

# Profile and Possibilities

## **West Allis East Parishes**

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Profile and Possibilities  
Toward a Strategic Plan**

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# INTRODUCTION

In the Gospel of Matthew 28:19, Jesus entrusts his followers with a mission:

*“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”*

This mission guides the pastoral activity of every parish. The mission is people-centered. The challenge for each parish is to determine how to effectively reach out and serve the people in its geographical area. Pastoral planning assists a parish by assessing its ministerial activity and then strategizing ways to enliven that activity and carry out the mission more effectively.

The early Christian communities used Greek words to describe the four areas of the mission of the Church: *leitourgia* (sanctify), *kerygma* (teach), *diakonia* (serve), and *koinonia* (build community). The Acts of the Apostles describes this mission in 2:42-45:

*“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need.”*

If pastoral planning is a challenge for a single parish, it is an even greater one for four parishes to collaborate on the process. While the mission of all four parishes is the same, their histories and traditions are quite distinct from one another. The effectiveness of the plan will rely on the willingness of parishioners to embrace new mission initiatives and to view their parishes as the Apostle Paul did: all Christian communities are inherently connected with one another in the person of Jesus Christ.

The strengths of these West Allis area parishes along with the needs for the future were identified through interviews, written responses, and meetings conducted in March through May of 2016. Parish leaders from a wide spectrum of the parish communities had an opportunity to talk about their vision for the future, needs in the community, priorities, and possible future directions for the parishes. All parish staff members had opportunities to provide observations. This report brings together key data and the input of many. From this document, possibilities will be prioritized and then formulated into a cohesive future plan for the parishes.

Demographic and census data about the territory surrounding the parishes was also collected. Fifteen years of annual parish reports to the Archdiocese were studied to identify trends and to provide some objective measurements for performance. These have been integrated into the “observations” in each area of ministry.

The report is divided into three sections. The first section views the vision and organization for mission. The second section is the largest and is devoted to the parishes’ ministries. The final section focuses on the administrative areas of the parishes.

Additional consultation with parish leaders and parishioners in two “envisioning our future” events will help guide the drafting of a strategic plan. This plan will shape the parishes’ future for the next decade.

# I. PARISH VISION AND ORGANIZATION FOR MISSION

## A. Toward a Vision Statement – *parishes often develop a brief statement or phrase which captures where they want to be in the future*

### OBSERVATIONS

1. The parishes already collaborate in many ways, such as sacramental celebrations, faith formation, and some pastoral staff positions.
2. The parish is comprised of a population of parishioners from primarily European descent with about 4% of other cultural groups (Parish Summary Report). The largest other cultural population is Hispanic with 116 members. There are 6418 Hispanics who live in this eastern part of West Allis (MissionInsite, 2016). Nationally, 60% of Hispanics self-identify as Catholics.
3. The average household income projection for the study area (boundaries: north – I-94; south – Cleveland Avenue; east – Miller Parkway; west – 92<sup>nd</sup> Street) in 2015 is \$49,704. The average income is projected to increase in 2020 to \$52,652 (MissionInsite, 2016).
4. The population is projected to increase from 45,438 residents in 2015 to 45,902 in 2025 or 1% (MissionInsite, 2015). With all the planned development in the downtown West Allis area, there is some expectation that population growth may be greater than projected. About 21% of people in Milwaukee County are Catholic (Glenmary Research Center, 2014).
5. There are some projected changes in the age distribution of the study area population which can impact the parish by 2020 (MissionInsite, 2016).
  - 0-4 year age group projected for a small decrease
  - 5-17 year age group projected to increase by 8%
  - 18-24 years projected for a small decrease
  - 25-34 years projected to decrease by -29%
  - 35-54 years projected to increase by 4%
  - 55-64 years projected to increase slightly
  - 65+ years projected to increase by 20%
6. In the past five years, the number of parish households has decreased by a net 985 households or 35%. The parish population has decreased by 2,695 members or 44% (Parish Summary Report).
7. The national average household size is 2.55. The parish's household average size is 2.11, which is below average, meaning fewer children living at home or a greater number of single person households (Parish Summary Report).
8. There was 1 baptism (29) to 2.5 funerals (72) at the four parishes. The recommended metric for "natural" growth within a parish is 2 baptisms for each funeral (Parish Summary Report).
9. People who have no religious affiliation are referred to as "unclaimed" by the Glenmary Research Center. 49.5% of the total population of Milwaukee County is "unclaimed" (Glenmary Research Center, 2014). This reality suggests there is significant opportunity for evangelization efforts.
10. The parish leadership seeks to develop a pastoral plan and enters the process with many different thoughts for its proposed outcome.

11. The four parishes have been designated as a multi-parish community in the Archdiocesan 2020 plan.

## **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. The four parishes have collaborated on a Catholic School and a shared faith formation program.
2. The parishes are moving toward a shared human concerns commission.

## **NEEDS**

1. Invite parishioners to become active disciples of Jesus Christ and more involved in the mission of the Church.
2. Become more adult-focused without losing emphasis on children and youth.
3. Place an emphasis on evangelization to enliven more members of the parish and to reach out to the alienated and unclaimed.
4. Develop a common identity for the four parishes which are working together that retains the unique gifts and heritage of each individual parish by establishing a specialized ministry at each site:
  - Holy Assumption – could serve as the site for pastoral care and outreach in the West Allis area. With its downtown location and history of serving the poor and those in need, their location is ideal.
  - St. Augustine – could serve as the center for celebrating the rich cultural and ethnic heritage of the Catholic community in West Allis’s past, present and future. Opportunities for celebrating national feasts and feast days in conjunction with sharing food can help to build community between the diverse populations.
  - St. Florian – could serve as a center for discipleship and spirituality by drawing upon the traditions of the various religious orders of women and men from the surrounding area. Opportunities for parishioners to experience days of reflection, retreats, small faith sharing group, and Bible study are unlimited.
  - St. Rita – could serve as the site for Hispanic ministry and a Mass in Spanish. There is potential with this initiative alone to double parish membership and significantly increase sacramental activity.

## **B. Pastoral Staff** – *hired by the pastor to direct specific areas of ministry in the parish*

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The priests from all the parishes in West Allis meet on a regular basis.
2. Staffs from all the parishes would benefit from meeting on a regular basis.
3. Even though the parishes share some staff, there is not a clear organizational chart in regard to the supervision of and consultation with staff.
4. An increasing number of parishes in the Archdiocese are adding a staff member for the stewardship/community building area of mission.
5. There is a deacon candidate in formation who will be shared by St. Augustine and St. John the Evangelist Parish in Greenfield.

### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. Staff serve in many different roles because of the needs of the community and the size of programs.
2. Volunteers bring many gifts and talents to the parishes and play a critical role in the support of parish ministries.

### **NEEDS**

1. Hire one DAS (Director of Administrative Services) who will manage the finances and facilities of all four parishes.
2. Consider ways to combine staff positions to free up funding for new staff positions so that they can guide and develop ministry initiatives in the plan.
3. Establish a common staff meeting schedule and meet regularly.
4. Determine a common performance review process and conduct regular individual meetings with each staff member as well as an annual review.
5. Explore ways to develop staff professionally and spiritually through continuing ministerial formation.

## **C. Lay Leadership, Councils and Committees** – *the consultative bodies and committees which volunteer parishioners lead and serve*

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The parish has adopted the new norms for finance and pastoral councils.
2. Most parishes have functioning commissions and committees.
3. Many parish leaders are involved in multiple groups and ministries within the parish. Many are finding it more and more difficult to maintain their level of activity but worry about who will replace them.
4. Lay leadership is essential to maintain the integrity of the parish vision, goals and objectives related to the pastoral plan.
5. Formation of lay leaders is critical so that existing and new leadership have a common understanding of faith, Church, and ministry.
6. The past five Popes and Vatican Council II have emphasized the important role of the laity: “The laity accomplish the Church’s mission in the world principally by blending of conduct and faith which makes them the light of the world (*Lumen Gentium*).”

### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. Councils and commissions are dedicated to carry out the mission of the Church as they understand it, to manage parish finances, and to maintain parish facilities.
2. There is wonderful talent and rich faith among the lay leadership.

### **NEEDS**

1. Combine pastoral councils and commissions to serve all four parishes. Parish finance councils remain separate but meet on the same night at the same place.
2. Establish an evangelization committee as part of the formation area of mission to develop ways for the parishes to reach out to the interested, inactive, alienated, and unaffiliated.
3. Develop a strategy for identifying and training new leaders for various roles within the community.
4. Consider holding a common commission/committee night so that all the groups can pray together, share information, and conduct their individual meetings.
5. Consider an annual calendaring night so that all activities of the parishes can be calendared and properly communicated to the parishioners.

## II. PARISH MINISTRIES – “FOSTERING PASTORAL ACTIVITY”

### A. Prayer and Worship – *the group which prepares liturgies for sacramental celebrations and other prayer experiences*

#### OBSERVATIONS

1. Average Sunday Mass attendance in 2015 was 1,236 people or 23% of the 5,278 parishioners. The average Mass attendance in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for 2015 was 30%. On a national level, about 30% of registered parishioners attend Mass on a weekly basis (CARA, 2010). Close to one-third of that number are “occasionals,” parishioners who attend Mass at least monthly.
2. In general, Mass attendance has been in decline at the parish since an average high of 2,446 parishioners (37.4% of 6,527 members) in 2006. The number of people attending Mass at the parishes has declined by nearly 50% in ten years.
3. The reported total church seating capacity for all Masses at the four parishes is 6,200 persons. Based on the 2015 Mass attendance, the parishes use only 20% of their capacity. Average attendance at all Masses is below 50%. Archdiocesan guidelines suggest that good stewardship of resources requires the church to have a minimum of 50% attendance to justify the Mass time.
4. Holy Assumption has Children’s Liturgy of the Word at the 10:30 AM Sunday Mass.

#### AFFIRMATIONS

1. There are choirs in the parishes of varying sizes.
2. Parishioners participate well at Mass.

#### NEEDS

1. Study the Mass schedule to maximize attendance and use the parish’s resources wisely and make recommendations.
2. Develop strategies for the Sunday Mass and evangelization as part of the first-year initiatives of the Synod.
3. Consider the potential for using a common hymnal in all the parishes.
4. Add a Mass in Spanish at one of the parishes.
5. Develop a schedule for the priests to preside and preach at the other parishes in the area and do this several times during the year so that priests and parishioners will get to know one another.
6. Look into adding a Sunday night liturgy to attract youth and young adults to the parishes.

**B. Evangelization and Formation** – *This area of mission is responsible for forming disciples and sending them to proclaim the Gospel to others.*

**C. School** – *the ministry of the Catholic School within the parish*

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. A total of 43 students from the four parishes are enrolled at Mary Queen of Saints Catholic Academy.
2. Mary Queen of Saints has become part of the Seton Catholic School initiative and network of Catholic schools.
3. St. Rita School may possibly become available for use or lease for the 2018/2019 school year.

### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. There are many dedicated parents and staff at the school.
2. The priests are involved with sacramental celebrations at the school.

### **NEEDS**

1. To assist with marketing efforts and good record keeping, the school and parishes should maintain records about MQS graduates who attend Catholic high schools as well as track high school student performance of all graduates.
2. Look into ways to increase awareness of the school in each parish and make recommendations.
3. Develop an enhanced marketing and recruitment strategy with the Office for Schools Marketing.
4. Explore the potential for expansion of a satellite campus for Mary Queen of Saints.

## **D. Religious Education** – *programs for children pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade*

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. Grades K3 through 8 enrolls 52 students. According to the combined parish census, there are approximately 287 students of K3 through middle-school age. With the addition of the school population of 43 students, 101 (35%) of the 287 possible students of elementary/middle school age are enrolled in faith formation sessions. The diocesan average is 75% of the potential school-age population. The religious education enrollment was as high as 235 students in 2004.
2. There is some concern that the program is taking children away from the smaller parishes.

### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. There are dedicated catechists and parents.
2. The program seems to instill greater confidence than in prior years.

### **NEEDS**

1. Develop ways to contact and invite new families from the large number of possible attendees so as to grow the enrollment.
2. Because parents are essential to faith development, determine additional ways to involve parents in the Sunday program and add some family-based formation activities so that families can grow in faith together, as well as develop community among the religious education families.
3. Design an ongoing program for catechist recruitment, training, formation and certification to provide a pool of qualified and capable teachers.
4. Study enrollment potential, program design, and facilities in order to develop a long-range plan for the growth and enhancement of religious education in the parish, as well as ways for the program to be conducted at various sites.

## **E. Youth Ministry** – *programming and activity for high school students, grades 9 through 12*

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. There were 14 students who were confirmed in 2015 during their junior year in high school. The number of confirmands has declined steadily over the past 15 years.
2. 20 high school students participate in the high school program. The parish does not track the number of parish students who attend Catholic high schools.
3. There are 190 high school students in the parish census. The parish enrolls 10.5% of teens. The Archdiocesan average is 50%.
4. There are no summer programs for youth ministry.
5. There are no work camps or mission trips.

### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. There are 12 catechists/group leaders for the ministry.
2. Attendance in the program is good.

### **NEEDS**

1. Examine total youth ministry, catechetical programs and program models to identify options and components which may serve youth more effectively and involve a higher percentage of parish youth.
2. Look at the possibilities for using social media to communicate with youth and their parents.
3. Discuss and develop strategies for involving parents in junior high and high school ministry.
4. Explore the possibilities of including more young adults as volunteers within youth ministry in order to build a core team of young adults.
5. Establish summer youth ministry activities.
6. Consider the development of common guidelines for Confirmation preparation, as well as the potential for a West Allis city-wide program.

## **F. Adult Faith Formation** – *opportunities for adults to deepen their understanding and practice of the Catholic faith*

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. In 2015, there was 2 adult baptisms and 6 adult confirmations.
2. The young adult population of the parish (ages 18 to 40) is approximately 864 members or 16.3% of the total population. The Archdiocesan average is 19%.
3. There are approximately 2,285 adult parishioners between the ages of 21 and 64 and an additional 1,702 over the age of 65, for a total of 3,987 adult parishioners over the age of 21.
4. Bible study and other adult faith formation opportunities are offered.
5. There are 1,702 parishioners (32%) over the age of 65.

### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. There are offerings for adult faith formation at the parishes.

### **NEEDS**

1. Identify, recruit and train a core team of adult leaders to strengthen and expand formation opportunities for adults at a center located in one of the parishes.
2. Study the need for spiritual support, formational activities, and service opportunities for senior citizens in the parish and develop a ministry.
3. Study and develop a ministry to the young adult (ages 18-40) population.
4. Consider the impact of offering local-based adult retreat experiences which are designed to form disciples, identify ministry leaders, and recruit new participants.
5. Consider offering small faith sharing group opportunities to parishioners, particularly those who have participated in a parish-based retreat.
6. Establish an evangelization committee and recruit members who will look at ways of reaching out to the inactive, alienated, searching, and unclaimed.

**G. Human Concerns** – *pastoral care for ill and homebound parishioners as well as outreach to people who need the basic human necessities of life*

**OBSERVATIONS**

1. The parishes support a number of outreach projects and activities.
2. The volunteers for outreach projects tend to be older members of the parish rather than younger.
3. The pastoral care ministry to the homebound could be expanded.

**AFFIRMATIONS**

1. There are very dedicated volunteers for these projects.
2. The food pantry at Holy Assumption is recognized by businesses in West Allis, which conduct food drives to support the ministry.

**NEEDS**

1. Develop a city-wide human concerns effort involving all the parishes and including the Archdiocesan Office for Social Justice Ministry, Catholic Charities, and St. Vincent De Paul, which will be centered at one of the parishes.
2. Study the possibilities for additional outreach projects, particularly projects in which all the parishes have an opportunity to participate, and the volunteer support to sustain them. As part of the study, consider how the human concerns commission can monitor and coordinate all human concerns and pastoral care activities.
3. Increase the outreach to the homebound and hospitalized.
4. Consider the establishment of a sister-parish relationship with a parish in another part of the world.
5. Recruit more young adult volunteers to participate in outreach programs.

## **H. Stewardship** – *community building ministry and activities particularly those related to the sharing of time, talent and treasure*

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. The parishes added about 81 new households in 2015 or 6 to 7 per month.
2. At least one-third of the parish households do not contribute financially to the parish.
3. There are identifiable transition or risk times among parishioners which can present the occasion to end active involvement or membership itself: school and religious ed families that do not attend Mass; 2<sup>nd</sup> graders after their first communion; school families whose last 8<sup>th</sup> grader has graduated; juniors in high school who have been confirmed; young adults as they move out on their own.
4. In the area served by the parish, there is an estimated average household income of \$49,704, projected to increase to \$52,652 in 2020. Nationally, the average Catholic household contributes between 1% and 1.1% of household income. Other religious groups have an average which is at least double the Catholic average.
5. Studies have indicated that parish bulletins reach two-thirds of the parish population. A common bulletin for all four parishes has the capacity to provide more information and communication about events and activities to parishioners.

### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. The parishes conduct successful festivals, dinners, and other social events.

### **NEEDS**

1. Develop a welcoming process for new members which provides opportunities for new members to become familiar with the ministries and activities of the parishes, as well as meet other parishioners.
2. Develop an ongoing way for parishioners to discern their gifts and talents, to learn about ways they can use these gifts in the parish, and to invite them to become more involved in the mission of the Church by volunteering for a ministry.
3. Examine various approaches for a comprehensive, Gospel-based financial stewardship process and recommend one for ongoing use in the parishes.
4. Look at ways of developing a stewardship of assets or planned giving which will have a long-term benefit for the ministries of the parishes.
5. Develop a communications plan for all the parishes which involves a common Sunday bulletin, website, and use of email communication with parishioners.
6. Study the various socials/fund raisers which are currently conducted in the parishes, consider new possibilities for building relationships among parishioners, and propose a plan to the pastoral council which includes focusing this activity at a center in one of the parishes.

### **III. PARISH ADMINISTRATION – “ADMINISTERING THE PARISH GOODS”**

#### **A. Finances** – *the management of the financial resources of the parish*

##### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. In the past 15 years, the parishes have managed their income and expenses to balance their budgets. As income has declined, parishes have cut expenses. This has impacted the ability of the parishes to conduct ministries. Sharing of personnel, ministries and programs has greatly benefitted the financial condition of the parishes.
2. St. Rita Parish has an outstanding debt of \$470,000 from a building improvement project.
3. Most of the parishes have a significant amount of restricted and unrestricted assets.
4. The parishes rely on fund-raisers and building leases to balance their budgets.

##### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. Parishioners have responded in the past to appeals for additional funds and to capital campaigns.

##### **NEEDS**

1. Develop ways, in collaboration with the pastoral council, to create a budget which will be able to develop the ministries, support new ministry initiatives, and enhance the facilities at each site.
2. Develop a proportional formula based on envelope and offertory contributions for the funding of shared personnel, ministries, and programs.
3. Work with the stewardship committee to develop a parish approach regarding the significant transfer of wealth through planned giving which is already passing significant amounts of money from generation to generation because of the unprecedented number of baby-boomers.
4. Study the possible need for a future capital campaign at some sites or a common campaign with goals for each site to improve and enhance the facilities at each parish.

## **B. Facilities/Technology** – *the management of the buildings, grounds, and information/communication capabilities of the parish*

### **OBSERVATIONS**

1. Parish complexes have been designed primarily with an operating Catholic school located at the site and serving as the primary ministry. Parishes need to re-think and re-envision the use of facilities both now and for the future.
2. Not all sites are easily accessible to the handicapped and elderly.
3. Maintenance has been deferred at some of the sites because funds were not available for repair or improvement.
4. There are facilities at some sites which may be considered for razing rather than renovation because the cost to do so is prohibitive.

### **AFFIRMATIONS**

1. For the most part, parishes have kept the church buildings in a state of good repair.

### **NEEDS**

1. Establish a building and grounds committee comprised of representative members from all the parishes in order to develop a master site plan for all parish properties which will take into account the maintenance and update of the facilities, as well as their current and future use by the parishes.
2. Consider some interim “fixes” or repairs for certain facilities so that ministries can be conducted as effectively as possible until more permanent solutions are in place.
3. Assess the technology and communications use and needs at the parishes then develop a strategy for the ongoing replacement of equipment and the development of technology usage.
4. Study the potential for common signage at all the church sites so that parishioners and the public are aware that the parishes are working together.

## APPENDIX