



Fostering a Spirituality of Communion

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
Planning for the Future



ACTION PLAN WORKBOOK

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PLANNING PROCESS PREFACE

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him. He said to them, “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” **Luke 4:16-21**

This excerpt from Luke calls us to continue the mission of Christ. Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed 2013 the Year of Faith. What better way to embrace the Pope’s charge than to promote a **spirituality of communion** throughout the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, a concept coined by Pope John Paul II at the beginning of the millennium?

*This **spirituality of communion** indicates above all the heart’s contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the faces of the brothers and sisters around us. A **spirituality of communion** also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as “those who are a part of me.” This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. A **spirituality of communion** implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a “gift from me.”¹*

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and its shepherd, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, in response to the ever-present inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has worked prayerfully and diligently to develop an Archdiocesan Pastoral Planning Process...a process that will ultimately identify and utilize the gifts of those in our archdiocese, as well as in all local parish communities. Beginning with listening sessions in the spring of 2011, approximately 7,000 of the faithful met to share and discuss issues they deemed important to them as Catholic Christians. Data gathering and analysis of our “Current Reality,” followed by prayerful discernment of “A Vision for the Future” culminated with three pathways that serve as a roadmap to help the archdiocese move from its current reality to the vision of a future – a future where we practice a **spirituality of communion** throughout the archdiocese. Parishes are invited to participate in reaching our goal to foster a **spirituality of communion** by writing action plans for objectives in support of one or more pathways. (Refer to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan Timeline, page 4 in this document, for more details. Additional information may also be found online at www.archgh.org/pastoralplan).

Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan Process: The Archdiocese of Galveston- Houston is creating a plan for addressing the pressing issues we will be facing in the upcoming years, while supporting the needs, hopes and dreams of the faithful. Below is a brief history of the process and future plans. For updated progress or to view a document, please visit www.archgh.org/pastoralplan.

2011 Mar - Jun 2011	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Where we began</i></p> <p>Listening to the faithful: 7,000 Catholics in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston attended listening sessions and responded to surveys on what is important to them as a Catholic.</p>
Sept 2011	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>What did we learn?</i></p> <p>Our “<i>Current Reality</i>” is compiled from the data analysis of information gained from listening to the faithful. You can read this document at www.archgh.org/pastoralplan.</p> <p>We know the future holds: Rapid projected Catholic population growth • Stable number of priests • Multicultural diversity</p> <p>What the faithful requested: Meaningful prayer, liturgy and sacraments • Spiritual Growth • Formation and education • Social services and outreach • Welcoming and hospitality</p>
2012 Jan 2012	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Where do we want to go?</i></p> <p>“<i>A Vision for the Future</i>” is created, developing a picture of the future of the archdiocese as a Spirituality of Communion, based on the information learned above. Read the document at www.archgh.org/pastoralplan.</p>
May 2012	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>How do we get there?</i></p> <p>“<i>Pathways</i>” are developed as a roadmap for our Archdiocese to achieve the vision for the future. Read the document at www.archgh.org/pastoralplan.</p>
May - Sept 2012	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pathways are introduced throughout the Archdiocese</i></p> <p>Daniel Cardinal DiNardo introduces the Spirituality of Communion and <i>pathways</i> to priests at the Priest 2012 Convocation, and through a video distributed and shown in all parishes.</p>
Oct - Nov 2012	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pathways are discussed at parishes</i></p> <p>Parishes identify examples of existing actions in support of <i>Pathways</i> and brainstorm potential actions to support the pathways.</p>
Nov - Dec 2012	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pathways are discussed at Regional Parish Meetings</i></p> <p>Pastors and selected participants attend regional meetings to share how their parish supports the pathways and to identify opportunities to collaborate with other parishes.</p>
2013 Jan - Feb 2013	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Objectives are developed</i></p> <p>Archdiocesan Pastoral Council members, priests, deacons, religious and lay delegates refine and consolidate information from the Regional Meetings into objectives to support the pathways.</p>
Mar 2013	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Plan is published</i></p> <p>The pathways and objectives are published and distributed to the parishes.</p>
Apr - May 2013	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Action Plans are written</i></p> <p>Parishes and Chancery staff write action plans in support of the objectives created from the parish regional meetings.</p>
Oct 2013	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Action Plan results are gathered</i></p> <p>Initial results are gathered and shared across the Archdiocese.</p>

ACTION PLAN BACKGROUND

Based on feedback from the archdiocesan regional meetings, the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council---along with priests, deacons, religious, and lay delegates---gathered and consolidated information reflecting parishes' hopes for how to support the vision of an Archdiocese that lives the Spirituality of Communion. They formulated nine objectives to support the three Pathways that will lead us to our vision of the future.

The nine objectives approved by the Cardinal are not presented in priority order. This means that no one objective is more important than another, yet each was seen as important to the faithful of the Archdiocese.

It is important to note that parishes are not asked to create action plans for every objective. Choose the objective(s) that address(es) the hopes, aspirations and available resources of your parish. **What's important is to begin taking action.** In this way a **spirituality of communion** will begin to spread throughout the Archdiocese. Since the **spirituality of communion** is the foundation for the Pastoral Plan, all parishes are encouraged to create *at least one* action plan to support the first objective. Write other action plans to address objectives of your parish's choosing.

On the following pages you will find steps with instructions for completing action plans. The steps are also listed below:

1. **Identify individuals for your Parish Action Plan Committee (PAPC).**
2. **Schedule a meeting and ask members of your PAPC to complete the pre-reading tasks.**
3. **Begin the meeting with prayer! (See Handout #5)**
4. **Select the objective(s) appropriate for your parish. (See Handout #2)**
5. **Identify the action plan(s) for each objective.**
6. **Complete a Parish Action Plan & Tracking form for each action you plan in support of an objective. (An objective can have one or more actions associated with it. See Step 5, page 7 and Handout #6.)**
7. **Review and submit only the first page of your Parish Action Plan & Tracking form (Handout #7) by email to pastoralplan@archgh.org, by fax to 713-741-8775 or by mail to: Secretariat for Pastoral and Educational Ministries, 2403 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, TX 77021. For more information leave a message at 713-652-4446.**

The Tracking Task Group of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council will follow-up with parishes as they complete action plans to help share best practices and lessons learned. You can also find parishes that are willing to partner on activities at www.archgh.org/pastoralplan/documents. Select "**Current Parish View Report Builder**" for the version of Excel that you use. You can search by parish or by category of activity.

Writing a Parish Action Plan: *A Suggested Step-by-Step Process*

Keep in mind that the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan will begin with actions in 2013 and end with actions in 2015. Plan actions to begin and end at any point within that time frame.

Step 1: Identify individuals for your Parish Action Plan Committee (PAPC).

The Pastor should discern which parishioners would best work collaboratively to design and write a plan that addresses the needs and hopes of the parish at-large. Consider inviting Parish Council members, deacons, key ministry leaders, staff, selected parishioners, etc. Remember the goal is to foster a **spirituality of communion** by envisioning your parish of the future: which current activities, events, projects, or ministries do you want to retain. Which do you want to extend, expand or enhance? Which parishes in the archdiocese might you partner with to meet an objective?

Step 2: Schedule a meeting and ask members of your PAPC to complete the pre-reading tasks.

- (A)** Review the descriptions of the three Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan Pathways (See Handout #1.)
- (B)** Read the objectives of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan. (See Handout #2.) Consider each in relation to your parish. Discern which one or more objectives your parish needs to address in an Action Plan. All parishes are encouraged to create *at least one* action plan to support the first objective. Review your Current Parish View document to align with your initial planning and interests.

Step 3: Begin the meeting with prayer!

Handouts #3 & #4 are recommended agendas for a Parish Action Plan writing meeting.

Before writing Parish Action Plans that will direct your parish's future activities, ask PAPC members to begin with prayer. (See Handout #5.)

Step 4: Select the objective(s) appropriate for your parish.

Discuss the objectives (Handout #2) and prioritize them to determine the group's consensus on the top objective(s). Take time to read and prayerfully reflect upon the "narrative" and the "reflection questions for action plans." You can find this information in the full Objectives document. Note the "resources" cited for the top objective(s). Consider what resources you will need at the parish or those that you can request from a Chancery office to address an objective(s). Facilitate this discussion until all members agree and commit to the objective(s) which support a parish need or interest and for which you will write a Parish Action Plan.

Step #4 in the Parish Action Planning Process is the most critical and thus deserves more time, more prayer, and more discernment than any of the other steps. Your chosen objective(s) become(s) the commitment to which time, personnel, and resources will be devoted...and rightly so!

Step 5: Identify the action plan(s) for each objective.

Once an objective has been selected from the list designated by the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, your PAPC is ready to decide on what action(s) you plan to take to help meet the objective. You can plan more than one action to support an objective. Keep in mind that you will need to write a separate plan for each action. Also consider the resources you have at the parish to implement the action plan and resources available from Chancery offices.

As an example, you might write an action plan to partner with another parish on creating a program for younger adolescents and another action plan to enhance your current program focusing on service for older adolescents. Both action plans support Objective 9 - *Ensure a vibrant, comprehensive youth ministry that ...*

Step 6: Complete the Parish Action Plan & Tracking form for each action you plan in support of an objective.

Once you have identified your action plan(s) and objective(s), you are ready to complete the form detailing all that will be required to implement the action plan and meet the objective. (See Handout #6.) Below is an explanation or definition of each column:

Steps/Tasks – List all steps that are needed to implement the Action Plan and achieve the objective. Steps may be sequential or some might be done concurrently.

Person/Group Responsible – Be sure to identify the name of a specific individual or group and delegate each step/task. In some cases, the person or group will be doing the task; in other situations, the name(s) cited will reflect the person/group responsible for delegating a specific task and for checking to make sure that it is completed on time.

Resources Needed – Resources refer to time, people and materials. For each step/task, an event might merely need to be placed on the parish calendar. For some steps/tasks, volunteers from the community or parishioners with special gifts/talents need to be recruited. Materials might be listed in this column; however, if the task involves many types of materials (such as for a retreat), a separate step/task should be listed for each.

Questions/Obstacles – Tasks are best completed when problems and pitfalls are anticipated. Determine what might go wrong and problem-solve before it does. List questions that you cannot answer when you are writing your Parish Action Plan. Some issues or questions may be resolved at a later date.

Estimated Cost – List costs for personnel, materials, transportation etc. Follow your pastor's procedures. Assistance for Parishes in need can be requested.

Complete by Date – Estimated date when each step/task should be completed.

The Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan will span three years, and each Parish Action Plan should be completed within that same time frame. Parishes may anticipate that specific objectives may be completed in a shorter amount of time (i.e., 3-10 months or 1-2 years).

Step 7: Review and submit only the first page of your Parish Action Plan & Tracking form(s).

Once your PAPC has completed the plan, use the Checklist for a Completed Action Plan to self-evaluate your efforts. (See Handout #7.)

Submit **only** the first page of your completed **Parish Action Plan & Tracking form(s)**

- **by email to pastoralplan@archgh.org OR**
 - **by fax to 713-741-8775 OR**
 - **by mail to: Secretariat for Pastoral and Educational Ministries, 2403 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, TX 77021.**
- (For more information leave a message at 713-652-4446.)**

Contact Jim Barrette, Director, Secretariat for Pastoral and Educational Ministries, with additional questions at jbarrette@archgh.org.

The Tracking Task Group of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council will follow-up with parishes as they complete action plans to help share best practices and lessons learned.

For samples, contact other parishes for copies of their Action Plan(s).