



Writing a Mission Statement

While writing a parish mission statement can seem like a daunting task, it can also generate energy and be a wonderful positive force within a community. St. Gerard Majella in Hollis, Queens had such a great experience that we checked in with their Pastor, Fr. Ed Doran and asked him to share the Council's experience in developing their mission statement:

At our parish assembly two of the questions asked of the participants were "If Jesus were here today what words would he give us to direct our future?" The second question was "What makes our parish unique and special?" Detailed notes of the responses to these questions were kept in order to provide a foundation for a Parish Mission Statement.

When the Parish Pastoral Team met to begin the brainstorming session in which the Parish Mission statement was to be drafted the summary sheets of parish input on these two questions became the basis of our discernment process.

The four major areas which provided a framework for our discussion included:

Identity – identifying elements of the parish – name, location, unique character, and history

Purpose – focuses on the core values, beliefs, and the reason for the parish's existence

Function – identifies the commitments of the parish.

Future – challenges and areas that need strengthening

The August and September meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council focused on beginning the process of writing a Parish Mission Statement. Meetings were opened with prayerful reflection on the parishioners comments on the two questions asked of them during the Parish Assembly. These two Council meetings worked to come up with a few potential Parish Mission Statements.

These Statements were shared with parishioners through an insert in the Parish bulletin in order to involve them in process the selection of one Mission Statement. Parishioners were asked to comment on the Statements written by the Council in order to:

- vote on that statement which best reflected Saint Gerard Majella parish
- submit their own Mission Statement
- edit the Mission Statements which the Council generated.

Once all parishioner input was collected a final meeting was held and anyone in the parish who would like to have further input on the adoption of the Parish Mission Statement was invited to attend the meeting to select the Parish Mission Statement.

At this meeting the final editing of the Mission Statement was adopted with the grateful approval of all present.

This process was time consuming but it generated a great deal of excitement and involved a good number of parishioners in an important process. We have created a Parish Mission Statement which every member of the congregation can look at and feel a sense of pride that they were involved in giving birth to that Statement.

The Parish Mission Statement for St. Gerard Majella:

"We, the faith community of Saint Gerard Majella, follow the inspiration of the words of St. Gerard that, "the most Blessed Sacrament is Christ made visible while the poor person is Christ again made visible." Gathered around the table of the Lord, we provide a place for all people of every race and color. We welcome all to the table of the Lord to provide them with an opportunity to grow in Christ. We strive to bring Christ to all."