

St. John Paul II CATHOLIC PARISH

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January 24, 2023

Dear people of St. John Paul II Parish,

“Without a vision the people of God lose restraint” (Proverbs 29:18). A dream, a vision, a goal – these are required for God's people to move forward. Since the day of opening in the summer of 2013, St John Paul II has always had a vision of what God has called us to be, “the hands and feet of Christ.” I consider it a privilege to be the first pastor of this parish and unfolding this vision from day one.

In anticipation for the 10th anniversary of establishing our parish, I asked the pastoral council to engage the parish in the strategic planning process to discern where the Holy Spirit was leading us. This process unfolded at the time in our world some people were hurting, and many were still angry, full of doubt, or full of fear. By engaging the parish in the strategic planning, we echoed the famous words of the Second Vatican Council: “the joys and hopes and the sorrows and anxieties of the people today, especially of those who are poor and afflicted, are also the joys and hopes, sorrows and anxieties of the disciples of Christ” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 1). Having discerned the voice of the Holy Spirit, I would like to introduce to you the three strategic priorities:

Our first strategic priority is to enhance our **parish communications**. We are aware of the force of secularization, the attempt to eliminate Christ and His ruling in our world, so we need to effectively proclaim the Lord to our culture. To effectively proclaim Christ, we strive to communicate among ourselves more clearly. Furthermore, enhancing communication among us will foster a stronger bond among us as disciples of Christ.

Our second strategic priority is to strengthen our **adult faith formation**. The Second Vatican Council employed an ancient expression (which is repeated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no.1655-1658) the *ecclesia domestica*/domestic church to describe each family. It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children.” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11). The only way that we can strengthen the *ecclesia domestica*, the basic block of our church and the fundamental fabric of our society, is by inviting the adults in our parish to be formed as disciples of Christ. Only when parents allow the parish to equip them as the first catechists (teachers of the faith), will the Gospel of Christ be echoed in the comfort of the living room of each of family in the parish. Thus, each family is truly the *ecclesia domestica*.

Our third strategic priority is to engage parishioners to lead and to volunteer. As a priest who embraced stewardship as a way of life, I name this third priority as engaging parishioners to be **Christian stewards**. Through baptism, we belong to the family of God's children, and we

live out our baptismal call in the context of our local parish. A Christian steward is the one who recognizes his role, dignity, and responsibilities as one baptized in Christ. Just as a son in my own family, I have my privileges and responsibilities in that home; and so, each baptized member of the parish has a role and responsibilities in this spiritual home. Our secular culture presents serious challenges for parishioners today to be Christian stewards. However, in answering our baptismal call, we discover our dignity and our worth as the believers in Christ.

In closing, I have two remarks: First, a sincere thank you to all who participated in the development of the plan; and I acknowledge it took more than a year to complete this plan. Second, being that this is the first strategic plan for St. John Paul II Parish, I echo the same words of our parish patron saint in his inaugural homily as the Vicar of Christ on earth on October 22, 1978: "Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ." The plan is only effective when we continue our involvement in our parish, and above all opening our hearts to be formed as our Lord's disciples. Pray that God's spirit gives us the courage to do just that.

Sincerely in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lam T. Le', written in a cursive style.

Rev. Lam T. Le, Pastor