

*St. Frances Cabrini Parish Community*

*Parish Pastoral Plan*

*Part Five*

*Parish Priority: Fully Engaged in the Mass*

Hello everyone. I am honored to have been asked to share some thoughts on the work of the Envisioning Team over the past twelve months. I was blessed to work with the most amazing group of people, and to hear the thoughts and shared values of my fellow Team Members. I believe that the Holy Spirit was indeed stirring our hearts and imaginations as we crafted a vision of deeper engagement at Mass. I would like to say how grateful I am to Monsignor McCormac for the courage to initiate this process of reflection on the strengths of our Parish Community, as well as identifying areas for growth. It is only through his leadership that we have entered this process and been able to complete this initial step.

Today, I present to you one of the areas that our Team identified for growth. After much discussion, we identified being **FULLY ENGAGED IN THE MASS** as a priority for our Parish Community. Here is our description of this statement.

*We desire that our parishioners be fully engaged physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually in order to experience the Liturgy so as to be changed by the graces that come to us through the Mass.*

Let's unpack this statement. When we come to church, do we reflect on where we are going? Do we take time on the short trip to church and enter church with the proper mindset? Do we think about the words that we pray, and the gestures that we make? Over the years, we have all heard from our Catholic families, friends and co-workers who say that they get nothing out of Mass. Even those of us that do come to church and are actively practicing our faith can sometimes use a friendly reminder. To be fully engaged physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually is indeed a challenge. If you already are actively engaged in Mass, thank the Lord for that blessing, and perhaps see who you might be able to help. Maybe it's a family member, a friend, or a neighbor. As an active organist who spends time in choir lofts, I sometimes find it frustrating to look down at the back rows of the church and see people on their cell phones. It's hard to imagine that these parishioners are fully engaged in the Mass. We can do better for Our Heavenly Father. We are all on different parts of our journey in this life, and if we allow ourselves to more fully participate in the Mass, our relationship with our Lord will strengthen and grow. It all starts with a purposeful, well-formed mindset.

As a Team and after much discussion, we developed the following rationale for the priority that was named above.

*We find in the Mass the strength, guidance and support we need each day, and we believe that Mass helps others to discover that God is an integral and essential presence in our daily lives.*

With 168 hours in a week, how can we hope to truly be strengthened for the trials and challenges that will cross our paths in just one hour on Sunday? We must carry the joy and energy that emanate from full engagement in Mass and the Eucharist, and it must sustain us until we gather once again the following week as a church family. The Implementation Committee will continue the good work of the Envisioning Team and move the Parish Pastoral Plan forward by creating pathways to keeping Christ first and foremost in our daily lives.

As you can see, our goal of fuller engagement for our Parish Community will ask each of us to take an honest look into our hearts, and to seek opportunities to draw closer to our Lord, and to one another. As I look at your faces at Mass each weekend, I am so grateful to see such faithful people who want to love and serve the Lord as I do. There is so much that divides us in the secular world today, but I know that when I walk into the Lord's house, it is my safe harbor in this very stormy world. It is your safe harbor, too, and the place for us to hear the Good News of the Gospel, and to be nourished by our Lord. Let us help lead others to this corner of the vineyard called St. Frances Cabrini, where they too, can benefit from the spiritual nutrients that our Lord wants for all His children.

Thanks for taking the time to read this, and for making St. Frances Cabrini an awesome parish!

Ad Dei Gloriam  
To the Glory of God

Hank Wajda