to parishioners. Clergy will also make mention of the practice of daily Mass.
2. *Daily prayer* - advice for better prayer will be regularly offered to parishioners through multiple channels
3. *Regular Bible reading* - Bibles will be made available to parishioners
4. *Regular confession* - catechesis on the sacrament of reconciliation will be offered to parishioners through multiple channels

Ministries and Prayer Groups

Ministries and prayer groups are the best vehicle for parishioners to join the parish's mission. Through them, parishioners can reach many more people than the parish clergy and pastoral staff can alone.

Ministries are usually service-driven; *prayer groups* exist primarily for the spiritual growth of their members.

1. The parish invests more resources in Our Lady Star of the Sea School than in any other ministry. Therefore, a dedicated section in the bulletin and regular altar announcements will insure that the school is connected to the parish. The parish clergy will be present in the classroom and at important school functions. The clergy will participate in planning and celebrating school liturgies.
2. The ministries in the citywide parish will be reviewed with the intention to fill needs with new ministries if necessary.
3. An annual signup drive for ministries will be organized, perhaps on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord which because of its early January date may take advantage of parishioners' desire to do new things in the new year.
4. A new parishioner packet will be created to encourage participation in a ministry or prayer group by including a comprehensive list with one-line descriptions.
5. A Service Committee will be created to organize the parish's service to the poor by bringing together representatives from each service ministry.
6. We will attempt a significant increase in membership in the Knights of Columbus and the Knights of St. John because these organizations can provide significant support to general parish operations and a variety of other ministries.
7. A Youth Council will be created to provide a voice for the parish's youth. It will assist the pastoral staff in reaching youth, especially in promoting vocational discernment.

Evangelization

"A pastor is obliged to make provision so that the word of God is proclaimed in its entirety to those living in the parish.... He is to make every effort, even with the collaboration of the Christian faithful, so that the message of the gospel comes also to those who have ceased the practice of their religion or do not profess the true faith" (can. 528 §1). Therefore, we will invite non-practicing Catholics and city residents with no religious affiliation to join the parish.

1. The pastor will walk through every neighborhood of the city with the other parish clergy and parishioners.
2. A welcome desk will be built in each church and staffed by a new ministry.
3. The number of registered households will be published in the bulletin weekly to emphasize the importance of this number in addition to the collection totals.
4. Evangelization training will be offered for parishioners through the bulletin, the Web site, and, in collaboration with the San Andres School, seminars and retreats.
5. Evangelization kits including parish brochures, business cards, etc. will be offered to parishioners.
6. An introductory class, or perhaps course, for non-Catholics who wish to test their interest in the Catholic faith will be offered throughout the year. It will be a "feeder program" for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.

Diversity

Atlantic City is a racially diverse city, with no single race having a majority. This diversity also exists in the parish. The former parishes of Holy Spirit, St. Michael's, and St. Monica's were centers of ministry to Hispanic, Italian, and black Catholics, respectively. A vibrant Vietnamese ministry also formed in the former parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea. The citywide parish has the responsibility of continuing these cultural ministries.

1. Pastoral plans for ministry to African Americans, Hispanics, and Vietnamese will supplement this parish-wide pastoral plan.
2. Leadership teams for these cultural ministries will work with clergy to follow their pastoral plans and make occasional reports to the Pastoral Council.
3. Liturgical diversity also exists in the parish with the offering of the Traditional Latin Mass.

Visitor Services

Atlantic City receives over 27 million visitors a year, many of whom are Catholics. Realizing both their need for the sacraments and the support they can offer the parish, we will offer specific services for visitors.

1. Mass schedules will be placed at all concierge desks in the city.
2. Confessions will be heard daily.
3. We will offer a takeaway that keeps visitors connected to the parish after they return home.
4. The St. Nicholas Shoppe will be redesigned with all new prices. The shop will be advertised online and in newspapers.
5. The "AC Catholic Experience" will be created, including an exhibit on the Catholic history of Atlantic City and church tours and organ recitals scheduled at convenient times for visitors.

Civic Engagement

The Parish of Saint Monica is the citywide Catholic parish of Atlantic City. The parish therefore has the responsibility of demonstrating the Catholic Church's social concern in a city with an importance much larger than its population. Since the city's Catholic churches have a history of civic engagement, there is already an expectation of it from the community.

1. A petition for Atlantic City will be included in the universal prayer at Sunday Mass.
2. The parish clergy will be present at important civic events and offer prayer when requested.
3. The parish churches will be made available to host ecumenical and interreligious prayer services.
4. An annual Community Day will organize parishioners to serve the city.

Communications and Development

Parishioners expect strong communication from their parish. Communication with and development of supportive visitors is also an opportunity for significant financial support.

- The parish bulletin will be completely redesigned. A more attractive format will provide a snapshot of the parish's community service at a point in time. Therefore, the bulletin will not only be informational; it will also be part of the parish's development efforts.
- A modern and extremely helpful Web site will be created.
- The parish will regularly communicate with parishioners and other supporters through e-mail.
- A development strategy will be implemented to take further advantage of generous visitors and other outside supporters of the parish.

Approved by the Pastoral Council on June 6, 2016