

**Notre Dame De Lourdes Catholic Church, Price, Utah**  
**Good Shepherd Catholic Church, East Carbon and Missions**  
*2024 Summer Diocesan Assembly - Questions for Discussion*

**1. Define for your community what is a "vibrant and welcoming parish / mission."**

A "vibrant and welcoming parish/mission" is a community characterized by:

1. **Active Participation:** Members are engaged in the life of the parish through regular attendance at Mass, participation in sacraments, and involvement in parish ministries and events. The parish fosters a sense of belonging and active contribution from all its members.
2. **Warm Hospitality:** The parish extends a heartfelt welcome to everyone, including newcomers and visitors. Members greet each other with warmth, offer support, and create an environment where everyone feels valued and included.
3. **Spiritual Growth:** There is a focus on deepening the faith of the community through regular opportunities for spiritual enrichment, such as Bible studies, faith formation programs, and retreats. The parish encourages personal and communal growth in the understanding and practice of the Catholic faith.
4. **Outreach and Service:** The parish actively engages in outreach efforts to serve the needs of the local and global community. This includes supporting charitable initiatives, social justice causes, and providing assistance to those in need.
5. **Diverse and Inclusive:** The parish embraces and celebrates the diversity of its members, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued. It actively works to break down barriers and build a community that reflects the universal nature of the Church.
6. **Supportive Environment:** Members support one another through life's joys and challenges, fostering a sense of family and mutual care. The parish provides resources and support for various needs, including pastoral care, counseling, and community-building activities.
7. **Active Communication:** The parish maintains open and effective communication channels, keeping members informed about parish life and opportunities for involvement. It encourages feedback and actively listens to the needs and concerns of its members.

In essence, a vibrant and welcoming parish at Notre Dame de Lourdes is one where faith is lived fully, relationships are nurtured, and the community comes together to grow in holiness and service.

**2. Some parish reports indicated that their local parish/mission pastoral plan is "a living document," meaning that they have a built-in means for allowing the plan to evolve and change as needs and context change.**

- If you have not already built this into your local planning, what do you think would be some important, specific actions your parish or mission can take to ensure that the plan is a "living document."
- If you already have built this into your planning, what recommendations would you make to a parish that wants to ensure that the parish or mission pastoral plan is a living document? Are there any pitfalls you would warn them about? What advice do you have for avoiding pitfalls?

### **To ensure the Plan is a "Living Document" we would like to**

1. **Foster a Culture of Flexibility:** Encourage a mindset that embraces change and continuous improvement. Communicate that the pastoral plan is not static but an evolving tool designed to meet the parish's needs.
2. **Document Changes and Updates:** Keep a record of changes made to the plan and the reasons for these changes. This helps in understanding the evolution of the plan and maintaining continuity over time.
3. **Celebrate Achievements and Learn from Failures:** Recognize and celebrate the successes achieved through the plan. Similarly, *analyze and learn* from areas where the plan did not meet its goals, using these lessons to inform future updates.
4. **Engage the Parish Community:** Regularly engage the parish community in discussions about the plan. This involvement helps in keeping the plan relevant and ensures that it reflects the needs and aspirations of the entire community.

### **Pitfalls to Avoid**

1. **Neglecting Regular Reviews:** Failing to review and update the plan regularly can make it obsolete. Ensure that there is a clear process and timeline for reviews.
2. **Ignoring Feedback:** Disregarding feedback from parishioners can lead to a disconnect between the plan and the actual needs of the community. Actively seek and incorporate feedback to keep the plan relevant.
3. **Overloading the Plan:** Including too many initiatives or goals can overwhelm the parish and dilute focus. Prioritize key goals and ensure that they are achievable and measurable.
4. **Lack of Communication:** Failing to communicate changes and updates effectively can lead to confusion and disengagement. Keep the parish informed about updates and the reasons behind changes.
5. **Inadequate Training:** Not providing adequate training for those implementing the plan can result in ineffective execution. Ensure that leaders and volunteers are well-prepared to carry out their roles.

### **Advice for Avoiding Pitfalls**

1. **Set Clear Processes:** Establish clear processes for reviewing and updating the plan, including roles, responsibilities, and timelines. Ensure that these processes are communicated to all involved.
2. **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Foster open and ongoing dialogue with parishioners and leaders. Encourage transparency and inclusivity in discussions about the plan.
3. **Maintain Focus:** While being adaptable, ensure that the plan remains focused on core objectives. Avoid spreading resources too thin by prioritizing key initiatives.
4. **Monitor Implementation:** Regularly monitor how well the plan is being implemented and address any issues promptly. Use feedback and data to make informed adjustments.

### **3. Increasing ownership and a sense of belonging among parishioners for the parish/mission pastoral plan**

How can you increase the share of parishioners who are actively involved in building up the parish or mission as a vibrant, welcoming community through implementation of the parish/mission pastoral plan?

How will you share the parish/mission pastoral plan with your community?

## **Increasing Parishioner Involvement**

### **1. Create Engagement Opportunities:**

- **Committees and Task Forces:** Form committees or task forces for different aspects of the pastoral plan. Encourage parishioners to join based on their interests and skills. This hands-on involvement helps build ownership and commitment.
- **Volunteer Programs:** Develop volunteer programs related to the pastoral plan's goals. Provide various opportunities for parishioners to contribute, whether through service projects, ministry roles, or event planning.

### **2. Foster a Culture of Inclusion:**

- **Encourage Participation:** Actively invite parishioners to share their ideas and feedback. Use surveys, suggestion boxes, and town hall meetings to gather input and involve them in shaping the plan.
- **Diverse Representation:** Ensure diverse representation in planning and implementation teams. Include voices from different age groups, backgrounds, and life experiences to make the plan more inclusive and relevant.

### **3. Provide Training and Resources:**

- **Leadership Training:** Offer training for parish leaders and volunteers to equip them with the skills needed to implement the plan effectively.
- **Educational Workshops:** Conduct workshops or informational sessions to educate parishioners about the plan's goals, strategies, and their role in achieving them.

### **4. Recognize Contributions:**

- **Acknowledge Efforts:** Publicly recognize and celebrate the contributions of individuals and groups involved in the implementation of the plan. This can be done through announcements, newsletters, or special events. Be thankful to each other.

### **5. Incorporate Feedback Mechanisms:**

- **Regular Check-Ins:** Schedule regular check-ins to assess progress and gather feedback on the implementation of the plan. Use this feedback to adjust and show that parishioners' input is valued.

## **Sharing the Parish/Mission Pastoral Plan**

### **1. Communicate Through Multiple Channels:**

- **Church Bulletin:** Regularly include updates about the pastoral plan in the church bulletin. Provide summaries and key points to keep parishioners informed.
- **Website and Social Media:** Post the pastoral plan on the parish website and share updates through social media platforms. Ensure that information is accessible and regularly updated.
- **Email Newsletters:** Send out email newsletters with information about the pastoral plan, including progress reports, upcoming events, and ways to get involved.

### **2. Host Informational Meetings:**

- **Stewardship Fairs or Ministry Fairs:** Organize town hall meetings or informational sessions where the pastoral plan can be presented in detail. Allow time for questions and discussion.

- **Workshops and Forums:** Hold workshops or forums to delve into specific aspects of the plan. These sessions can provide more in-depth information and encourage dialogue.
- 3. **Visual Displays:**
  - **Posters and Flyers:** Use posters and flyers displayed in common areas of the church to highlight key components of the pastoral plan and ways to get involved.
  - **Interactive Displays:** Create interactive displays where parishioners can learn more about the plan and provide their input.
- 4. **Personal Invitations:**
  - **One-on-One Conversations:** Engage parishioners in one-on-one conversations to personally invite them to participate in the implementation of the plan. Share how their involvement can make a difference.
- 5. **Incorporate in Liturgical Celebrations:**
  - **Homilies and Prayers:** Incorporate themes related to the pastoral plan into homilies and prayers during Mass. This helps connect the plan to the spiritual life of the parish.

#### **Some ideas for Successful Implementation**

- **Ensure Clarity:** Clearly articulate the goals, strategies, and benefits of the pastoral plan. Avoid jargon and make sure that the information is easily understandable.
- **Build Relationships:** Develop strong relationships with parishioners by being approachable and open to their ideas and concerns. Trust and rapport will enhance their engagement.
- **Be Flexible:** Be open to adjusting the plan based on feedback and changing needs. Flexibility shows that the plan is a living document and reinforces the sense of ownership.