



Local Pastoral Plan  
The Christ Initiative:  
Saint Agnes Parish, Middleton  
And  
Saint Rose of Lima Parish, Topsfield/Boxford

June 2016



## **OUR VISION**

Igniting the vibrant love of Jesus Christ in our lives and our Community.

## **OUR MISSION**

Embrace, Live, Share . . . Christ

## **OUR PURPOSE**

Our purpose is to seek out, welcome and encourage a community of intentional disciples leading to a deeper and personal relationship with Jesus Christ so that we may embrace, live, and share Christ.

## **OUR COLLABORATIVE VALUES**

**FAITH** – We are a community of faith – worshipping and praying together, relying on the Lord to provide grace sufficient to do His will and remaining open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit through a continual process of prayerful discernment.

- Provide consistent invitation and diverse opportunities to all Catholics, to grow in understanding of their Faith to be better prepared and equipped to invite others to know Christ, or rediscover their Faith and experience a personal conversion.
- Share our relationship with Christ with those we meet, so both our faith and the faith of others is strengthened.
- Make prayer and worship times accessible so all can fully participate in the prayer and Sacramental life of the Church.
- Each year consider what type of faith formation opportunities would aid in personal and communal spiritual growth.
- Offer opportunities for faith formation for all ages and stages of the faith journey.

**FELLOWSHIP** - We will welcome all who are spiritually curious and open, or who are seeking Jesus Christ in a posture of intentional discipleship, serving one another in love and greeting and acknowledge all who join us, whether for Sunday liturgy, a social gathering, or study and prayer groups.

- Respect the dignity of each person by being welcoming to all.
- Commit to Christ-like personal interaction with all we meet, and show patience, compassion and understanding.
- Take the time to acquaint us with other parishioners and learn their names.
- Promote a culture of mutual trust and respect by exhibiting trust and respect to those whose ideas and opinions differ from our own.
- Provide Greeters at all Masses with a focus to greet and welcome all newcomers.



- Schedule periodic Parish social events.

**STEWARDSHIP** - Acknowledging God as Creator and Giver of all, stewardship is a life of accountability and responsibility, and involves responsible management of our God-given resources of time, talent, and treasure. Gratitude for these gifts is expressed in prayer, worship, offering, and action by eagerly sharing our gifts out of love and thankfulness for God and one another.

- Offer programs/ministries that reach out to the hungry, homeless, homebound, working poor, women and children at risk, and inmates in prison.
- Serve the needs of the community as they present themselves and bring the love of Christ to those most in need.
- Make an annual commitment of service to the community each year.
- Remove financial barriers for those who wish to participate in Collaborative activities.
- Encourage participation in Parish Ministries, Councils and Initiatives.
- Promote active participation in the social, evangelical, and Sacramental mission of the Parishes.

**EDUCATION** – Catholic education, based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, teaches how to live well now so as to be able to live with God for all eternity, deepens the connection and assists in understanding the Catholic beliefs, message and Faith traditions which can serve as preparation for the challenges of Christian living, and fosters personal faith growth and leadership development.

- Participate in small, Christ-centered study and prayer groups, and faith formational workshops.
- Offer various programs for individuals curious about Christianity and Catholicism, those who are seeking to join the Catholic Church, those who are looking to return to the practice of their Faith and those who want to go deeper into discipleship.
- Use the variety of tools and methods available to provide informational materials to all, including parish website, print, audio, video, on-line faith formation programs, and social media.

**INTEGRITY** - Being honest and doing the right thing, even if that “right thing” is unpopular, uncomfortable, or not what you want to do, is an integral part of our Catholic life, and is really what Christ’s teachings throughout the Gospels are all about.

- Engage in prayer daily and not reserve our Christian life to Sundays or moments (like Grace or other prayer times) when we call upon God’s presence.



- Treat each individual of our church community with welcome and respect.
- Hold fast to the fullness of integrity by bringing Christian awareness and witness into all walks of life.
- Act in concert with the faith in all your daily dealings, and promote and talk about our faith in places where we work, shop and live.
- Engage with our local civic and community members.
- Join our clergy, staff and lay leaders in their commitment to protect children and adults from all forms of abuse.

### **Priority 1 – Vocations, Focused on Parish Priesthood**

In order for our collaborative and the Archdiocese of Boston to both grow and meet the critical number of priests necessary to support a growing Catholic Community, it is essential that we create a sustainable program to recruit, introduce, engage, educate and enable young men in the community to explore the possibility of priesthood. We believe that God is calling us to focus our energy and attention on finding new, innovative and engaging ways for the young men of our community to explore the possibility of priesthood.

**Goal: Create a Vocation Committee that promotes a culture of vocations in the collaborative, with a special emphasis on promoting vocations to the diocesan priesthood, by September 30, 2017.**

The important strategies, milestones, and programs in achieving this goal include:

- Establish a Vocation Committee comprised of five members on or before March 15, 2017 for the purpose of fostering a culture that promotes vocations to the priesthood, religious life, and other vocations so that they may fully live their faith.
  - ✓ Members of Vocation Committee & Pastoral Council will attend a seminary Mass at Saint John’s Seminary on or before June 2017.
  - ✓ Visit with the rector and faculty of Saint John’s Seminary to understand seminary formation program and criteria seminary uses to form and assess candidates.
  - ✓ Members of Vocation Committee and Pastoral Council will meet with Archdiocesan Vocation Director on or before May 31, 2017 to develop best practices from the Archdiocese to be used in building our local action plans.
- Incorporate vocations as a focus area into each of our Religious Education classes.
  - ✓ Have a seminarian come and talk about his vocation to grades 8 and above with the goal of Religious Education classes supporting a current



Seminarian.

- Introduce Vocation Prayer Chalice Program in each Parish for families to pray weekly for Vocations to the priesthood, inviting families to share their experience at Religious Education and Parish Town Hall meetings.
  - ✓ Monthly prayer of the faithful for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in bringing vocations to our collaborative.
  - ✓ Prayers of the Faithful for young men and women to hear a call to religious and consecrated life, and for those called to the sacrament of matrimony.
  - ✓ Make available to all parishioners our Monthly Prayer Requests for Priests calendars as a reminder to pray for our priests.
  - ✓ Utilize existing Rosary Groups to offer Rosary for vocations and develop communication cards with prayer for priests and distribute to all parishioners.
  - ✓ Begin Holy Hours for Vocations on or before December 2016.
- Share in writing, with the Archbishop, Regional Bishop and Regional Episcopal Vicars, the Vocation Committee's impression and insights from the seminary Mass and discuss with the rector and faculty of St. John's Seminary.
- Bring five vocation candidates for a seminary visit on or before December 2018.
- Youth Group discussions as to why priestly and religious vocations are important to them.
- Identify and contact possible women's orders to speak to our young women who are interested in vocations.
- Educate all parishioners of the critical shortage of Archdiocesan priests thru books, media publications, internet posts at least quarterly beginning in January 2017.
- Religious Education classes send support letters to first year seminarians.
- Pastor to continue "Faith Matters" educational meetings to discuss priesthood and his call to vocations.
- Invite a current seminarian to participate in the Confirmation class retreat to share his faith journey.
- Repeat this process, as applicable, one year later, for St. John XXIII Seminary, Weston MA.

## **Priority 2 – Excellence at Sunday Mass (Individual Discipleship)**

### **Celebrate and strengthen our relationship with Christ thru Sunday Mass**

We believe that in order to grow our parishes, God is calling us to focus on finding new, and engaging ways to connect our parishioners, and non-practicing Catholics, with the



experience of worship – we want to provide our attendees with the best possible experience at every Mass.

**Goal: By September 1, 2017, provide a full celebratory Mass and engaging experience at all Saturday and Sunday Masses at St. Rose and St. Agnes.**

The important strategies, milestones, and programs in achieving this goal include:

- Create a consistently engaging and vibrant experience of worship that focuses on attracting those new to the discipleship path, particularly through:
  - ✓ Messages - life applications, messages with practical uses that help the lost get connected and challenge existing members to welcome change.
  - ✓ Radical hospitality - Reinforce our value of faith, fellowship and stewardship as it relates to welcoming all who seek to strengthen their relationship with Christ.
  - ✓ Music that appeals to the non-practicing Catholic and leads people to full and active participation in worship.
  - ✓ Sunday homilies will be planned and preached using a Series format beginning the First Sunday of Lent 2017.
  
- Through a strong, vibrant Music Ministry, we will synchronize music and liturgy that inspires and enables the congregation to worship through song in a joyous, prayerful atmosphere.
  - ✓ Develop and synchronize our music ministry to meet the needs of our parishioners. This will be a continuous process of evaluation and experimentation to find the best possible experience.
  - ✓ Develop a professional worship and praise ensemble that inspires participation our Catholic community no later the October 1, 2016.
  
- Explore technology enhancements/investments to ensure a more current worship experience for all attendees.
  - ✓ New in-church monitors, additional upgrades to the sound system, hearing devices for the hearing impaired.
  - ✓ Provide digital information screen outside of the church.
  - ✓ Provide video streaming of the Mass on the website and through public/town TV broadcasts.
  - ✓ Provide pastor's weekly sermon on the website.
  - ✓ Establish an audio team to ensure quality sound by January 1, 2017.



- ✓ Ad a visual component to the team no later than four months after installing video screens in the church.
  
- Engage and invite all members of our community to become a part of the Mass experience as greeters, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, lectors, gift bearers, greeters, and ushers to ensure a consistent and engaging experience where new parishioners are welcomed and engaged by January 1, 2017.
- Utilize faith formation, and Religious Education programs to increase Mass attendance so that 3-5% of our currently enrolled, non-attending families are attending Mass by September 2018.
- Within six months of registering as a new parishioner, survey the individual/family to solicit feedback about the Mass experience.
- Expand youth participation in Music Ministry by 20% on or before July 2017 (For youth group meetings)
- Coordinate the weekly homily with the music ministry and religious education classes to ensure an integrated communication experience.
- Work with the Finance Council to provide annual funds to ensure that the in church experience is always inviting and comfortable by increasing investment and maintenance of air conditioning, heat, fans, lighting, carpet cleaning and any other part of the in-church experience.
- Work with the Finance Council to provide annual funds to ensure that the property and grounds are always maintained to the highest standard and that annual improvements are prioritized within the annual budget cycle.
- By October 1, 2016, clearly establish that welcoming visitors, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries are not announcements, but an extension and living out of Holy Communion, becoming the Body of Christ.

### **Priority 3 - Build a Vibrant and Engaged Catholic Community (Community Discipleship)**

**This goal builds on discipleship by providing outreach and inspiring the non-practicing Catholics and practicing Catholics who are not participating in our community.**

We believe that God is calling us to focus our energy and attention on finding bold, creative, and exciting ways to share Christ's love with those who have become disconnected from the Church -- we want to share with as many people as possible the joy and fulfillment that can only be found in knowing and following Christ.

**Goal: Average five new families or individuals connecting to our community each month by June 30, 2018.**

The important strategies, milestones, and programs in achieving this goal include:



## Community Outreach Programs – New Parishioner Acquisition

- Develop a marketing strategy, including social media, to make the Christ Initiative Community easier to find for those who feel that something is missing from their lives. Complete this plan by November 30, 2016. The program will include elements/concepts as outlined below:
  - ✓ Publicize and conduct a minimum of four faith-based events/programs each year in multiple locations throughout our community.
  - ✓ Form an outreach committee to plan a semi-annual event that brings our worship to the community i.e., Outdoor mass.
  - ✓ Identify families and individuals in the community that are marginally involved or not participating in parish life.
    - **Target Audience** – Current and prospective parishioners, families of the recently baptized, families of children attending religious education and individuals recently married.
    - **Measure** – Identify 5-10 families and/or individuals by June 2017 and a minimum of 2 per month thereafter.
  - ✓ Increase volunteer participation in each of our ongoing ministries by 2 people in 2016, by 3 people in 2017 and by 4 people in 2018.
  - ✓ Develop a sense of responsibility among all pastoral service team members for connecting with families and individuals not currently part of our community, and reporting data monthly.
- Promote the Christ Initiative to parishioners and non-parishioners through multi-media channels.
  - ✓ Identify members of our community with expertise in marketing and demographics that can provide strategies for connect with the disenfranchised and those in our community who are not participating in parish life.
  - ✓ Display the Christ Initiative Vision Statement in conspicuous places in our facilities, publications, bulletin, website, Facebook and throughout the community by November 2016.
  - ✓ Develop a branding strategy to ensure all communications and correspondence includes the Christ Initiative logo, mission and vision statements by November 2016.





- ✓ Establish a Facebook page, a blog on spirituality and twitter account for Christ Initiative communications by November 2016.
- ✓ Increase the number of subscribers/followers to the website, Facebook Page, twitter account and blog by 25% each year once a baseline is established.
- ✓ Form an active Communications team by July 2016, to review, post and update content on the Christ Initiative website, Facebook Page, blog, Twitter account, etc. to ensure information is easily accessible, timely, relevant and consistently reflects the mission and vision of the Christ Initiative.
- ✓ Promote the Christ Initiative through increased publicity and announcements in local newspapers and publications.
- ✓ Mail invitations to parishioners who are not regularly attending Mass, inviting them back and saying “They are missed.” Accomplish the first mailing by January 2017.

### **Engage and Enable Parishioners to Advance their Faith Journey**

- Encourage parents of our religious education programs to become active in the child’s faith formation by attending regular mass in preparation for the sacraments.
- Form a Baptism Team of two to four parishioners who will be responsible for following up with local families who have had children baptized to encourage full, regular participation in the faith by December 2017.
- Develop an active Hospitality Ministry so that we know when a family or individual is new to our community—this will be key to measuring our progress in this goal. Be actively involved in the Religious Education enrollment process. Many new families will come thru Religious Education Programs.
- Develop and expand continuous Faith Formation Programs i.e. Arise, Alpha, etc.- to be held alternately at each Church by December 2017.
- Strengthen the marriages of twelve to fifteen married couples from our collaborative by hosting marriage enrichment programs for them by July 2018.
- Establish Alpha as the doorway to experience to Initial Discipleship.
- Utilize experiences like Cursillo to help build a Christ-centered Community encouraging parishioners to attend a Cursillo weekend event. Have Alpha, Symbolon and Cursillo participants talk about their experience at the weekend mass and how their lives have changed from the experience.



**Priority 4 - Build an Engaged and Growing Catholic Youth Ministry focused on developing an active relationship with Christ and the Catholic faith. (Youth Discipleship)**

We believe it is essential that we create a sustainable and scalable program to recruit, engage and grow a vibrant youth community for our parishes. We are called God to focus our energy and attention on finding new, innovative and engaging ways for the youth of our community to become active members and leaders of the Christ Collaborative. “A Church that is present to young people and a Church where young people are present”. The Church cannot wait for young people to come to the Church – the Church must go out and bring them to Christ.

**Goal 1 – Hire a fulltime student minister by June 30, 2018 to develop a student ministry program that synchronizes all of the Christ Collaborative ministries to support our catholic youth in their faith journey.**

- Develop position description, goals and objectives by June 30, 2016.
- Work with Finance Council to identify resources needed to hire a student minister by October 31, 2016
- Start recruiting process on or before May 1, 2017.
- Define interview process and participants on or before Sept 15, 2017.
- Identify hiring committee for this position on or before Sept 15, 2017.

**Goal 2 – Recruit and prepare 20 youth from our religious education and youth programs to lead or actively participate in our ministry programs by June 2017.**

Important strategies, milestones, and programs in achieving this goal include:

- Develop a comprehensive youth ministry program framework to serve as the foundation for our incoming Youth Minister.
  - ✓ Pastoral Council to establish program structure, objectives and requirements to be shared with Youth Minister position finalists during the interview process. Identify current best practices and include in program.
  - ✓ Ensure that Youth Minister and volunteers in our youth programs are aligned to the overall goals of our youth program.
  - ✓ The Youth Minister will collaborate with local parishes to develop the youth ministry program based on identified best practices and develop specific program milestone to achieve objectives by June 2017.
- Build a vibrant, high activity Youth Ministry Engagement Program to include many of the following concepts that can best support the achievement of our goals and align to the resources available to succeed.



- ✓ Support and expand Vacation Bible School.
- ✓ Participate in one mission trip per year beginning in 2017 to support the disadvantaged among us.
- ✓ Plan and participate in at least one community service event semi-annually beginning in early 2017.
- ✓ Plan and execute quarterly youth events beginning in June 2017.
- ✓ Develop and execute an annual youth retreat beginning June 2017 focused on discipleship and what it means to be Catholic in our society.
- ✓ Develop program to mentor and support former youth program participants, post - confirmation and college by September 2018.
- ✓ Invite all children who have received First Holy Communion and older to join the appropriate ministries of the Collaborative; provide appropriate training and instruction by June 2017.
- ✓ Continue to support bi-monthly youth Mass.