



## **Expanded Vision Statement**

### **Building Faith for the Next 100 Years**

One hundred years ago, a small group of faithful immigrants in Loudonville sacrificed to build a Catholic Church on Route 9. That small parish has evolved into the vibrant community we are today.

#### **Our Growing Parish**

Presently, we have approximately 2,100 active families as part of St. Pius X. In the 24 months ending June 2016, we have added 293 new families. Over the past year, the number of baptisms (92), weddings (28) and First Communions (112) are all increasing. The Holy Spirit is actively guiding our parish to a deeper faith in Christ.

#### **More Work to Be Done on Two Fronts**

Studies show today that only 30% of baptized Catholics remain connected to the Church. We seek to strengthen the faith of the 30% by expanding our ministries. These expanded ministries will provide opportunities to live out the gospel values and provide support to our parishioners for the challenges of everyday life.

The other 70% of baptized Catholics may occasionally attend a wedding, funeral or Christmas Mass, but the majority of them are no longer practicing their faith or have joined another Christian denomination. All of us have family, friends, co-workers and neighbors who fall into that 70%. In the scriptures, Jesus asks us to welcome back the lost sheep (e.g. story of the prodigal son). That's why the last part of our parish mission statement reads "invite others into a relationship with Jesus Christ." Like any family, we must never feel content until all our sisters and brothers are back with us.

#### **Deepening the Faith of the 30% and Plan for Bringing Back the 70%**

After much research and dialogue with colleagues, I'm convinced that the best approach to help active parishioners and the 70% reconnect with their faith, is to first meet their needs. Needs that are presently

not being met or are only minimally being met include: opportunities for middle school, high school, college, young adults, mothers of young children and seniors to connect with people their age, offering additional support groups (e.g. cancer support group), offering small groups as a way to make a large parish more intimate and offering additional speaker series (e.g. dealing with Alzheimer's, being a caregiver, dealing with addictions, parenting, developing strong marriages, etc). Once we help people with the challenges they are facing and the needs they have, they will be more open to deepening and rediscovering their faith. The attached appendix summarizes some of the efforts we have made over the past three years to address needs as well as those areas yet to be addressed. These efforts are built on the foundation established by our Pastoral Care Office, which was founded in 1998.

There are six groups that should be of particular interest to us:

- a) high school youth who will face tremendous pressures to leave their faith in the years following high school,
- b) couples who bring children for baptism but who do not return until First Communion,
- c) wedding couples who opt out of our community after their marriage ceremony,
- d) single and married adults in the 20 - 40 year old range,
- e) parents who bring their children to religious education classes and send their children to St. Pius X School but who don't attend Mass, and
- f) people who are struggling with loss and personal pain.

## **Needs**

To expand our parish's reach to meet the needs of these groups, I plan to add this additional staff:

- a) Licensed Counselor (1/4 position to begin) – this position will begin by referring parishioners to the proper professionals,
- b) Communication and Marketing Coordinator (1/4 position to begin) – our message needs to be better communicated with all age groups,
- c) Intake Coordinator (1/4 position to begin) – meets with parishioners and new families to determine needs and connect them with ministries,

d) Small Group Coordinator (1/4 position to begin) – Small groups make a large parish seem more intimate and allow people to connect.

I can fund these four additional positions through the normal offertory. The additional office space required will involve repurposing one of the present conference rooms, thereby decreasing the amount of available gathering space.

Presently, we only have two conference rooms (before one of the two is converted into offices) and a parish hall for meeting space. Not only is this space inadequate in terms of square footage, but none of these spaces offer a comfortable, convenient and welcoming presence that is especially important to youth and young adults today. We will need additional meeting space that will include: a) a large, multi-purpose room with comfortable furniture, b) a room dedicated to middle school and high school youth, c) a room for toddlers to play while parents meet, d) four conference or meeting rooms, and e) additional office space. We will also need to review our current parking and storage needs.

### **Summary**

Nearly every parish in this country would love to have the challenges we face because our challenges are based on growth and potential, not survival. St Pius X has the unique opportunity to become a model Catholic parish for deepening the faith of active parishioners and re-connecting with spouses, siblings, children, grandchildren, friends and others who have wandered away from our faith for whatever reason. To accomplish that, we need the necessary facilities and personnel to accomplish those goals.

I am deeply appreciative of your financial support that allows us to expand our vision and mission in this manner. My sincere thanks for your support.



Fr. Jim Walsh

Pastor

10/24/16