

St. Benedict Parish Transformation

February 2014



St. Benedict Parish Mission Narrative

We, the members of St. Benedict Parish, commit to learning, understanding and living our Catholic faith. The teachings and rules of our namesake, St. Benedict, help to guide our humble journey toward holiness as we share and express our faith in our parish and neighborhood community through our prayer, worship, service, education and daily behavior.

Parish Transformation celebrates the gift of our parish by making our parish stronger and more effective in fulfilling the mission that Jesus has entrusted to his Church.

The ultimate goal of the Parish Transformation process is to learn new ways of looking at parish life, to adopt new pastoral and fiscal practices where it is advantageous, and to initiate an ongoing review and refinement of the mission and vision of the parish at regular intervals.

Archdiocesan Facilitators supported our parish through prayerful group discussions on the following topics:

- Reflection on parish mission, strengths, and survey
- Formation of parish mission narrative and building blocks
- Mission, School, and Finance Team action planning

Over 75 parishes across all six Archdiocese of Chicago Vicariates have participated in Parish Transformation since Fall 2011, with an additional 20-30 parishes joining each wave.

The Parish Transformation Survey, completed by over 300 St. Benedict parishioners, provided valuable feedback on both parish strengths and opportunities for improvement and served as the basis for our parish action plan.

We are a parish facing the challenge of engaging and meeting our members' diverse needs – a parish characterized by its diversity in age, ethnicity and wealth across generations. To meet our members' needs, we fearlessly commit to be a welcoming community to each other and our extended community, consistent with the Gospel message and in the spirit of Pope Francis' recent apostolic exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, through lifelong catechesis and continuous outreach with humble and faith-filled hearts. Our faith and our unity in the Body of Christ, enable us to make this fearless commitment.

Inclusion and Lifelong Catechesis

As we learn, understand and live our Catholic faith, we will realize the power of our faith. Our fellow members and friends in our larger community will come to understand our commitment to revealing our faith through our daily actions. Our commitment to ongoing catechesis will lead our "...people to enter the mystery of Christ, to encounter him and to discover themselves and the meaning of their lives in him..." (National Directory of Catechesis, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., pg. 55.)

We commit to offering learning opportunities about our faith to all parish members and to those in our extended community who seek to understand our beliefs. Ongoing catechesis requires us to understand the varied needs of our members. At distinct life stages, what guidance our members' require about our Catholic faith may be distinct. We must recognize these differences and satisfy their needs in order to strengthen the foundation of our faith community.

Welcoming Communion

Understanding our faith and living it strengthens our sense of communion. We commit to creating a communion that raises our consciousness of how our Catholic faith shapes our daily behavior. This deeper and higher level of communion is more than the joy we experience from the welcoming, hospitality and fellowship shown us by our fellow parishioners. It is "one which gradually 'draws together the stitches' to make a more extensive and thick cover. A threadbare cover will not provide warmth." (Pope Francis, World Youth Day, 2013) This deeper communion reflects the collective spirituality of our parish and increases our understanding of the power of our faith. This intense communion will reveal itself to the wider community as a parish that is welcoming, spiritual, faith-based and inclusive.

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Sharing Time, Talent and Treasure in a Missionary Spirit Beyond Sunday Mass

"By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit." (1 John 4:13)

As we build the foundation for our mission with the pillars of inclusion and lifelong catechesis and of a full, fearless, welcoming communion, we add a third pillar - that of sharing our time, talent and treasure in a missionary spirit beyond Sunday Mass. God has given us the gift of His Spirit. We, the Parish of St. Benedict, look forward to expanding and strengthening the giving and sharing of that Spirit to all our community. We will pray with a charitable heart that we may discern the opportunities to give to each of our brothers and sisters in all their stages of life, and the strength and commitment to give freely. By our actions, St. Benedict Parish will show our community that God resides in each of us as we reach out with love and compassion. By doing so, we will also be living the words of our patron saint: *"As we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God's commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love."*

Our Fourth Pillar

Our Bell Tower is a clarion call to prayer and worship with the three pillars of our mission supporting this call. As we act on realizing our parish mission of inclusion and ongoing catechesis, welcoming communion and sharing our time, talent, and treasure in a missionary spirit, we add a fourth pillar of support – the devotion and faith of our parish community.

St. Benedict Parish Transformation Objectives & Action Plan:

- Modernize and unify communications to reach to all active, non-active and potential parishioners
- Reinvigorate and expand adult religious education programming
- Establish catechetical program around life milestones
- Connect families to catechesis and Mass
- Become fearlessly welcoming and move people outside of comfort zone
- Re-evaluate and educate all on parish ministries
- Proudly champion our parish preparatory school's Vision of Excellence 2016 Plan
- Support in strengthening Catholic Identity across entire block
- Teach stewardship and increase giving of time, talent, and treasures
- Design and plan for future capital needs

Gratitude

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported the Parish Transformation process through your prayers, survey participation, and especially those who journeyed together over the past six months:

Amy Stern	Fr. Rodlin Rodrigue	Kristy Condon	Michael O'Malley
Armi Jerger	Heath Winborn	Linda Krier	Michelle Stevens
Ben Mazzone	Henrietta Skolnick	Luke Howe	Molly Kluznick
Bern Kachinsky	Jan McNeill	Lynne Kattner	Rachel Gemo
Bernie Libao	Jeremy Kiobassa	Marge Lawlor	Renee Brass
Ed Gilger	Joan Wilcox	Mark Jerger	Rick Petrillo
Ed Kestler	Joe Accardi	Marty Lunkes	Rita Kattner
Ellen Reynolds	Joy Walton	Mary Ann Kattner	Terri Aluise
Fr. Jason Malave	Kathleen Sanchez	Melissa Mulhern	Tom Weirath

Prayer of St. Benedict

Gracious and Holy Father,
Grant us the intellect to understand you,
Reason to discern you,
Diligence to seek you,
Wisdom to find you,
A spirit to know you,
A heart to meditate upon you,
May our ears hear you,
May our eyes behold you,
And may our tongues proclaim you.
Grant us grace that our way of life
May be pleasing to you,
That we have the patience to wait for you,
And the perseverance to look for you.
Grant us a perfect end...
your holy presence,
A blessed resurrection and life everlasting.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
our Lord. Amen

Our parish now has a clear mission and plan, but this is just the beginning.

Join the exciting St. Benedict Parish Transformation Journey as we work together to live the mission of Christ.

Stay connected by sharing your email with the parish office today!