

Dear Fellow Parishioners & Friends in Christ:

January 15, 2006

The attached November 2005 Long Range Plan for our St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church is a result of some three years of work lovingly given to all of us by our Long Range Planning Committee members. I most heartily thank the members of the Committee and their Chairman for their very diligent and dedicated hard work planning for our future together. Although the Plan Appendices' statistical data on population growth is not included in this Bulletin insert (but see below), it may be noted that Aiken County has grown 7.6% over the last five years while our Parish has grown 25% over that same period, which is three times faster than the County.

This Long Range Plan is really an Improvement Plan. It focuses on things to be changed in the Parish -- new actions to be started, or ongoing actions to be improved. It does not mention the very numerous activities, ministries and functions that are perceived to be going along satisfactorily.

This Long Range Plan is an outline of ideas, to help us to think about our future. It does not describe actions in detail, nor does it provide a time schedule. The people and committees carrying out the actions will determine the details, in consultation with me. No doubt, this Long Range Plan will have to be revised from time to time, as conditions and needs change. As our circumstances change, so must our planning. Our Parish Pastoral Council has reviewed this Plan. And now, most grateful to the Long Range Planning Committee for their excellent Plan, I am very pleased to publish it for the information of the Parishioners.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Rev. James L. LeBlanc

## St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church Long Range Planning Committee

### **Long Range Plan November 2005**

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## **METHODOLOGY**

The Long Range Planning Committee was formed in the Fall of 2003. The Committee members are:

**Bernard Girouard - Chairman**

**Phyllis Jessey - Facilitator**

**Fran Jessey**

**Joan LaBone**

**Claire Brede**

**Mike Anaclerio**

**Jose Blanco**

**Diana Strom**

**Keith Darr**

**Joe Murphy**

**Carolann Horton**

**Ernie Chaput**

**The process used to develop the Long Range Plan was:**

1. Survey all Ministries/Activities of the parish.
2. Survey the parish membership - Parish Survey
3. Conduct focus groups on meaning of results of Parish Survey
4. Gather statistics on Mass attendance, parish profile, parish growth, Aiken County Growth
5. Analyze the information and data to formulate a Long Range Plan that has goals, objectives and action items that will move the parish in the direction satisfying our mission while moving towards the vision of the future. The Committee recognized that the parish is currently actively engaged in striving towards the vision. Therefore, the plan addresses only those areas not currently being fulfilled, but which need to be in order to reach our future vision of mission.
6. Review the results with the Pastor for acceptance and implementation in the parish

## STATEMENT OF MISSION, VISION AND FOUR GOALS

The Pastoral Plan of Goals, Objectives and recommended Actions is in compliance with the stated Mission and Vision of St. Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church. The Mission and Vision are the foundation of all the efforts of the Long Range Planning Committee.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To Proclaim the presence of Christ, the Redeemer, in our midst, through Word and Sacrament. We seek to strengthen the spiritual and temporal life of the Parish community and to reach out to all in the surrounding community through Catholic tradition and presence. We endeavor to do this under the patronage of Our Blessed Mother, Mary Help of Christians, and in union with our Holy Father, our Bishop and our Pastor.

**VISION STATEMENT:** Our Parish undertakes to learn to live more fully the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

- in preaching and teaching
- in our understanding and faithful following
- in evangelizing
- in spirituality, prayer and worship
- in growing close together in social interaction
- in being one community of English and Spanish speaking peoples
- in sacrificial giving of our time, talents, and treasures
- in reaching out to others in need of our spiritual and temporal assistance

**GOALS:** In order to accomplish the Mission and Vision, stated above, four Goals were developed. They are:

**A. Worship, Sacraments, Devotional Life:** We the people of St. Mary's parish, all being members of the Body of Jesus Christ, breathing in the Holy Spirit, growing and learning in the Gospel, worship together in full active participation at Mass and other liturgies.

**B. Parish Life and Sense of Community:** Parish life at St. Mary's guided by the Holy Spirit embraces all cultures in oneness through encouragement, growth, spiritual development and fellowship.

**C. Religious Formation and Evangelization:** Guided by the Holy Spirit, St. Mary's strengthens understanding of the Catholic faith by all in our parish community; encourages inactive Catholics to examine their relationship with the Catholic Church; and conveys the tenets of the Catholic faith to those who are not Catholics.

**D. Social Justice:** By the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit, in union with the universal church, St. Mary's is known for its outreach to those in need.

*We have identified Objectives and related Action Items for each of these stated goals.*

## **GOAL A: WORSHIP, SACRAMENTS, DEVOTIONAL LIFE**

**We the people of St. Mary's parish, all being members of the Body of Jesus Christ, breathing in the Holy Spirit, growing and learning in the Gospel, worship together in full active participation at Mass and other liturgies.**

### **Objectives:**

**1. Build a new Church building to provide adequate worship space.**

**Action Items: Assigned to Pastoral and Finance Councils and Buildings, Capital Campaign and Stewardship Committees**

- Hire an Architect to develop a Master Plan for a new church with a 1,500 seating capacity and other space needs detailed in other sections of this plan
- Make presentation to the Parish and Diocese
- Launch capital campaign to last 3 years
- Begin Construction

**2. Reduce the number of Masses and celebrate them in the largest spaces available to bring the parish community together under the leadership of the declining number of our priests**

**Action Item: Assigned to the Liturgy Committee**

**3. Enhance the role and training of greeters and ushers.**

**Action items: Assigned to the Liturgy Committee**

- Create greeting ministry
- Reinvigorate ushering ministry

**4. Reinforce the value of reverent silence for prayers before and at Mass**

**Action Item: Assigned to Liturgy Committee**

- Communicate expectations of behavior in the Bulletin (English & Spanish)

**5. Learning the Scriptures**

**Action Item: Assigned to Religious Education Committee**

- Explore activating an adult preparation period and methodology for the next week's scripture readings (both group and individual)

**6. Initiate "History of Mass" sessions**

**Action Items: Assigned to Liturgy Committee and Religious Education Committee**

- Connect with parish dinners
- Research existing materials on history of the Mass
- Explain parts of the Mass as celebrated

**7. Examine purpose of music in each Mass**

**Action Items: Assigned to the Director of Music**

- Sing together to encourage everyone to become one voice singing God's praises
- Incorporate appropriate liturgical based music to serve the diverse needs of the parish tempered with taste and appropriate silences according to Vatican II directives

## **8. Increase number of perpetual adoration volunteers**

### **Action Items: Assigned to Perpetual Adoration Committee**

- Two for each hour and spare
- Personal testimony from Adorers on the value of spending prayer and meditation time with the Blessed Sacrament
- Personal testimony during Small Christian Community gatherings
- Teaching on why we have Perpetual Adoration and the value of it
- Consult with Blessed Sacrament in Charleston to find out about their methods

## **9. Space requirements identified to satisfy the above stated needs include:**

### **Action Items: Assigned to Pastoral and Finance Councils and Buildings, Capital Campaign and Stewardship Committees**

- New church building with seating capacity for 1,500 persons
- Music room practice area for choirs and for St. Mary school use

## **GOAL B: PARISH LIFE AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

**Parish life at St. Mary's guided by the Holy Spirit embraces all cultures in oneness, through encouragement, growth, spiritual development and fellowship.**

### **Objectives:**

#### **1. Develop and expand hospitality and welcoming programs**

##### **Action Items: Assigned to Hospitality Committee**

- Develop Hospitality Committee
- Assign groups as greeters and highlight them at Mass from the pulpit
- Make it easy and comfortable to consistently and repeatedly meet with others
- Establish newcomers committee
- Re-charter the Small Christian Communities to include the outreach program i.e. "Presence in the neighborhood"
- Group St. Mary's families into "clustering" for filling family support needs within respective neighborhoods
- Develop various communities of interest like singles, divorced, widow and widowers and men's group
- Create child care program

#### **2. Bring all cultures together**

##### **Action Items: Assigned to all Ministries**

- All Ministries and activities create opportunities for multi cultural activities and communicate in English and Spanish
- Create an opportunity for English/Spanish teen groups to come together

#### **3. Enhance Communications to and among Parishioners**

##### **Action Items: Assigned to Communications Committee**

- Develop Communications Committee
- Integrate all means of communications, bulletin, internet, newsletter, picture

- directory, E-mail chain, and Aiken Community Calendar
- Emphasize English/Spanish Communications

**4. Increase weekly Mass attendance of registered Parishioners by 10%**

**Action Items: Assigned to Hospitality Committee**

- Advertise and promote the Masses
- Provide hospitality and fellowship, e.g., donuts and coffee after Masses in St. Angela Hall and wine and cheese after the 5:00 PM Saturday Mass

**5. Create paid staff to assist Pastor in managing the Parish**

**Action Item: Assigned to Pastor and Pastoral and Finance Councils**

- Hire a Director of Business Administration

**6. Promote Good Stewardship in Parish**

**Suggested Action Items: Assigned to Pastoral and Finance Councils and Stewardship and Capital Campaign Committees**

- Tithing in the Parish
- Ministry Fair
- Capital Campaign

**7. Space requirements identified to satisfy the above stated needs include:**

**Action Items: Assigned to Pastoral and Finance Councils and Buildings, Capital Campaign and Stewardship Committees**

- Expanded Parish Office space for new employees and volunteers
- Four meeting spaces for up to 20 persons
- Youth Center for 80 to 100 persons with kitchen which will accommodate all parish youth activities
- Storage area for Parish activities (Christmas, Chocolate Festival, etc.)
- Maintenance shop for all facilities with bench and area for small tools
- Maintenance office near the shop

**GOAL C: RELIGIOUS FORMATION AND EVANGELIZATION**

**Guided by the Holy Spirit, St. Mary's strengthens understanding of the Catholic faith by all in our parish community; encourages inactive Catholics to examine their relationship with the Catholic Church; and conveys the tenets of the Catholic faith to those who are not Catholics..**

**Objectives:**

**1. Objective for active Catholics:**

**Offer relevant, stimulating and convenient programs to our parish which increase our depth of understanding of the Catholic faith**

**Action Items: Assigned to Religious Education Committee**

- Promote St. Mary's School and our Sunday School as sources for religious education for all children in the parish
- Promote our Youth Ministry programs of religious education
- Develop college level religious education programs for ATC and USCA
- Develop adult level religious education programs for Bible Study, Catechism Study and Liturgical Study
- Create fellowship evenings to include meals, socialization and education
- Promote missions and retreats at the parish

**2. Objective for inactive Catholics:**

**Identify fundamental reasons why Catholics have become inactive and present programs inviting them once again to embrace their Catholicism**

**Action Items: Assigned to Religious Education Committee, Evangelization**

**Committee, and Communications Committee**

- Access national and diocesan level social science data concerning inactive Catholics
- Plan outreach to inactive Catholics, communications, including advertising in mass media to build a desire in inactive Catholics to return to the Church
- Provide a reception program for returning Catholics, such as "Landings"
- Encourage active Catholics to invite inactive Catholics to any Catholic educational activity

**3. Objective for those who are not Catholics:**

**Provide the Aiken community at large information about St. Mary Help of Christians parish and the Catholic faith**

**Action Items: Assigned to Religious Education Committee, Evangelization**

**Committee and Communications Committee**

- Engage in outreach programs to those who are not Catholics through the written word, electronic and audio media
- Invite those who are not Catholic to adult religious education programs

**4. Space Requirements identified to satisfy the above stated needs include:**

**Action Item: Assigned to Pastoral and Finance Councils and Buildings, Capital Campaign and Stewardship Committees**

- Meeting Rooms for general meetings are described in previous goal

**5. St. Mary's School space requirements identified to satisfy the needs include:**

**Action Items: Assigned to School Board, Pastoral and Finance Councils and Buildings, Capital Campaign and Stewardship Committees**

- School Office-entry point to school sized for a receptionist area for 12 people
- Health Room, Record Storage Area, Conference Room for 15 persons
- Office for Principal, Office for Secretary, Office for Bookkeeper,
- Office for Counselor, Office for Administrator, Art Class Room

## **GOAL D: SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**By the grace and guidance of the Holy Spirit, in union with the universal church, St. Mary's is known for its outreach to those in need.**

### **Objectives:**

- 1. Provide regular opportunities for ministry leaders/pastoral staff to appeal for volunteers and support.**  
**Action Item: assigned to Stewardship Committee**
  - Increase volunteerism & financial support of Social Justice
  
- 2. Include Hispanics in the St. Vincent de Paul Society to help the needy in our parish, such as, providing assistance to the newly arrived Hispanic Catholics**  
**Action Items: Assigned to the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Hispanic Ministry**
  - Contact the St. Vincent de Paul Society for coordinating specific Hispanic needs
  - Identify individuals in the Hispanic community who will lead the Hispanic volunteers
  
- 3. Establish a network program for the unemployed**  
**Action Items: Assigned to Jobs Network Committee**
  - Investigate established model at All Saints (Atlanta) and evaluate their model
  - Recruit necessary skills
  
- 4. Space requirements identified to satisfy the above stated needs include:**  
**Action Items: Assigned to Pastoral and Finance Councils and Buildings, Capital Campaign and Stewardship Committees**  
  
**For St. Vincent de Paul Society:**
  - Kitchen area with refrigerator, freezer and large pantry
  - Meeting area for clients  
**For HomeWorks**
  - Large storage area for tools and supplies