

PARISH CODE 016

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

COMMITMENT TO MINISTRY
PARISH REPORT

MAY, JUNE 1990

I AFFIRM THE COMMON CALL OF OUR BAPTISM

We all have been molded by our Catholic education and background. There are many ways in which we as a parish attempt to promote the awareness of the common call of our baptism. Liturgies and homilies at liturgies provide guidelines for our daily living. Ministers for these liturgies are called forth and trained for their particular roles in the liturgy. Parish Missions provide an opportunity for deeper penetration into our common baptismal call. Other opportunities provided in our parish are weekly Bible Study, the Family Religious Education Program and the Sacramental Preparation Programs. We hope to continue to pursue the development of Christian Formation programs in the parish. We bring the Word of God to people through the Eucharist, through direct communication with parishioners on a faith level and through acting in a responsible Christian manner.

II Reflect on our Character as a Faith Community

A variety of information/statistics about our community are reviewed periodically. The major sources of information are our computerized parish information program and the diocesan annual report. The models of the Church most prevalent among our parishioners are that of institution and community.

There is a lively sense of prayer and community present in our parish. The prayer style tends to be individual/traditional as contrasted to communal/contemporary. There is a sense of caring for one another especially in time of need and of hospitality toward visitors at weekend liturgies. There is a desire to be together socially. There is a variety of activities which exhibit the parish's sense of the apostolate. They include participation in the monthly SWEM collection of food and money for the poor, participation in the Giving Tree Project at Christmas, attendance at Soup Suppers and other formal and informal ways of outreach to others.

III MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN VIABLE FAITH COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE DIOCESE

We identify the following as characteristics of a viable faith community: fidelity to the tradition of the Catholic Church, an appreciation of the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, financial responsibility for the operation of the parish, strong pastoral leadership, sense of outreach to those within and outside of our community, a willingness to share facilities with other community groups and provision for the Catholic education of its young people.

We consider the above as important viability characteristics because they have been of the essence of our parish community since its founding over sixty years ago. We assess our effectiveness in these areas through diocesan reports submitted yearly, through census summary reports, through known outreach to others, through response to parish activities, through Mass attendance records and through financial reports.

We consider the following as the strengths of our parish:

1. A pastoral staff devoted to spreading the Word of God and caring for the parishioners
2. Excellent neighborhood location accessible to travelers as it is near the airport - Rochester's Friendly Airport Parish
3. Excellent liturgies (including homilies) and personal contact with the staff after the Masses
4. Financial support by parishioners
5. Ability of parishioners to take responsibility regarding liturgical ministries, maintenance of the buildings and grounds, finances, etc.
6. Great number of lifetime members who still contribute greatly to parish activities
7. Generosity and caring in neighborhood (ex. SWEM appeals) as well as in parish
8. Social activities for youth (Boy Scouts), families and senior citizens
9. Friendly and caring, hard-working, family-oriented people who reach out to all both in the parish and in the community

Our main hopes are:

1. That there will be more vocations for service in the church
2. That there will be increased involvement of parish members in all areas of parish life
3. That there will be a strengthening of peoples' faith.
4. That young people will be drawn back to church and become involved in the life of the Church
5. That our church will always remain as a parish church

Although a parish mission statement has not been formulated as yet, our parishioners, through their lived experience of the faith, reflect our mission as a parish.

III (continued)

To be a servant church is in the tradition of OLG C Parish. For years the parishioners have taken responsibility for the financial support of the church and for the upkeep of the buildings and grounds. They have responded to appeals for help of any kind. For example, on the third weekend of the month the parishioners donate food and money to the South West Ecumenical Ministries Food Cupboard. They have responded generously to Christmas Giving Tree appeals, to Right to Life projects. A small number of parishioners work at St. Peter's Kitchen regularly and some parishioners are currently involved in an Amerasian Resettlement Project.

Since over 22% of the parish are age 70 or over, the need for outreach to the elderly in their homes and in homes for adults and nursing homes increases. Much outreach takes place formally and informally to these people. Members of the staff and Eucharistic ministers to the homebound visit these people regularly to provide especially for their spiritual needs. Family members and neighbors provide for many of the needs of these aging parishioners.

Our connecting with other Catholic communities has been twofold - that related to Catholic education and that related in other ways. For the past five years there has been ongoing dialogue with St. Anthony, Holy Family, Holy Apostles, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Augustine Parishes regarding the reorganization of the schools. Plans are progressing for a shared Summer Religious Education Program with St. Helen Parish. One meeting was held to initiate dialogue with the Parish Reflection Teams of nearby parishes. A recent Parish Mission had as its speakers the pastors of five neighboring parishes.

The churches of southwest Rochester work with the other Christian churches in this area on events such as Advent choral presentations and Good Friday Stations of the Cross. The pastoral leaders of these SWEM churches meet monthly to share needs, concerns, events. It is a fact, however, that some parishioners are reluctant to cooperate with other denominations.

IV. Acknowledge the Declining Number of Priests in our Diocese

As a whole the parishioners are aware of the need for alternate staffing options but are not ready for these changes. The readiness will come when the need arises. A good number of parishioners indicated that having a deacon appointed to the parish would help considerably as the need for ordained clergy becomes more acute. Many also indicated that the hiring of a business manager would help free the ordained for their pastoral duties.

At this time we expect our priest to provide overall pastoral care, to oversee maintenance and finances, to supervise personnel, to assure ongoing religious formation for all ages, to celebrate all the Sacraments with the parish community.

Our parish community is promoting vocations to the ordained priesthood and other Church ministries by an inclusion of this intention in the general intercessions at Mass, by welcoming speakers on this topic, and by supporting the Diocesan Call to Priesthood and Call to Ministry Days and the Diocesan Leadership and Ministry Days.

Yes, we are willing to pay a just wage to those "others" whom we employ.

For many parishioners the layperson's concept of call to ministry is limited. It is a fact, however, that those ministries shared by the laity have been accepted for the most part due to clear explanations given at the time of initiation. There are a few who would like to see the diaconate shared by women.

V. EDUCATE PERSONS FOR CHANGE

Fear, especially among the older people, seems to be the prominent emotion regarding change. There is the fear of a shortage of priests and seminarians. There is a fear that people will opt not to become involved in the parish. Losing a grip on our religion is feared by some as well as a loss of our identity as Catholics through amalgamation with other religions. Loss of young adults is a concern. Finally, closing of our parish church and the loss of our parish identity is feared.

We attempt to ease these fears and strengthen our hopes through open discussion of the possibility of change. Parishioners are informed of such changes through the parish bulletin, the Parish Council and the Parish Reflection Team.

Change has taken place in our parish. In the area of Christian Formation change has occurred through the reorganization of the Catholic School System and the initiation of the Family Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation Programs.

As stated in the response to # IV., we do not think that the parishioners are ready for change. They seem to accept what has already been initiated (such as hiring of a pastoral assistant four years ago, change of weekend Mass schedule, Eucharistic ministry to the homebound, Communion under both forms). Education ahead of time for these changes is necessary. Hopefully, a natural evolution of change will occur.

VI STRENGTHEN LOCAL LEADERSHIP

We provide training for lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharistic Ministers to the Homebound, altar servers, folk group/choir, parish office volunteers and religious education teachers. Once trained, we provide support in a variety of ways. For example, we supply materials such as workbooks for lectors, yearly afternoons of reflection for lectors and Eucharistic ministers and an appreciation luncheon for office volunteers.

We seek new leaders through use of our parish census. Registration cards provide an opportunity for parishioners to indicate areas of volunteer interest. Bulletin articles and personal contact also further this interest.

In the future, we look to expand training programs for liturgical ministries and other leadership roles in the parish and to promote and expand support for these groups.

Over the past few years, we have expanded the number and areas of ministry including Eucharistic ministers to the homebound and office volunteers. Lay leadership has been strengthened in that parishioners have taken greater ownership of ministry in the parish.

VII ENABLE LOCAL LEADERS TO BE CO-RESPONSIBLE FOR SHAPING THEIR FUTURES

We have explored affinities with the following parishes: St. Monica, St. Augustine, Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Helen, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Francis of Assisi, Holy Family and Holy Apostles. Most of the discussions have centered on Catholic School Education and other areas of Christian Formation including RCIA, Summer Vacation Bible School and Religious Education for children. As part of the Commitment to Ministry Process, the Parish Reflection Team has met with team members of St. Monica's, St. Augustine's, Sts. Peter and Paul's, Holy Family and St. Helen's Parishes. We see St. Monica Parish and St. Augustine Parish as the ones with the greatest possibilities for sharing a weekend Mass schedule.

We already share programs, resources and services with most of the above named parishes, especially in the area of Christian formation. We share with four other parishes support and maintenance of Holy Family School. Our Religious Education Program this summer will be held in conjunction with St. Helen Parish.

As far as sharing physical facilities, our school building is currently under consideration for use as a quadrant junior high school in 1991. Our school and church halls are used for diocesan and regional meetings. Our gym is also used for CYO basketball. Presently the school building is rented out to the Rochester Junior Academy and Birthright and additional space will be rented out in the near future.

In the future we foresee continued sharing of parish staff. For example, our recent parish mission was conducted by the pastors from some of the neighboring parishes. Our parish priests have been able to offer assistance to neighboring parishes for a variety of ministerial needs. The parish provides a priest to be on call at Highland Hospital on the first and fifth Fridays of each month. A parish priest takes his turn to celebrate Mass at Mariner House (VOA).

Our enhanced computerized bookkeeping service will be available to provide bookkeeping and payroll services for Holy Family School. Parish staff regularly meet with staff members of other parishes to discuss cooperative programs.

We project the greatest possibility in sharing a pastor with St. Monica and St. Augustine Parishes. These, like ourselves, are city parishes sharing similar problems, including aging and declining congregations.

VIII ARTICULATE OUR NEEDS

Our long-range goals to work on over the next three to five years are:

1. to involve a greater number of parishioners, especially young families, in the life of the parish
2. to educate and prepare both laity and clergy for the inevitable changes in parish structure and personnel
3. to assure adequate finances for parish's ministries

Parish Council will review these goals yearly. This review will look at steps taken to achieve these goals and their success or failure.

Our short-range objectives to accomplish in the next year or two are:

1. to coordinate youth leadership with other parishes by January 1992
2. to make active all standing committees of the Parish Council by January 1992
3. to identify the specific needs of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parishioners by June 30, 1991

Parish Council will review objectives at several intervals during time allotted for completion to determine whether or not these short-range objectives are being met.

We have the following needs, but, for various reasons, we feel we cannot address them at this time:

1. to recognize the parish as a bridge between the inner city and the suburbs and set up programs to close the gap
2. to open Catholicism to the unchurched Afro-American community
3. to promote the diaconate program within our parish
4. to establish guidelines for maintaining and operating parish physical facilities and property

We can project that within five years we may have the following needs:

1. expanded ministry to the elderly and infirm
2. more critical financial needs based on the declining number of parishioners
3. as the parish population ages and/or declines there will be an ever increasing need for new volunteers

If we could expand our parish staff by one person we envision that person's responsibilities to be to administer the parish, its finances, buildings, grounds and personnel in order to free our present ministerial staff for the spiritual needs of the parish.

IX SUMMARY

Many differences have taken place in our faith community as a result of the Commitment to Ministry Process. Some of them are:

1. a greater awareness of future needs for the parish
2. a greater awareness of the possibilities for collaboration/consolidation
3. the surfacing of leadership as evidenced in the Parish Reflection Team
4. the development of leadership skills by the Parish Reflection Team
5. the opportunity to reflect on our parish as a faith community

One positive movement which grew out of the Commitment to Ministry Process was the recent Parish Mission. The speakers, a different one each day, were the pastors of five neighboring parishes.

We, the Parish Reflection Team, agree that we have gained a heightened awareness of the parishioners' perspective on their parish life and on the concept of Church. We have created an increased awareness of the present problems and future needs of the parish. The major accomplishment was the completion of this report!

It is hoped that this report will be used constructively and effectively in helping our parish maintain itself as a viable faith community. The challenge will be for the people to accept change and to become more actively involved in these changes as they occur.

We have discovered common needs in our association with the Parish Reflection Teams of other parishes. We hope to continue to collaborate with other parishes in the future to fulfill these common needs.

As further steps in satisfying these common needs we hope to continue to discover areas in which collaboration/consolidation can take place. We hope to continue to be in communication with other parishes, to educate our parishioners for change in a consistent way and to enable the potential lay ministry in our parish. It is hoped that these further steps will be taken through Parish Council initiatives. The challenge will be to set aside parochialism and to work toward communal cooperation.

As a team we have learned patience, tolerance and understanding of opposing viewpoints. We have become aware of the parishioners' feelings, esp. fear, and have tried to be compassionate toward these feelings. We have become more aware of our own abilities and gifts. We have become aware of the reality of the shortage of priests and of the necessity of shared responsibility.

We have come more in touch with our own story through the Commitment to Ministry Workshops and through personal reflection. We have come more in touch with others' story through the Commitment to Ministry sessions and the meeting with other Parish Reflection Teams. In the parish we have come more in touch with others' story through personal conversations and through the two sessions and the two questionnaires which we sponsored.

PERSONS COMPLETING FORM:

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Pete Tedquiel PRT
Martin E. Giel PRT
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DATE: May 29, 19 90