



HOPE IN THE FUTURE



DEVELOPING A PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

The Hope in the Future vision is the development of a missionary parish which “is a community called to be open to the Holy Spirit so that the Good News of Jesus Christ can be known to all through welcome, engagement and outreach.” A Parish Mission Statement is a way to concretise this vision in a particular location through discussion with parish groups about who they are as a Christian community and how they promote these ideals of welcome, engagement and outreach.

According to Mary Ann Gubish and Susan Jenny, S.C., “A brief and clear mission statement makes a public declaration about the group’s purpose and helps keep priorities in order, build morale, and provide direction for the future.” (Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council: A Workbook by Mary Ann Gubish and Susan Jenny, S.C. with Arlene McGannon, p.95) They identify 4 areas that should be included in a mission statement: (p. 108)

1. **Identity:** stating the parish name, location, history, make-up, unique characteristics
(We the parish of...)
2. **Purpose:** stating the values, beliefs, central focus, reason for existence
(Our mission is to...)
3. **Function:** identifies the “to whom” and “what” of the life of the parish in broad categories
(We are committed to...)
4. **Future:** addresses areas of challenge, elements that are missing or in need of strengthening.
(We seek to become...)

Two examples of Parish mission statements are:

1. **Parish of St. Joseph, Highgate Parish, London:**

(<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/highgate/parish-mission-statement/>)

The parish of St Joseph is a community of God’s people centred on the word of God and the Eucharist

- where all seek to be loving and caring, welcoming and forgiving, serving and healing,
- where the poor can go for help, the lonely for company and the sorrowing for comfort
- where, with fidelity to our own faith and respect for that of others, we seek the unity for which Christ prayed
- where, in a spirit of mission, we seek to promote God’s glory throughout the world
- where there is a passion for justice and peace
- where, as stewards of creation, we reverence the environment
- where Christ is the way and the truth and the life.

2. St. Andrew Catholic Church, Silver Spring, Maryland

(<https://standrewapostle.org/about-us/mission-statement/>)

The Mission of Saint Andrew Apostle Parish is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ by living our faith as a Catholic Community in worship, service, and support of one another.

We believe that each member is called to discipleship, outreach, and evangelisation to our parish and local community.

We celebrate the gift of Jesus by growing in our faith and living out the mission of our fidelity to the Roman Catholic Church.

Goals and objectives:

Writing parish goals and objectives is a way to put the ideals of the mission statement into practical and achievable steps. This allows the parish to develop a plan for the next few years, provides a way to evaluate the plan at strategic points along the way and make adjustments as necessary. Goals and objectives also provide guidance to various groups and clarify who is responsible for specific tasks that the parish wishes to accomplish.

Goal: “A goal is a brief, clear statement of an outcome to be reached within three to five years. It is a broad, general description that sets forth not how something is to be done but rather what the results will look like.” (Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council: A Workbook, p. 11) Goals need to be action oriented and, thus, need active verbs: create, establish, write, implement etc. Describe what you want to accomplish over a period of 3-5 years and what the outcome or quality of the outcome will be. Some examples of goals are:

1. To develop programmes to foster effective lay leadership by encouraging people to identify and use their gifts within the parish.
2. To create parish religious education opportunities for adults to explore and deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith
3. To strengthen parish outreach efforts to be able to assist the poor in the local area as well as in national and international efforts.

Objectives: “An objective is a brief, clear statement of an outcome to be reached within one year as a step toward one goal in the parish pastoral plan. An objective is specific about what will be done and who will be affected. The outcome is stated in terms that are quantifiable and measurable and each objective specifies a completion date.”

(Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council: A Workbook, p. 114) Some examples of objectives are:

1. To form a committee of 6 – 8 parishioners who will choose one of the resources available from the Diocese or elsewhere to plan 5 evenings of reflection on identifying and using your gifts within the parish setting over the course of the next 12 months.
2. To plan 3 evenings or days of recollection for adults on the theme of “Exploring your Faith” during the next calendar year with the aim of getting at least 10% of the parish to attend one of those events.
3. To coordinate parish outreach events with the existing parish groups and plan at least two information/recruitments sessions and three specific activities to engage the broader parish community in assisting the poor of our area during the coming year.