

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here? said Alice. “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the cat.

“I don’t much care where,” said Alice. “Then it doesn’t much matter which way you walk,” said the cat.

Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

That may seem like a strange quote with which to begin this homily. But the direction of our parish is very important. As a parish, we, you and I, must reflect together on some important questions:

- 1) What is our parish all about?
- 2) What are our values?
- 3) Where are we going?
- 4) What do we need to get there?

1) What is our parish all about?

Where have we been?

For many, this is and has been a place and a community where the great events of our lives are celebrated and lived in the context of faith: birth, growth, reconciliation, marriage, healing and death. Here we have witnessed baptisms, been sheltered in sorrow, confirmed our young adults, celebrated committed love and prayed over the remains of those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith. Here we express the dream, the vision: our reaching out towards God and one another. It is here that friendships have been forged with others who travel on the journey of life. It is a community of people who pray together.

Here we come into contact with Jesus, who comes to us in word and sacrament. Here our Lord challenges us, teaches us, comforts us and leads us to salvation. Here we have found help in our role of sharing our faith with our children and university students. Here family life has been strengthened and it has been here that our awareness of justice and injustice has been sharpened. It is also here that we feel our contact with the rest of the church.

What should our parish be? The parish is the people of God called to live and love and serve one another. The parish is the body of Christ and we are all a part of that Body. But the parish does not exist for itself; it exists for Christ and Christ’s work in our world.

As a parish we are about **worship, liturgy and spiritual growth.**

As a parish we are about **Evangelization.** We must pass on the

Good News of Jesus to our children to our world. We must develop an adult understanding of our faith. We are called to reach out to inactive and alienated Catholics and to those who have never heard the Good news.

We are also about family life, Service and Justice. The parish exists to support the home church, the church in the world. The parish can only be as strong as the families that make it up. We are challenged to serve the widowed, the orphaned, the elderly, the teenaged, the university student, the divorced and single parents, the disabled and the hurting, the hungry and the homeless. We are called to bring the Good news, liberating the oppressed and bringing about a more just society so that every human person in every circumstance is honored and valued.

We are about building community. We are invited to be a community who knows each other, cares about each other, and works together to build up the Body of Christ right here and right now.

2) So where are we going?

Those answers will be discovered through our planning process. Pastoral planning is the primary responsibility of our Pastoral Council. With the busyness of life today, we know that if we are going to use our time, talent, and treasure effectively and efficiently, we need to plan.

But authentic and realistic planning can only come about after we have listened to the needs and the evaluations of as many people in the parish as possible. We have designed a short evaluation instrument to begin this process. We are asking you to give us a snapshot of the different areas of our parish. It will take a just a few minutes.

The surveys are located in each pew. We invite everyone to fill one out now. The first eight questions will give us a sense of who we are. For the rest of the questions, please use the key to rate the quality of these various areas of parish life. The key is: *1 = poor*
2 = fair *3 = good* *4 = very good* *X = Not enough information.* Please return the completed survey in the offertory baskets.

The Pastoral Council will also be hosting listening sessions this summer and fall — Watch the bulletin and our website for the dates.

Thank you for your honesty and time in helping us plan for our future. By working together, our pastoral plan will provide us with direction and purpose, keeping us grounded in the mission of Christ.

(If you missed Liturgy this weekend, an on-line survey is available on our website, www.christthekingccm.org - click on the survey button.)