



Pastoral Vision

**Holy Cross Parish
Kemptville, Ontario**

15th May 2016

Holy Cross Church
505 Clothier St. W., P.O. Box 224
Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our Holy Father Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* wrote:

“I dream of a missionary option, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world.”

What was the original evangelization? What were the apostles about? When we look at that carefully we see that it was about bringing people into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It was about people's lives being redeemed through an encounter with Jesus. It was about coming to know that Jesus is the living Lord who is alive today and on the move.

Coming into a relationship with Jesus is the essence of the new evangelization. Everything else flows from that.

When we think about the first evangelization of the apostles something was necessary. Jesus did not tell them to go out and evangelize right after he rose from the dead. Jesus said wait for the promise of my Father. What was that promise of the Father? It was Pentecost; it was the Holy Spirit.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, the first disciples were sent forth to change the world. It is the Holy Spirit that is the principle agent of the new evangelization. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to our spirits that Jesus is alive, that He is the living Lord, and that He is who He claims to be.

The new evangelization requires a New Pentecost.

On this feast of Pentecost we pray for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our parish of Holy Cross as we embark upon this transforming journey.

Our Gospel Acclamation is “Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.” It is a calling for the Holy Spirit to come upon us, the faithful, the people of God, His Church.

With the Pastoral Council over the past few months, we have been working on developing a “Pastoral Vision” for our Parish of Holy Cross. This document is a starting point, and will be our guide in transforming our parish for the mission given to us by Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Andrew B. Shim

Fr. Andrew B. Shim, Pastor

Pastoral Vision

Holy Cross Parish

Introduction

The times and circumstances in which we find ourselves in the world are nothing that any of us could have easily anticipated or wished for. Knowing what the Lord is asking of us at this time becomes crucial. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has been calling for the Church to become missionary in nature, and for each and every one of us to become missionary disciples, to go out, to bring Christ to the world.

As a parish, and as the people of God, it is right for us to ask what does that look like, and how does this happen? The following scripture passage may help us to focus on the situation at hand:

Ecclesiastes 1: 9-10

What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun.

Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new?"

It has already been, in the ages before us.

We need to look at the mission of the early Church. This is not something new. It is something we may have forgotten, or over time, lost the true meaning and practice. In Matthew's Gospel 28: 16, 18-20: The Commissioning of the Disciples (also referred to as "The Great Commission") we hear:

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. . . . ¹⁸ Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

We find ourselves today in a culture not unlike that of the early church. Early Christians were being persecuted, and the faith was practiced in secret. However, it was their steadfast belief and adherence to the practice of that authentic faith, and the living out of the mission given them by Jesus Christ, that allowed them over time, to change the culture of the world.

For two thousand years, the Catholic Church has made tremendous contributions to the local, national and international communities. Every single day the Catholic Church feeds more people, houses more people, and clothes more people, visits more imprisoned, cares for more sick people, and educates more people than any other institution on the planet.

We have been capable of great achievements down through the centuries, and by the grace of God we are capable of transforming a world that is in rapid social and moral decline by living out our true Catholic faith.

A life of authentic Christian discipleship is not easy and it is no longer something to be presumed – living and sharing the Gospel in our present time has become a radical alternative. But it is clear that our Church needs renewal, and now is the time, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that we are called to act.

Current Situation

Today we live in an ever growing secular culture that has significantly influenced the last two or more generations in our society. This culture has also caused many of us to blindly accept new social directions and practices that are not in keeping with the Word of God, or the teachings of our faith. Over time, many of us have become accustomed to picking and choosing those elements of our Catholic faith that satisfy us, and tend to ignore or reject those things that we find difficult.

Today, it is estimated that eighty percent of baptized Catholics, and ninety percent under the age of forty, no longer practice the faith.

Sadly, we have all witnessed this in our families. We have seen our sons and daughters, grandchildren, brothers and sisters, even spouses and parents who no longer see the need for the Church in their lives. We see this also in our friends, neighbours, co-workers, associates, and we feel powerless to do anything about it. Today, fewer parents bring their children for the sacraments, and many of those who do come, do not feel the need for a relationship with the Church.

Our pastoral practices of fifty years ago are no longer relevant in the culture of today. They no longer make sense, and they do not foster conversion, which is a key element of initiation into the body of Christ. These pastoral practices need to change.

We could focus at length on the various reasons why people drift away from the Church, and these are many and varied. The greater question for us is why would they want to stay? What's so special about being part of this faith community? In addressing these questions, we may find out what needs to change.

In his book "Divine Renovation," Fr James Mallon, in speaking of the many crises in the church, states "I contend that our deepest crisis is an identity crisis...; we have forgotten who we are and what we are called to do as a Church. When this happens, we soon forget not only what our buildings are for, but why we exist as a Church to begin with."

This is not the first time the people of God have needed to recall their true identity. The first step is to recognize that we have lost our way, and that we need to find our rightful direction. This has to be viewed as a tremendous opportunity, and not a burden or problem.

A New Direction

We recognize that we are in need of a cultural change in our Parish to respond to the cultural changes that have rapidly taken place in our society, and in particular our community.

Your Pastoral Council has been working on this Pastoral Vision which will see our Parish being transformed from a Church in maintenance mode, to a Missionary Church structured and organized to carry out the mission given by Jesus.

The following Purpose and Vision statements outline the goal of our Parish in the years ahead.

Our Purpose

"To raise up disciples who joyfully live out the "Great Commission" given to the Church by Jesus Christ."

Our Vision

"Holy Cross Parish is a healthy, vibrant, enthusiastic, and growing faith community, who welcomes all, and brings people to Christ, forms disciples and sends them out to transform the world. Every member is committed to worship, to grow, to engage and to give."

These statements will provide the focus for moving forward. The strategy for the transformation of our Parish will be phased in over a period of years.

We see the development and implementation happening in three phases:

Phase I – Focusing on hospitality, engagement, liturgy, strengths-based ministries, evangelization, the beginning of discipleship formation, and large community groups;

Phase II – Continuation of evangelization, process for the formation of disciples, ongoing faith formation initiatives; and

Phase III – Expanding the formation of disciples, formation of outreach ministries and apostolates into the community.

Implementation of these phases will require a new structure and organization framework, while ensuring we bring with us all the valued gifts and strengths we have in our current model.

Leadership is a key element in this transformation process. The Pastor will be forming a leadership team to assist in carrying out the various activities and functions as we move forward. This Leadership Team will work with the Pastor to develop, in conjunction with the Pastoral Council, a strategic plan for each Phase of development and implementation. The makeup, role and task for these team members, and the organizational structure will evolve in the early stages of this initiative.

Conclusion

In our Parish today, we find ourselves at the crossroads where we can continue to maintain the “status quo” approach of dealing with a shrinking and aging population, or, to realize that change is absolutely essential to become a missionary church.

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* – The Joy of The Gospel, includes a vision statement about the kind of community he wants Catholicism to be: more missionary, more merciful, and with the courage to change.

"I dream of a 'missionary option,' " Francis writes, "that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world, rather than for her self-preservation."

As we move along in the planning and development process, you will be kept up-to-date as each component comes together.

To carry out this transformation, we must rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we journey forward. The first step for us as individuals and as a parish is to pray.

Let us all continue to pray this age old prayer:

Come Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit
and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Holy Spirit
we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations,
Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Our Parish Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord God,
ruler of all creation.

Blessed are you, Risen Jesus,
cornerstone of our faith, lover of us all.

Blessed are you, Spirit of wisdom,
builder of community, our inspiration and guide.

Bless us with generous hearts,
open minds and a willing spirit,
so that united we seek a renewed vision
for our Parish of Holy Cross.

Grant us the courage,
faith and conviction of our ancestors
to face all our challenges
as we continue to build your kingdom here on earth,
now and for all generations to come.

Help us to be a holy people,
where dwells the true and never-failing light,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*Parish Prayer - Holy Cross Pastoral Council 2006
Kemptville, Ontario*

Come, **Follow Me** 