

Our Lady of Good Counsel Aurora, Illinois Pastoral Plan

With a Heart Renewed Parish Consultations Process

Mission Statement

We, as cherished members of a Christian Catholic community, are called to be Christ for others, and to see Christ in others; to provide a loving environment wherein all may grow in faith, wisdom and knowledge.

All parish plans in this document should be reviewed within the context of our parish mission statement.

Introduction and Historical Perspective

This draft pastoral plan was developed by the Parish Pastoral Council. It is the result of the following steps.

1. On September 13-14, the With a Heart Renewed survey was administered at all parish Masses to people age 16 and over. A total of 571 surveys were completed and processed by the Rockford Diocese. The Parish Pastoral Council studied the results. Particular attention was paid to those areas where the parish was not strong but parishioners had high expectations.
2. During November, the Parish Pastoral Council completed a parish evaluation using materials provided in the With a Heart Renewed manual. The parish was compared to the ideal parish, as defined by the Diocese in their report "Indicators of Parish Vitality." All parishioners were invited to participate.
3. In January, an open meeting was held where a synopsis of the parish survey was presented and parishioners provided feedback to the Parish Pastoral Council.
4. The Parish Pastoral Council met in February to write the first draft of the pastoral plan. The council compared the survey results with its own evaluation of the parish, and took into account the comments provided by parishioners after reviewing the parish survey data.
5. An open meeting was held to review the first draft of this plan in March 1998. There were no substantial changes to the plan as a result of this training.
6. The plan was shared with the representatives of the parishes in the Aurora Parish Consultations Process cluster. The cluster met from May to September to discuss inter-parish issues. The issues addressed were Youth Ministry, Spiritual Life/Worship, Young Adult Ministry and Evangelization. For most issues, ideas and experiences were shared. For Youth Ministry, the Aurora Deanery had already established a monthly Youth Mass (being held at St. Joseph's) and voted to provide a deanery level Youth Ministry resource to work with each parish's Youth Ministry.
7. A second parish town hall meeting was held on February 21, 1999. There were no substantial changes to the plan as a result of this meeting.

8. The Parish Pastoral Council met on March 1, 1999 to complete the plan.

Future steps for completing this plan are:

Quarterly assessments of the original Pastoral Plan and encouragement for modifications are sought by members of the Our Lady of Good Counsel Pastoral Council.

Items of Highest Importance

These are the five highest priority items identified in the survey.

1. Our parish Masses are prayerful, reverent and spiritually moving experiences.
2. Children have access to a Catholic elementary and secondary school in the area.
3. Provide opportunities for adults in spiritual growth, i.e. Missions, Study Groups and RCIA.
4. Our parish assures that the sick and homebound are visited and the grieving are comforted.
5. The homilies are well prepared.

Items of Highest Quality

1. The church's interior environment (lighting, statues, artwork, etc.) creates a good atmosphere for worship.
2. Children have access to a Catholic elementary and secondary school in the area.
3. Adults have opportunities for spiritual growth, i.e. Missions, Study Groups and RCIA.
4. The buildings and grounds are maintained in good condition.
5. Opportunities are provided for on-going education for all parishioners.

Parish Priorities

Priority 1: To increase the participation of young adults in active parish life, so they may live out their baptismal commitment and the parish may receive their gifts and talents. This area had a high rating in both the parish Mass survey and the Leadership evaluation.

" **Objective 1-1** To explore ways to provide optimum opportunities for participation of young adults in all phases of Parish Life by 2004.

" **Objective 1-2** Continue to develop, expand, and enhance the RCIA program.

" **Objective 1-3** Provide an ongoing spiritual formation program for those who have completed the RCIA program, and for other members of the Parish seeking spiritual enrichment.

Priority 2: To encourage active participation in the Aurora Area Youth Program and other programs geared to the spiritual and physical needs of young adults.

" **Objective 2-1** Select two representatives to the Aurora Area Youth Program, prior to the end of the year 2003.

" **Objective 2-2** To encourage our parish youth to participate in the Aurora Area Youth Mass activities.

" **Objective 2-3** By the end of the year 2003, conduct a survey regarding the quality and effectiveness of the Elementary School, and the religious Education Programs.

Priority 3: To increase parishioner participation in all liturgies.

" **Objective 3-1** Study results of the recent survey of the Mass schedule regarding the number of Masses to be offered, and determine a proposed time schedule prior to June 1, 2004.

" **Objective 3-2** Continue to seek input from Parish Council, unless Mass attendance shifts dictating the lack of change from the current schedule.

" **Objective 3-3** Utilize the liturgical committee efficiently, and make ongoing education a top priority. Continue to enhance the faith formation for all adult parishioners.

Priority 4: Research available literature, and develop a plan to invite and assist those who are inactive in the Parish.

" **Objective 4-1** Initiate a plan to extend an ongoing invitation to Catholics who are currently separated from the Church by Advent 2004.

" **Objective 4-2** Seek input from the Liturgical Committee and Pastoral Council on the most effective means of communicating personally and inviting members of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church to become active participating members in the Liturgies.