

FROM YOUR PASTOR

As a follow up to last week's article, we need to keep in mind that the Parish Visioning Team (PVT) as it develops a missionary strategic plan for the parish will be responsive to five propositions of the Synod of 2016. The following are the propositions. 1. Envision and develop a practical plan for ongoing human and spiritual formation for all stages of life. 2. Build a culture of life-changing personal encounter with Jesus Christ that permeates every aspect of parish life and that leads to a loving encounter of our neighbor. 3. Equip, empower, support and send forth individuals and families in mission. 4. Establish a parish leadership team around the pastor as a normative practice, where team members develop shared responsibility and accountability to the vision of the Archbishop's "Unleash the Gospel" and the mission of the parish. 5. Build a framework of mutual accountability between pastors, parishes, schools and the Central Services.

After developing the plan, the PVT will submit it for review to a new council named, the Unleash the Gospel Council, which is responsible for the entire process throughout the Archdiocese. The Council will ensure that each parish plan is bold, concrete, measurable and actionable. After its review the plan will be sent back to the parish for revision or acceptance. The expectation is that the plan will require new resources for the parish, so upon approval CCS Fundraising will help each individual parish to translate the Missionary Strategic Plan into a Case for Support. This fundraising effort will also include support for Archdiocesan wide programs that also aid the efforts of Unleash the Gospel. The fundraising effort will include pledges of three to five years.

All of these efforts are going to require that we look at our parish life in a different way. Many look to their parishes in a consumeristic way. I have a need and the parish is there to respond to it. The Strategic Plans that will be developed will look at the parish as a place to encounter Christ and then to live and to share our faith in our daily lives, in such a way that it will begin to have an effect on our culture for the good of God's kingdom. The next three years can be a very creative time for our parish.

Because of these efforts, the Archbishop is asking pastors to remain in their parishes for the next three years beginning in July of 2020. For this reason, and so that I can spend more time with my sisters and their families who all live outstate, I will be retiring on June 30th of 2020. I will be turning 70 later that fall and I think the parish will be better served with someone who will be able to carry out a new Church vision with greater energy and enthusiasm. For the rest of this fiscal year, I remain committed to preparing the parish for the developments mentioned in these past articles and to serve you as graciously as I can. This is a wonderful parish and I look forward to being with you until next summer.

Blessings,

Fr. John