

Sample Pastoral Plan

St. Albert the Great, Victoria

March 1, 1999

St. Albert Mission Statement

St. Albert the Great Parish chooses to follow Jesus Christ and bring the gospel message of salvation to all people in our community. We do this by first finding our focus within the Eucharistic assembly and then moving out into the secular world. We believe that God's Word is continually being revealed to the world in many fashions and that our role is to discern this revelation and cooperate with God's grace wherever it is found.

All parish plans in this document should be reviewed within the context of the Indicators of Parish Vitality and our parish mission statement. This mission statement was approved in March 1997 by the parish pastoral council after considerable consultation with parishioners.

Introduction

This pastoral plan was developed by the parish consultations committee in collaboration with the pastoral council. It is the result of the following steps.

1. In September 1997 the *With a Heart Renewed* survey was administered at all parish Masses to people age 16 and over. A total of 450 surveys were completed. The parish consultations committee studied the results, paying particular attention to those areas where the parish was not strong but parishioners had high expectations.
2. In October 1997 the parish staff, the consultations committee and the pastoral council completed a parish evaluation, using materials provided in the *With a Heart Renewed* manual . The parish was compared to the ideal parish, as defined by the Diocese in their report "Indicators of Parish Vitality."
3. Using the survey data and the results from the parish leaders' evaluations, the first draft of the pastoral plan was written. Parishioners were given opportunity in January 1998 to comment on the plan via a parish meeting or written comments. The plan was revised in February 1998 in light of parishioner suggestions. This became the second draft.
4. Between April and October 1998 three people from the parish met with seven other parishes in our geographical area to discuss our parish plans and look for ways to strengthen our faith. Representing St. Albert were: Father Robert Taylor, pastor; Samantha Lockheed, PCP coordinator; and John Evan, pastor council chairman.
5. In November 1998 the parish PCP committee and the pastoral council revised the second draft of the pastoral plan in light of discussions with our neighbor parishes. This third draft was

then presented to parishioners in early December. Like with the first draft, parishioners had opportunity to comment on the plan via a parish meeting or written comments. The third draft was revised slightly in light of parishioner advice to become the final pastoral plan, which you are now reading.

Parish Priorities

Priority 1: *to provide a high-quality youth ministry program for our parish high school students, so that their faith might be strengthened and an experience of Christian community be developed among them.* (Indicator of Parish Vitality #4: Education/Formation).

High school youth ministry is listed as the top priority here because the parish Mass surveys indicated that parishioners had a high desire for a strong youth ministry. This was confirmed by the parish leadership in their separate evaluation of the parish's strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, pastoral council members indicated that both parents and youth have been asking for a good youth ministry program for at least the last five years. All parish meetings to discuss the pastoral plans confirm the importance of this issue.

The following objectives will help the parish address priority 1.

Objective 1-1: by October 1, 1998 to have parish leaders meet with a representative of the Diocesan Youth Ministry Office to discuss our parish's need to address youth ministry. This has already been accomplished.

Objective 1-2: by January 1, 1999 to identify 5-9 high school students, who seem to take an interest in parish life, and invite them to a meeting to discuss the needs of high school students. The students have been identified and a meeting is scheduled for February 6.

Objective 1-3: during the spring of 1999 to host a youth evening, to which all parish high schools students will be invited.

Objective 1-4: by fall 1999 to establish a "youth seat" on the pastoral council, with the youth representative being elected by high school parishioners.

Priority 2: *to increase the participation of young adults (ages 18-25) in active parish life, so that they may live out their baptismal commitment and the parish may receive their gifts and talents.* (Indicator of Parish Vitality #4: Education/Formation).

Participation of young adults in the parish is the second priority because of its high ranking in both the parishioner Mass survey and the leadership evaluation. Many parishioners have expressed concern that once young people get married, they are not seen at church until the birth of their children. This concern continued to be expressed at parish meetings.

The following objectives will help the parish address priority 2.

Objective 2-1: by the end of 1998 to have parish leaders research how other parishes in our size category engage young adults in their parish communities. This objective is being worked on now.

Objective 2-2: by the end of 1999 to make a presentation to all parish groups, encouraging them to recruit young adults and presenting them with some ideas on how to do this.

Objective 2-3: beginning in 2000 to provide young adults who are receiving preparation for either their marriage or the baptism of their children with a brochure which lists the opportunities for involvement in our parish.

Priority 3: *to increase the experience of community within the parish, especially within the Sunday Eucharistic assembly, so that we might better live out our faith in support of, and supported by, one another.* (Indicator of Parish Vitality #1: Worship; and #2: Community).

While there is general satisfaction with the Sunday Liturgies at our parish, sufficient concern was raised in the parishioner survey and at parish meetings to make this item the third priority. Many people who have visited other parishes report a vibrant sense of community. They ask, “why can’t we have this at St. Albert.” The parish leadership evaluation concurs with them.

The following objectives will help the parish address priority 3.

Objective 3-1: by October 1, 1998 to solicit assistance from the Diocesan Office of Divine Worship to help the parish improve Sunday Liturgies. This objective has been delayed while a new liturgy committee is trained. The new date for implementation is March 1, 1999.

Objective 3-2: during the autumn of 1998 to begin using greeters at all Sunday Masses to welcome people coming into church. This has already been accomplished.

Objective 3-3: during the winter of 1998-99 to have coffee and donuts available weekly in the church hall after the principal Sunday Mass and encourage people to meet other parishioners there. This is been implemented now.

Objective 3-4: by September 1999 to begin the regular practice of publishing photographs of new parishioners in the parish bulletin.

Objective 3-5: by November 1999 to invite new parishioners to a semi-annual potluck supper so they might meet other parishioners and find out more about opportunities for involvement in the parish.

Priority 4: *to become involved in serving the needs of the poor and sick in our local civic community.* (Indicator of Parish Vitality #3: Service).

While service to the poor was not one of the highest priorities in the parishioner survey, parish leadership has strong convictions that some form of social ministry should be identified in St. Albert's pastoral plans. This conviction stems from Matthew 25 and various papal encyclicals of the past 30 years.

The following objectives will help the parish address priority 4.

Objective 4-1: by March 1, 1999 to recruit 5-9 parishioners to serve on a new parish Social Ministry Committee of the Pastoral Council.

Objective 4-2: by autumn 1999 to discuss with neighboring churches, both Catholic and Protestant, the feasibility of sponsoring a joint food pantry for the needy.

Future Directions

The leadership of St. Albert believes that this pastoral plan will benefit the parish greatly by outlining specific ways in which we may better seek the reign of God and practice gospel values. At the same time we realize that either parish priorities or, more likely, some objectives may change over the next year. Therefore we intend to annually review our pastoral plan to make sure it is still relevant. This review will be conducted each spring by the pastoral council. Any changes to the plan will be communicated to all parishioners.