

St. Joseph Parish

April 2009

State of the Parish

April 22, 2010

Compiled by

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Chairperson, Pastoral Parish Council

Acknowledgement

I would like to voice my appreciation to all the member of the parish leadership who took the time and effort to provide information on the many ministries of St. Joseph Parish. It if were not for your dedication and commitment, this report would have never been completed. I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Larry Hiner, Trish Lenkiewicz, and Trina Koontz for their superb editing skills in making this the document what it is.

– Peter Vacura, Chair, Parish Pastoral Council

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St. Joseph Parish

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1 Introduction

The strength of a Parish can be measured by successful leadership, strong sense of community, and the continued building of the discipleship. St. Joseph Parish has been blessed with the growth of our community beyond expectations. The Parish has over 5,000 families in the database, with over 3,800 families have some demonstrable involvement in the parish. Current ministries are gaining membership and new ones are unfolding. With growth come greater needs within the Parish. These needs can only be responded to with increased participation of the parishioners. We are meant to serve and not be served.

1.1 Purpose

The Parish community provides its members with a sense of belonging to our Lord's family of followers. We are disciples and are called upon to share our treasures and talents. This report will show clearly that St. Joseph Parish has grown to be a vibrant, caring and loving community ready to respond to the needs of one another.

1.2 Parish Overview

The following is a summary of the many ministries present in the Parish and the involvement of so many parishioners as to assure that each one is successful and meets the need of the community at large.

1.3 Parish Mission Statement

A Parish is guided by its mission statement, a statement that best defines the vision and purpose of the Parish as a whole. The mission statement sets the tone of the Parish and where the focus should be in terms of meeting the needs of not only our own community, but the communities around us.

The Parish mission statement was reviewed and modified by the Pastoral Parish Council in August 2008. The council felt that the mission statement needed to be revised to better reflect the current and future position of the Parish as it moves forward.

The mission statement of the Parish is, "Saint Joseph Parish strives to enable all members of our community to grow in Faith and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ

through inspiring worship, enriching religious education, service oriented ministries, and ensuring a welcoming environment."

2 Parish Leadership

2.1 Parish Pastoral Council

Parish leadership is not only present in the Pastor. It also resides in the Parish Pastoral Council. The St. Joseph Parish Council was reinstated in August of 2006. The council is currently made up of twelve members of the Parish. As many as five new members are installed every year. Members serve three year terms. The council is tasked with providing recommendations to the Pastor on issues that involve worship, community involvement, enhancing our ministries, and optimizing space in our facilities.

The council has participated in annual retreats. Purpose of the retreats is to galvanize the beliefs of the councilors to become a spiritual team of disciples tasked with leading the Parish. The retreats also help to build strong relationships amongst the members learning to all be active members in this journey of faith and discernment.

Recent accomplishments of the council have been establishment of By-Laws, facilities use agreement, assigning names of Saints to rooms on campus, and creation of a consolation ministry. The council is also planning a Parish gathering for parishioners to attend and express their needs of the Parish. The result will be the creation of a Five-Year Plan for moving the Parish forward in an effort to meet these needs.

The mission statement of the Parish Pastoral Council is, "As a Pastoral Council of Saint Joseph Parish, we are called through our Baptism as priest (worship), prophet (witness) and king (service), to serve as advisors and councilors to our PASTOR. Our primary functions are facilitating the proclamation of the Word of God to all the faithful, assisting in planning to meet pastoral goals, proposing the development of pastoral service, evaluating the effectiveness of the programs, services and ministries to meet the needs of the community and reaching and identifying the needs, hopes, lives and activities of the people of God."

2.2 Finance Council

The Parish Finance Council was originally formed during the time Monsignor O'Connor was the Pastor of our Parish. The Finance Council's role was to advise the

Pastor on Parish financial affairs; observe and facilitate preparation of the annual budget and the annual Parish Financial Report to be submitted to the Diocese.

With the arrival of Fr. Bosque, the Finance Council created a mission statement, adopted By-Laws, revised the Charter of Accounts, changed financial institutions and increased its membership to eight and three ex-officio. The Finance Council advises the Pastor on Parish financial affairs, facilitates the preparation of the budget and the Annual Parish Financial Report to be submitted to the diocese. We meet monthly to ensure complete and accurate bookkeeping of the Parish finances and formulation of the Parish report to the faithful. Additionally, they develop and update when needed a financial plan, monitor surplus Parish funds and maintain professional confidentiality. Also, they support the vision and ministry of the Parish and its members.

The Finance Council has approved funding for the following tasks that have been accomplished over the past three years:

- Approved funds to raise the “organ pit”
- Approved funding for the removal of the glass wall from the Chapel area to enhance worship space
- Donated \$1 Million for the start-up of St. Maria Goretti Parish
- Maintained Endowment Fund and Parochial Fund
- Prepare, review and approve the annual Parish budgets and reports (which are published semi-annually).
- Approved funding of the Parish Office conversion
- Arranged for a new telecommunications provider
- Planned and delivered a stewardship presentation to the congregation
- Allocate funding for campus directory panels
- Develop 2009-2010 Budget for all Ministries and the Parish
- Allocated funding to renovate a classroom wall to enhance worship space (currently in progress)

Planned future activities include:

- Allocate funding for a new Social Hall roof

2.3 Parish Office

The growth of the Parish over the past few years has warranted an increase in the administrative staff required to handle the day-to-day operations of the Parish. With an increase in the number of families comes an increase in the demands made on the Parish for spiritual support and guidance. The office is now staffed with four

administrators, two plant operators, and an ever-expanding group for Faith Formation.

3 Parish Liturgical Ministries

One of the greatest strengths and signs of our Parish vibrancy is the multitude of successful ministries that are currently in place. The true sense of community can be witnessed by the many activities that these many ministries participate in.

3.1 Liturgy Committee

St. Joseph Parish has been in the process of developing the Liturgical Committee. This committee has been meeting through the past year, inviting members of the various ministries which serve our Parish and liturgy. This meeting has been spearheaded by the leadership of Fr. Peter Bosque, with the intent to re-direct its leadership to the Director of Music and Liturgy, John Grassadonia.

We join the ministries together to reflect upon the 'themes' of the upcoming liturgical celebrations; the environment and flow we wish to create as we pass through each season of the liturgical calendar; the planning and preparation needed for our sacramental celebrations, such as First Communion, Confirmation, Baptism, Penance, etc.

The liturgical committee is dedicated to creating a full, conscious and active participation of the assembly and to foster and develop those actions which support and promote the evangelizing mission of the church. Through the liturgy and those who serve it, as well as those who receive it, we dedicate ourselves to creating a church that is alive with the Holy Spirit; listening, following and serving as One Body of Christ. Though we are continually developing and transforming ourselves into the vision of Christ and His Holy Catholic Church, we look forward to the continued growth and fruits of this committee as we journey in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3.2 Comité Litúrgico Hispano Parroquial

The purpose of the Comité Litúrgico Hispano is to serve as a bridge, a voice, a liaison between the Pastor, Priest, Parish Council, Liturgy Committee, and the Hispanic multi-cultural diversity community to identify and respond to their needs, under the guidance of Deacon Ramirez and the support of the Pastor while working collaboratively with the Priest and other committees. Our mission is to serve and promote the Hispanic community to cherish values that are central to the service of the church and society, a sense of community that celebrates life

through our cultural religion devotions. Encourage them to engage in the life of the Church and help shape its evangelization mission by taking an active role in service to Christ.

The Comité Litúrgico Hispano Coordinator in 2006 was Jesus Arroyo. Since 2007 the role has been shared between Esther Cuellar-Valadez and Carlos Viña. There are currently 11 members in the program and it serves both St. Joseph's Parish and St. Vincent de Paul Mission.

Each of the following members served as leads in the ministry of:

- Sacristan, Altar Servers & Monitors - Carlos Viña
- Pre-Baptismal Classes - Jesus Arroyo
- Lectors - Lupita Viña
- Eucharist Ministers - Mario Perez
- Choir/Music - Eliseo Garcia
- Bible Study - Mariano Barrientos
- Hospitality - Celsa y Leonardo Ramirez-
- Prayer Group - Matilde y Luis Zubiria
- Collection - Raquel Ortiz

The program has had the following Accomplishments/Activities:

- In 2003 the Comité Litúrgico Hispano Parroquial was established by Fr. Atienza to respond to the needs of the growing Hispanic community and to provide support to the Coordinator Jesus Arroyo. Fr. Atienza invited and encouraged the lead ministers to take an active role in service to Christ and promote others to serve in the ministries. Today there are over 40 ministers serving at the 1:00 pm Spanish Mass.
- We prompt and encourage parishioners to participate in service to Christ.
- Provide training in collaboration with Deacon Ramirez and other clergy members for ministers.
- Plan and coordinate the services for Good Friday, Las Posadas and the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The ministry is anxious to continue serving and responding to the needs of the growing Spanish-speaking parishioners by working closely and collaboratively with the Pastor, priest and other committees.

3.3 Arts & Environment

The Arts & Environment Committee was established by our Pastor Fr. Peter Bosque in August 2007 with an attention to detail in architectural style, the order of the Mass, Liturgical environmental design, and awareness to our community's need for pleasing aesthetics in order to enhance our worship and participation. The committee is comprised of eight members lead by Carol Aivegedis and Vicky Tereau.

Collectively we have worked in aid with our Liturgy Committee in order to build on a theme for a particular season such as: Advent 2007, when we created a series of hanging banners representing the O Antiphon prayers; and during Lent 2008 we created wall hangings in the theme of The Beatitudes. And always with high regard to Christmas season planning we have worked to create a sense of the Nativity/Crèche for our community and for our Faith Formation children and families. Our latest endeavors have been to create hanging banners and sanctuary wall hangings for Easter 2009; a series of Trinity symbols with Baptismal water and light representations.

All of our creations have been planned with the idea to be used continuously throughout the years, and as we focus on the most important seasons and work to create high quality representations for these, our future planning will include a series of ordinary time wall hangings in seasonal specific color depictions throughout this extended time period. Following, we will then be able to focus on special events such as First Communion for our Faith Formation children, and specific feast days.

Our vision is to encompass the whole of the grounds with the concept of worship environment including new ideas for future fundraising in order to acquire larger scale items such as a new baptismal and worship enhancement pieces for the lawn and surrounding area.

It has been mainly through the education, care, and attention from Fr. Peter Bosque, inspiring our committee that we are able to work toward a vision of the best possible environment for our Parish community. We look forward to collaborating with Fr. Rodolfo Llamas in all respects environment.

3.4 Eucharistic Ministry

This ministry exists to assist in the promulgation that we, as a faith community assembled together, are the body of Christ; that the nourishment we receive through Christ's body and blood strengthens us to live and carry the Gospel with us

after we have parted company, asking for the grace of Christ to shine through us so that anyone who sees us, sees Him.

Committed to serving God's people at St. Joseph, we have the honor of welcoming our brothers and sisters when they arrive, preparing our worship space for the upcoming Mass, assisting our celebrant with the distribution of Holy Communion, and bidding our brothers and sisters good day as they depart to serve God's will.

The Eucharistic Ministry always bids an open, enthusiastic invitation to all those who have received the sacrament of Confirmation. Anyone interested in exploring the details of this ministry further, is invited to contact the Eucharistic Minister Coordinator.

3.5 Lector Ministry

The Lectors of St. Joseph Church encompasses a group of parishioners (over 50 in number) who have been moved or called to proclaim God's Word to our community. The primary responsibility of the Lector is to bring the Scriptures to life for all to hear. During all of our Masses, we have two Lectors. The first Lector gathers in the community by beginning our Masses with "Commentating." This is provided to the Lector by Fr. Peter Bosque and is available the Thursday before Masses on our website. The Commentating enables the community to prepare themselves on what the readings will teach us during the Mass. The first Lector also reads the Old Testament Scripture. The second Lector reads the New Testament Scripture and, following The Creed, announces the Prayers of the Faithful. The Prayers of the Faithful enable us as a Parish to combine our prayers locally with the prayers of our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Our Lectors are typically trained twice annually within the church by Percy White, our Lector Coordinator. During this training, Percy ensures that all instruction is given both orally and in written form. Percy also makes himself available to answer all questions our Lectors may have on current training and any changes that may occur.

Assisting Percy with the scheduling of our Lectors is Trish Lenkiewicz.

The following tasks that have been accomplished over the past three years:

- Trained forty three Lectors.
- Distributed schedules and information via email.
- Maintained Lector requests and accommodations for special Masses ensuring rotation, so all have the opportunity to proclaim.

Planned future activities include:

- Training additional Lectors for all Masses.

3.6 Music Ministry

The Music Ministry at St. Joseph Parish plays a vital role in the overall liturgical prayer of the Church. Within the musical family are parishioners who are devoted servants, having served in this ministry anywhere from one to twenty-five years. Our ministry serves a congregation of approximately 3,800 active families. To meet the challenges of the liturgical calendar, we are in continual planning, rehearsal, and dialogue with one another and the various ministries of our church.

Within the last four years, our ministry has seen growth and expansion, boasting a robust and spirit filled ministry, led by the Holy Spirit and the leadership of our church.

Our Mass schedule begins with a 4:30 PM Saturday Vigil followed by Sunday Masses at 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 10:45 AM and 1:00 PM Mass in Spanish. Each Mass has at least a pianist or organist with cantor and in most services a full choir ranging from fifteen to twenty-five Music Ministers. We provide a traditional choir, contemporary choir, youth choir, children's choir, and a youth-ministered Mass, as well as a traditional Mass with organist and cantor.

As part of the vision to evangelize the Faith, the Music Ministers have provided our Parish community with guest artists who are known throughout the world for their love and commitment to our Catholic faith. Included in the vision is on-going training through workshops and concerts for our ministers and parishioners.

The St. Joseph musical team includes three part time pianists and one part-time organist. Also included are three part-time cantors. Each choir is lead by their own director who is responsible for choosing music appropriate for the liturgy, and suitable for the skill level of the respective choir. They are also responsible for scheduling and leading weekly rehearsals. All directors participate weekly for their respective masses.

Due to the growth of our musical ministry, there is a need to update and upgrade the sound system. Continued support in this area is vital.

3.7 Altar Service

Altar Servers are young parishioners who have received their First Eucharist, who accept the great opportunity to participate in Sunday Mass and act as true disciples. The altar serving program has always been a great success in our Parish. It

is a great joy to watch children begin their service at an early age and progress through their high school years. There are currently over ninety altar servers in the Parish. Four servers are scheduled for each Mass. Scholarships have been awarded each year by a family in the Parish to those who are graduating seniors in the Parish.

In the fullest way possible, this ministry allows children who have reached the fourth grade and received their First Holy Communion to serve God's people at Mass.

Servers are leading not only the Church in prayer and service, but the children of St. Joseph, who will become future Altar Servers. These children look up to Altar Servers to grasp the meaning of service to God and others, teaching lessons that most people cannot: that God is our Master, and we live to serve him.

Altar servers not only help the priest prepare for the Eucharist, but in doing so they assist in preparing the people of God to receive Jesus. They assist the priest to ensure the proper steps given to us by Christ are carried out, so that we all may fully receive Him. The greatest accomplishment for these children beyond the Sunday masses, is assisting the celebrant at Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms, Graduations, and Confirmations

4 Parish Service Ministries

4.1 Saint Vincent de Paul (Social Justice)

"Love one another as I have loved you." *John 13:34-35*. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is an international Catholic organization of laypersons who wish to live their faith by loving and serving as Jesus did. It seeks, in a spirit of justice and charity, and by the person-to-person involvement of its members, to help those who are in need and those who are suffering. It serves everyone regardless of creed, color, or origin.

In 2006, Dottie Schloemann was the coordinator; and since 2007, the coordinator has been Nina Heim. There are currently thirty active parishioners in the program. Hundreds of parishioners who respond to calls for help with "giving tree" requests, food, clothing, laundry, donations to Granny's Attic and the thrift store. St. Joseph Conference serves south Sacramento County which includes St. Joseph, St. Vincent de Paul Mission and St. Maria Goretti Parishes.

We are funded by occasional donations, "Granny's Attic" (the yearly tag sale), and twenty five percent of the Annual Catholic Appeal, which comes back to St. Joseph Church.

Last year, approximately 1,650 people were assisted with food, clothing, utility payments, other critical living expenses, Christmas gifts and other gifts throughout the year. Donations were also made to national and international disaster relief efforts. Fifty home visits were made and approximately 150 phone calls were handled.

Our ongoing programs include the SVDP Food Closet, Elk Grove Food Bank Serviceas, Wellness Bag Program (this program provides special nutritional foods to forty people, who are terminally ill, elderly, disabled and otherwise homebound), bi-monthly convalescent home visits, monthly volunteering at the SVDP Thrift Store in Sacramento, monthly meals provided at Loaves and Fishes and home visits as needed.

We also put up a "Giving Tree" at Christmas and Mother's Day, whereby parishioners are encouraged to purchase gifts for needy families and persons. The members of our Society organize, collect, and deliver the gifts.

We partner with the ecumenical Elk Grove Food Bank Services for food, clothing, energy assistance, a women's support group, and referrals to other agencies.

In the future we hope to recruit and train more home visitation teams and are always open to and looking for new opportunities to serve the poor and the forgotten.

4.2 Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus Council 7241, plays an active role in the community. The membership is made up of over 250 men in the Parish. The Council assists the Pastor with facility issues such as upkeep of the grounds, handling ushering duties at Masses, holding monthly adoration during the Lenten season, a Rosary three to four times a year, "free throw" contests for the youth, to name a few.

The council members also hold a pancake breakfast for the widows in the Parish on All Souls Sunday and assist these widows in times of need. Additional activities include support of the annual Parish Festival and Granny's Attic and yearlong support of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School.

The Knights also host and/or prepare several dinners throughout the year for their own events as well as others in the Parish. At some events, the Knights assist with the parking and traffic control measures.

Ushering has been a long standing tradition for the Knights of the Parish. A lead Knight is assigned to each Mass, who organizes the assignments for seating, collections, presentation of the gifts, and any other activity unique to each Mass.

There are approximately ten to twelve Knights taking part in the ushering activities of a typical Mass. Parishioners find a great deal of satisfaction knowing they can rely on these men for any form of assistance necessary. On special occasions such as celebrations for recipients of their First Eucharist or Confirmation, the Knights of Columbus Color Guards will be present in their full regalia.

4.3 Fellowship of Catholic Christian Women

The Fellowship of Catholic Christian Women, founded by Patricia A. Scileppi in Riverside, CA on January 29, 1996, exists to bring women together in the Spirit and to deepen each woman's personal relationship with God. When we gather together in community with others of faith, we fulfill Jesus' promise that "where two or more are gathered in my Name, there am I in their midst." (Matt 18:20)

Mission Statement

Women gathering in the Spirit to grow closer to Christ Jesus

It is our goal to foster fellowship amongst

Catholic Christian Women for the purpose of:

Evangelizing women

Building a faith community

Promoting the development of the spiritual life of every woman

Reaching out as a group in ministry

OUR VISION

Perhaps the most important opportunity for members of the **Fellowship of Catholic Christian Women** is that it offers women a chance to experience the *value of community*. Our vision includes our desire to grow as members of the Body of Christ, despite the persistence of secular values which stress the importance of individualism over the value of community. Thomas Merton said it this way, "There is no truly free society (or community) except in heaven. But that heavenly society is to be reflected as much as possible on earth. It is the responsibility of the Christian person to seek to bring this about. It needs to be reflected on earth by a society that is united by self-sacrifice and love, mercy and compassion, selflessness and a

participation in the divine Pity." The value of community is at the heart of the philosophy of **FCCW**.

The Fellowship of Catholic Christian Women has 19 fellowships in five dioceses throughout CA. FCCW received diocesan recognition in the San Bernardino Diocese in 2002 and is currently in this same process in the Sacramento Diocese. Members of FCCW strive to bring the GOOD NEWS to all persons, to provide an opportunity for fellowship, and to deepen our understanding of our Catholic Faith and Catholic Tradition through various study topics. During each FCCW gathering at our local parishes and when gathered as a regional group, members share their experience of living the Gospel and share their faith with others.

The St. Joseph's fellowship has had the consistent leadership of Geralyn Bollong and Jeanne Ecker, since 2006. There are currently 24 women members ranging in age of between 32 and 82 years of age from a variety of local Catholic churches and a Christian church including St. Joseph and St. Maria Goretti in Elk Grove, the Newman Center in Sacramento, the Vietnamese Catholic Martyrs in Sacramento, and the Capital Christian Center, Sacramento. Members meet twice a month for faith sharing of spiritual material and scripture that they have studied on their own between gatherings.

4.4 Consolation

Ministry of Consolation to the Bereaved is a new ministry in the Parish that began in the Fall of 2006. Their purpose is to comfort and meet the needs of those who mourn.

The Ministry to the bereaved offers pastoral and spiritual support to the bereaved and caregivers through education and resources, so that all who mourn a loss from death may receive the healing comfort of God. The Church calls each member of Christ's Body – priest, deacon, lay-person to participate in the Ministry of Consolation, to care for the dying, pray for the dead, and to comfort those who mourn.

Based on the belief in the Resurrection, the ministry answers the call to comfort. Ministers encourage journaling, as this helps one get in touch with feelings of grief. Other services include: forming support groups, calling families after the funeral to further determine their on-going needs, sending out cards of consolation during important days through the year (anniversaries, birthdays, holidays, etc.).

Support is also provided by facilitating a seven session workshop on “Understanding Grief,” sending out cards of consolation (inviting to families who mourn to join us on All Soul Days), and making phone calls to families after funerals.

Currently there are eight volunteer members with plans to grow the ministry, as we would like to work in teams. All eight members attended the “Ministry of Consolation to the Bereaved” training session at the end of March 2009. It is our intent to continue to grow this ministry, to better serve those in our Parish community who mourn or are suffering other forms of loss.

4.5 Youth

The purpose of Youth Ministry is to involve and engage young people into the life of the Parish. Currently, and since 2002, Jennifer Campbell has served as coordinator of Youth Ministry for English. The youth are represented from both St. Joseph Parish and St. Vincent de Paul Mission.

In the past we have had a high school youth group that met weekly on Sunday nights. Over the past three years the numbers attending those meetings lowered and it was decided to take a break from that format for awhile. That doesn't mean we do not have an active youth ministry at St. Joseph, because Youth Ministry is more than weekly meetings. It is important to have youth seen as an important part of our Parish. That has been done by creating a monthly Youth Ministered Mass on the final Sunday of the month. At these masses youth who are not on the regular schedules for liturgical ministry are invited to be Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Ushers, Petition Readers, and greeters. Many youth have become regularly-scheduled ministers at Mass, which is an opportunity that previously was not available to them. It also provides youth an opportunity to give back – and experience a sense of belonging – to their community.

Youth assist in many events at the Parish including the annual festival, Vacation Bible School, and many dinners that are hosted by the Knights of Columbus.

It is also important that the Youth in our Parish see the regional church. To help with, this they are invited to join at all Diocese-organized youth activities and our Parish has attended the past four Diocesan Youth Conventions, including acting as volunteers and Emcees at the last Junior High Youth Convention.

This year in Youth Ministry, the focus is on Junior High Youth; the Youth Coordinator will actively participate in the Confirmation process. A monthly All Youth Night (AYN) works along with the Confirmation process, and *all* Junior High Youth (in the

Confirmation process or not) are invited to a fun and faith-filled night. The AYNs have been very successful this year and therefore will be continued next year.

Over the next year plans are to offer a retreat for youth entering 9th grade. Efforts to increase participation in Youth Ministered Masses and twice-monthly High School Youth Nights will begin in August of 2009.

4.6 Spanish-speaking Youth

The Parish is blessed with a very diverse makeup. One of the largest contingencies is the Spanish community. This in turn results in a large membership of the Spanish youth. To meet the needs of this group, a Spanish speaking youth group was established in 2005. It is a very successful program filled with many activities.

In 2008 the program was responsible for organizing dinner dances, youth Mass every 2nd Sunday of the month, participation at the Parish festival, Synod in Yuba City, Spanish youth convention, and monthly Spanish youth meeting at the Diocese as well as the charismatic retreat in Davis.

There are many active youth in the program. Sandra Berrientos and Leo Ramirez have led the effort over the past three years.

The purpose of this ministry is to help the youth of our community find God in everything that they do, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. From there, the message of the Good News is transmitted. The ministry's aim is to be a resource to all the youth: those who have found God; those who are searching for God; and those who do not know anything about God.

This year there has been a mini spiritual retreat and plans for participation in three pastoral activities such as Youth Missions and a retreat and three social activities such as Mother's Day dinner and family picnic, the youth conference in Redding, and community service activities in the Parish.

4.7 Faith Formation and Sacramental Preparation

4.7.1 Baptism

The purpose of the Baptism Preparation ministry is to help parents and sponsors renew their understanding and appreciation of the Sacrament of Baptism, and understanding of how the grace of this Sacrament unfolds in their lives and the lives of their children. There are six ministers who provide service to this ministry, coordinated by Sr. Nancy McInerney.

The recent accomplishments of this ministry include **591 Baptisms** from March 2006 through March 2009. The ministry also provides outreach to parents and sponsors who are in preparation for the Sacrament at St. Joseph Parish and also provides preparation for sponsors who live in our Parish but are serving as sponsors for a person being baptized at another church.

Future plans include the training and empowerment of new ministers, to continue providing this service to our Parish.

4.7.2 Children's Liturgy

We have placed a greater emphasis on understanding and celebrating the Sunday Liturgy. All First Communions are celebrated at Sunday Masses. The fundamentals of our Mass - gathering, Liturgy of the Word, and Liturgy of the Eucharistic - are reviewed at each grade level. The development of Catholic vocabulary is also important. Our monthly Youth Ministered Mass is always well attended and children are able to practice their Faith. Collaborating with Music & Liturgy Director John Grassadonia, all children rehearse for singing at the Christmas Liturgy and a Christmas sing-along. They help out at the Christmas hospitality table, which is sponsored by the Catholic Faith Formation Ministry at the Christmas Vigil.

4.7.3 Catholic Faith Formation (CFF), K-6

The purpose of the ministry is to foster lifelong Faith Formation through educational programs and sacramental preparation rooted in the tradition, scripture and teaching of the Church. Catholic Faith Formation provided multiple opportunities for over 500 families and nearly 900 children in grades K thru 8 to "catch" our Faith. CFF conducts weekly 75 to 90 minute sessions Tuesday through Thursday (in English) after school or on Saturday morning (in Spanish) for approximately 36 weeks each year (about 45-54 hours of ministry per child). In addition to preparing children for the sacraments, the children are introduced to a grade-level appropriate curriculum based on the United States Council of Catholic Bishops religious education grade level standards. The CFF staff has selected the WE Believe textbook series by Sadlier Publishing to implement these standards. This series also includes a song and website component for catechists and families. CFF is not simply a classroom and textbook experience. Over the past four years, CFF staff has incorporated more Faith Formation opportunities outside the classroom. Between 35 and 40 percent of the preparation is conducted outside the specific classroom. We want the children to feel comfortable in church. Therefore, prayer services with Sr. Nancy, Fr. Bosque, and Faith Formation staff - as well as parishioners - provide

a valuable educational component to our program. Retreats have been introduced. Educational DVD's and videos that focus on the Bible also enhance the children's understanding and contribute to basic Catholic faith vocabulary and conceptual development. Service projects, appropriate to grade level, have also been implemented by some catechists.

In 2006 and 2007, the Director of Faith Formation coordinated and collaborated with all entities of the program. To ensure that ALL our families and children were being served with stronger programming and opportunities in our Parish in 2008, the Pastor provided greater clarification of the assignments of the Faith Formation staff. Children preparing for all Sacraments would be under the direction of the Sacrament Coordinator. The Director of Faith Formation would work with families with children in the K, 3, 4, 5 and 6th grades. The youth program and Spanish program would be the responsibility of the Pastor.

The CFF program has five paid staff and approximately 70+ volunteer catechists and assistants that serve both St. Joseph Parish and St. Vincent de Paul Mission.

The CFF program continues to have a strong reputation based on our welcoming tone and solid curriculum. Our enthusiastic and committed Parish volunteers (over 70) make up the St. Joseph difference in the Faith Formation of our children. Many of our volunteers work toward catechist certification hours or regularly attend adult education programs onsite and offsite. Some of our recent accomplishments include:

- **Enhanced communication efforts with families:** We initiated a catechist and parent orientation (established 2006), opening day celebrations for families and a family CFF calendar. Our Parish website has resources and links to our publisher and the USCCB standards that have been incorporated in our program. Weekly Bulletin announcements with details on the registration process and an open enrollment period have worked well to maintain participation. As well as clarify expectation for our families. With this greater emphasis on communication, nearly 90 percent of our families honor their financial commitment to our program and Parish.
- **Family Service project:** A project based on the Liturgical season has been embraced by families. Recent projects have been a St. Vincent de Paul shoe drive and the Lenten water bottle theme.
- **Cathedral Confirmation.** Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation in September at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament has become a trademark of our St Joseph program. The Diocesan statistical overview

stated that 4,972 young people were confirmed last year. Approximately 150 of these *Confirmandi* came from our Parish.

- **Catechists and assistants appreciation event.** Since 2006, the CFF program has hosted a luncheon or picnic in the Spring of each year to thank the catechists and their families. Last year we co-sponsored the event with the Knights of Columbus. We also hosted an Advent/ Christmas season open house at the home of one of our staff members as a gesture to thank our valued volunteers.

The CFF program will continue to welcome and encourage families in their faith development. We will always seek to improve our processes. We will always try to ensure that we are focusing on Catholic Fundamentals: Liturgy, Prayer, Catholic Morality and Creed. Some other future planned initiatives include:

- Redesign the CFF registration forms. We will encourage families to submit a family photo with their application (which will become a resource for the new Pastor). Forms are seen as developmental resource.
- Improve database management and make detailed reports available to Faith Formation Staff in order to inform decisions regarding the budget and selected programming. We will cross reference with other Parish databases, such as those families receiving weekly envelopes.
- Increase participation of our newly confirmed youth by raising the level of commitment and the standards and expectations of our Youth Ministered Mass.
- Set up a catechist and parent committee to help evaluate and recruit other parishioners to become involved in the program and enhance our Faith Formation efforts.
- Organize a field trip to the Capital Grounds to see the Sister of Mercy sculpture and then tour the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in 4th and 5th grades.
- Expand the CFF column in the Bulletin with more photos of families and children demonstrating their Faith or a Catholic tradition.
- Greater collaboration with the John Grassadonia in Music Liturgy to help the children understand our liturgical calendar.
- Collaboration with Nancy Kesthely, our Sacrament Coordinator, on service projects submitted by our *Confirmandi*. Having greater participation and input from select parishioners could enhance the teen experience and understanding of their role in God's Church.
- Have 35 catechists complete their basic certification by June 2010. Consider offering programs like: *Uniquely His: In our Personal Vocations and Charisms to all* catechists and assistants.

- Offer an exploratory session and then training session for children from our Parish who want to be Altar Servers, and have an end of the year gathering for those children that serve in this ministry.
- On the Feast of St. Joseph, have the children acknowledge all of the fathers in our Parish with a special prayer service in their CFF classes.
- Continue to collaborate with Parish leaders to help mainstream the families in CFF to be more engaged with our Parish and our Faith (for example, the Parish Ministry Fair).
- Continue participation and expertise at the Diocesan Ministry Day each September.

4.7.4 Confirmation Preparation – Youth

St. Joseph Parish provides a two year process for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Typically the teens are in junior high, and begin their preparation in the seventh grade. However, over the years, we have also had the opportunity to serve teens in high school as well, grouping the “older” teens together with a catechist and assistant.

A main focus of the Confirmation process is to build a sense of community while stressing our call to be Disciples of Christ. Some of the components of our process include personal reflection and writing a report on a favorite Saint; service learning by serving our families and our community/Parish; prayer services planned and led by the teens for their peers; All Youth Nights, following a youth group format, incorporated into our monthly sessions.

The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation was traditionally scheduled at the discretion of the Bishop's office, when a time frame of three to four months was the only Parish input. We now celebrate confirmation at the Parish of the Diocese, the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, speaking to our role to go out and serve, and to see beyond our limited vision of “Parish” to the larger “Church”. By moving the date to a fall celebration, the Parish is able to prepare the teens for a full two years, including the opportunity for a retreat and other community building activities over the summer months.

4.7.5 Confirmation Preparation - Adult

For the past few years, the Bishop of Sacramento has provided an opportunity for those practicing Catholics who have for various reasons not celebrated their Confirmation. Each year during the month of May, the Bishop confers the Sacrament on those who respond to the invitation to be confirmed. The diocese provides an outline of Catechesis for Adults in preparation for the Sacrament.

This course of study coincides with the Lenten season using the scripture readings proclaimed on the Sundays of Lent and continuing through the Easter Season, approximately twelve weeks. This course is intended to help those candidates accept and understand the Baptismal call to holiness and continuing conversion. It is also designed to allow these candidates to become more incorporated into the liturgical life of the Parish and the Diocese of Sacramento.

Recent accomplishments and activities of this ministry are:

- Celebration of the Sacrament to take place at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament at the end of May, 2009.
- The course is, and will be, directed by Sr. Nancy McInerney and a team of two couples.
- Since its inception at St Joseph, thirty-five adults have been confirmed with twelve more candidates preparing to celebrate in 2009.

Future activities will include continued support of this ministry as long as it is requested by the diocese. Further efforts will be made to provide future catechists and leaders to direct preparation sessions and implement it to carry out this important ministry in service to the Church.

4.7.6 First Communion & First Reconciliation Preparation

Sacrament preparation falls under the umbrella of our Parish Faith Formation efforts, specifically the grade levels of First and Second, Seventh and Eighth. Our mission and purpose is to provide families the opportunity to grow the faith within their homes, the domestic church, by offering weekly sessions following an outline of course work which exposes the children to the pillars of our faith: our beliefs, our prayers, our liturgy and Sacraments, and how we live our life in Christ.

Working in partnership with the Pastor, Director of Faith Formation, Youth Minister and Director of Spanish Faith Formation, the Sacrament coordinator is responsible for the planning, coordinating and implementation of the coursework associated with the preparation sessions for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation in the English program. From designing yearly syllabi and recruiting volunteer catechists, to providing a comprehensive means of communicating all components of the preparation process to the families, the Sacrament coordinator is responsible for all aspects of preparation and actual liturgical celebration of the Sacraments and rituals.

Nancy Kesthely has served first as coordinator of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion preparation since 2003. Her duties expanded to include the

Sacrament of Confirmation in the fall of 2004. The Sacrament Coordinator works within the Faith Formation program and is directly responsible to the Pastor.

The Faith Formation team is made up of the English and Spanish Directors of Faith Formation, Sacrament Coordinator, Coordinator at SVDP, Youth Minister and our Pastoral Associate, Sr. Nancy McInerney. We are blessed to also include the 70+ volunteer catechists and assistants each year who serve the families of our Parish.

The sacramental preparation time is established in our Parish as a two year process, allowing for a time of reflection and growth, as well as an opportunity to stress the importance of these grace-filled experiences.

The celebrations during the year of preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion bring the families full-circle in the church. Moving from celebrations outside of the Parish family to celebrations during the weekly celebrations of the Eucharist has been a wonderful experience for all involved. Beginning with our Rite of Enrollment, where the families and child inscribe their intents for this special year; through the celebration of First Reconciliation, where an average of six priests are available for the communal penance service; through the adult formation opportunities offered on the Sacraments; to the Bread Sunday Retreat, which for the past four years has been lead by Dr. John Leonard, whose presentation, inclusiveness and love of ministry is clearly evident to all who come in contact with him; culminating in our First Holy Communion celebrations during our weekly Parish celebrations of the Eucharist, which have continued to include all traditional aspects of past Parish celebrations (children in procession, singing of post-Communion song), but speaking to the importance of these celebrations within the Parish family.

The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation was traditionally scheduled at the discretion of the Bishop's office, when a timeframe of three to four months was the only input to the Parish planning process. We now celebrate confirmation at the Parish of the Diocese, the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, speaking to our role to go out and serve, and to see beyond our limited vision of "Parish" to the universal "Church." By moving the date to a fall celebration, the Parish is able to prepare the teens for a full two years, including the opportunity for a retreat and other community building activities over the summer months. And most importantly, by celebrating Confirmation in the Cathedral EVERYONE is invited. Heretofore, with only a capacity of 800 people in

our parish church, the Confirmation was limited to *confirmandi*, their sponsors and immediate family.

Expansion of the opportunities for faith development for the children and families in Sacramental Preparation, especially in efforts inviting guest speakers to our Parish; concerted effort with Parish as a whole to provide more opportunities for adult formation.

4.7.7 Spanish-speaking Faith Formation and Sacramental Program

The purpose of the Spanish-speaking Faith Formation and Sacramental Program is to serve and respond to the needs of the growing Hispanic community, sharing the fundamentals of the Catholic religion, relying on the Pastor and the many volunteer catechists. Our mission is to provide a family Faith Formation program for the Hispanic community based on the teachings of the Catholic Church as well as embracing and respecting our beliefs, doctrines, rituals, customs, rites, and cultures. We also encourage parents to be active and involved in their children's catechesis as the first and primary educators in their children's journey of faith and provide Faith Formation to our parents to assist them in transmitting and passing our Catholic Faith to their children enabling them to grow in their faith together as a family.

The Spanish-Director of Faith Formation coordinator since 2006 has been Esther Cuellar-Valadez. Esther works with as many as twenty catechists in order to run this successful program. The program also accepts children from both St. Joseph Parish and St. Vincent de Paul Mission.

The accomplishments are many and include the following:

- Around 1998 Spanish-speaking Faith Formation was offered here at St. Joseph for the first time to approximately twenty five children to prepare them for the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Today with the support of the Pastor, the guidance of Deacon Ramirez and the help of many volunteer catechists our Program serves approximately 110 families, 120 children and 56 youth. Our program includes adult formation for parents, RCIA, preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- In the family Faith Formation program we have retreats for the entire family including sponsors and parishioners. This year we had an Advent and Lent retreat with over 300 participants in each retreat.
- Throughout the year's volunteer catechists have embraced and participated in the "Echoes of Faith" certification program, retreats,

Catechetical Ministry day and other Faith Formation training. We are blessed to have eleven certified catechists and the others are in the process of completing the required hours for their certification.

The planned future activities include a continuation to serving and responding to the needs of the growing Spanish-speaking parishioners.

4.8 Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

St. Joseph Parish's Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is the journey where adults within our community are guided as they are introduced to the Roman Catholic Faith. We recognize that each individual comes to our church on a different path, seeking – and, we hope, finding – the Faith and a spiritual home within St. Joseph as they continue on their faith journey.

Our RCIA group meets weekly enabling learners to have their questions regarding the Catholic faith answered. Each meeting is lead by Fr. Peter Bosque and/or Sr. Nancy McInerney. RCIA learners are moved into smaller groups for discussions on the Catholic Faith that includes RCIA team members including converts and “cradle Catholics.”

The parishioners of St. Joseph celebrate important milestones of the RCIA process by being present to the catechumen and candidates during their Rite of Acceptance, Rite of Election and Three Scrutinies. At these Masses, both at our Parish and at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, each catechumen and candidates has their sponsor or a member of the RCIA team present with them as a testament of their readiness to move forward in the Catholic faith.

St. Joseph's RCIA faith journey process comes to a glorious and spirit-filled culmination at the Easter Vigil. This evening includes music, proclaimed readings, Baptisms, the Eucharist, Confirmations and ends with our RCIA group warmly welcomed as full members of our faith community.

Recent Accomplishments include:

- In 2005-06 our RCIA team journeyed with eleven Adults and three Children Catechumen and five Adult Candidates.
- In 2006-07 our RCIA team journeyed with thirteen Adults and 2 Children Catechumen and four Adult Candidates.
- In 2007-08 our RCIA team journeyed with nine Adults and three Children Catechumen and 9 Adult Candidates.

- In 2008-09 our RCIA team is journeying with ten Adults and one Youth Catechumen, as well as twelve Adult and two Youth Candidates.

Future Goals include:

- Training additional Catechists to participate in and lead future classes.
- Allowing for a “follow-up year” of formation after the catechumens and candidates are received fully into the Church.
- Designing the preparation process to more fully accommodate more catechumen and candidates to an even “deeper” journey.

4.9 Marriage Preparation

St. Joseph Parish understands the vital importance of this ministry in the edification of the Church. It is an opportunity to support the very deep and rich faith of couples who are actively participating in their faith, and an opportunity to welcome others “home” to a faith from which they may have taken some leave. Each couple is engaged in a full and comprehensive dialogue with a priest or trained lay minister.

On its website, the Diocese of Sacramento indicates several guidelines to be followed by couples seeking the Sacrament of Matrimony:

The Catholic Church has established a number of basic requirements for the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. In order to fulfill these requirements, to assure sacred celebration of the Sacrament and to facilitate preparation for marriage, the Diocese of Sacramento has adopted the following policies:

Every couple is asked to participate in an assessment process with the priest, deacon or pastoral minister. This process is designed to assist both the couple and the priest/deacon or pastoral minister in assessing the engaged couple’s readiness for marriage. The process begins with an initial interview with the priest, deacon or pastoral minister. As part of the process, each engaged person is to complete a questionnaire or inventory tool.

The inventory tools which are approved in the Diocese of Sacramento are FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study), PREPARE/ENRICH and PMI (Pre-Marital Inventory). A decision to proceed with, or delay, the wedding is made by the facilitator and the couple following the assessment process. The wedding date will be finalized only at this time.

The engaged couple is to attend one of the diocesan approved marriage preparation programs. Participation is to be completed no later than two months

before the wedding date. All programs cover such topics as: Sacrament of Marriage, family of origin, communication skills, finances, married intimacy, sexuality, family and their role in the Church and society

Additional Information can be found on the St. Joseph Parish website:

http://www.diocese-sacramento.org/evangelization_catechesis/marriage_prep_guidelines.html

St. Joseph Parish elicits the assistance of Dr. Paul C. Seishas, and ACT for Today, the Association of Catholic Therapists in its mission to prepare engaged couples for the Sacrament of Matrimony. ACT endeavors to assist the priest in his duty to prepare couples by conducting the PREPARE/ENRICH inventory and engaging the couple in several sessions of dialogue regarding the strengths and challenges of their relationship, advising the priest as to possible serious concerns or impediments regarding the couple's relationship, and supporting the priest in the sacramental education of the couple. This participation in the preparation process is an adjunct to closely assess the couples' psychological, emotional, spiritual, and relational maturity.

Additionally, ACT offers an engaging sacramental preparation workshop, *Becoming One: A Journey to Marriage, A Path to Lifelong Companionship*, covering each topic of concern for the diocese. This Workshop is rooted in the Gospel values of marriage and adheres to the very deep and rich traditions and teachings of our Church. (Please refer to Kathy Connor, Department of Evangelization & Catechesis, Diocese of Sacramento with whom ACT has been engaged in dialogue.)

Recent activities have centered on several sessions of dialogue with priest and a licensed therapist, and participation in Engaged Encounter. Future activities will involve the formation of "Evenings for the Engaged: A Couple's Christian Life Community," and a Parish weekend workshop.

4.10 Spiritual Direction and Psychotherapy

St. Joseph Parish recognizes that many in the Parish suffer from conflicted marriages, issues with children, depression and a host of other emotional and relational problems. Additionally, many desire to deepen their faith through a more intense spiritual direction. To that end, qualified members of the staff and others are engaged in these ministries.

For nearly two years St. Joseph Parish has engaged the psychotherapeutic services of ACT for Today, the Association of Catholic Therapists. Depending on the license and scope of practice of each therapist, psychotherapy is provided for individuals, couples, families, groups, children, adolescents, and adults on the Parish campus.

Therapists providing this counseling ministry are members of the Parish or a neighboring Parish. It is a fundamental belief of ACT that the witness of such community based therapy is part of the therapeutic process in many cases.

Fees are generally paid by the individuals seeking psychotherapy and are offered at a rate well below the prevailing cost of psychotherapy in the Sacramento area. St. Joseph Parish provides appropriate, confidential space for this counseling ministry to take place and for other services such as workshops.

To assist the Pastor and his Assistants, Deacons, and Religious in spiritual direction some associate members of ACT are also available for spiritual direction depending on background. These individuals are personally committed to their own prayer life, spiritual reading of the Gospels and the great spiritual writers of the church, and to assisting others in the search for union and communion with God. Dr. Paul C. Seishas has been the Coordinator of the program since 2008.

The accomplishments/activities thus far has been psychotherapy for couples and adult and adolescent individuals and spiritual direction for adults and adolescents

The Parish is anxious to grow the program. This has lead to developing plans for expanding the number of therapists and spiritual directors available and providing workshops and counseling groups.

4.11 Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School is meant to engage children and offer a fun week to explore their faith and the Church through Bible stories, crafts, games, songs, and food. Jennifer Campbell has served as Vacation Bible School Director since 2005.

There are nine volunteers that plan and coordinate each center. The week prior and the week of we have approximately seventy volunteers to ensure everything runs smoothly. There are one hundred and seventy children enrolled in the week of VBS (one hundred and forty school aged and thirty pre-K) with participation from both St. Joseph Parish and St. Vincent de Paul Mission church.

This is an awesome week of fun and faith that has grown over the years. During the first year of VBS less than 100 children participated and now we have to turn children away because of lack of space .

This is an activity where the whole family is involved. Parents help with activities, older siblings (6th grade and up) lending a hand, and the younger siblings participating.

Each night the children rotate through centers that are all connected by a theme and include Bible readings. On Friday night there is a big closing ceremony, that has grown so large that we have to now hold it in the church. The ceremony includes children perform the songs they have learned, a reflection of the activities of the week, and view a slide show of pictures from all the fun had by all.

This summer the theme is SON Rock Kids Camp. The children will be exploring the life of St. Peter. The event is scheduled for July 13-17, 2009.

5 School Ministry (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School)

The School Ministry of St. Joseph Catholic Church and Good Shepherd Catholic Church, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Elementary School (SEAS), has existed in Elk Grove, California, serving both parishes for the past ten years. The school is currently at 95 percent capacity, with an enrollment of 320 students in grades Kindergarten through 8th. There are also 56 candidates on our waiting list for various grade levels.

In the 2008-2009 school year, SEAS added a full pre-school and staff, under the direction of Mrs. Tammy Babich. The pre-school is at capacity with 72 students.

There is also an After School Program for those parents who work and need additional hours of child care for their school-age and pre-school age children. This program is also under the direction of Mrs. Babich. There are close to 40 students enrolled, with approximately 25 students who come on a regular basis. Students are expected to work on class assignments and are provided a snack, prior to engaging in social time.

Spiritually, the School community values and teaches the Catholic faith. Students meet each morning as a school to pray and prepare for the day. Each classroom has a designated Religion period. The faith is taught and woven throughout the curriculum. Students have expectations that reflect the Bible and Catholic tradition in lived faith life. Each Friday, students attend morning Mass and they gather in cross-grade level groups. Older students assist in preparing and participating in the Mass celebration. Throughout the school year, students and staff observe and celebrate various Church feasts and events, in song, assembly and activities.

Academically, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School is in the three year cycle of a six-year accreditation through WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges). There are a number of programs and activities that continue to make SEAS a strong, academic, elementary school focused on preparing our students for the rigor of Catholic high school. Among these vital programs and policies are:

- Adherence to Diocesan and State standards
- Rotation of textbooks and process for new textbook adoptions

- Development of staff to further meet the needs of our students as we focus on how students learn and how we teach incorporating innovative teaching strategies.
- Teaching Spanish for all grades
- Instruction of Music for all grades and offered through our middle school elective program
- Electives program for Middle school, including such courses as yearbook, technology, art, drama, newspaper, leadership.
- Instruction in Physical Education – two times per week for all students.
- Access to a Technology Lab for students. (Next year, Technology instruction and instruction for adherence to tech proficiencies for each grade level.)

Our school has very active and engaged parent support, as evidenced by the following:

- Involved Catholic School Advisory Council (CSAC), who meet regularly with the Pastors and Principal
- Active Parent Booster Club (PBC) who provide “friend” as “fund” raisers throughout the school year.
- Involved “room parents” and those who serve in our office as volunteers. Each school family provides 30 hours to the school support each school year.
- Provide students with athletic opportunities throughout the school year, through various athletic teams under the direction of the SEAS Athletic Director, in participation with other Diocesan schools.

6 Saint Vincent de Paul Mission Church

St. Vincent de Paul Mission Church operates under the direction of the Pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Elk Grove, California. Our small but vibrant church community is located in Rancho Murieta, approximately 22 miles east of Elk Grove. There have been many blessings bestowed on our mission community which adds to the spiritual and communal vitality one experiences when visiting us. Two of those blessings are personified in the priesthood of Monsignor Albert G. O'Connor and his successor, Fr. Peter J. Bosque. It is through their “extra effort”, pastoral guidance, willingness to dialogue and adherence to the teachings of Vatican II that capable and informed lay leadership has emerged and continues to from our growing Roman Catholic community of faith.

6.1 A Brief History

During the late 1980's Monsignor O'Connor was assigned duties to Pastor St. Joseph Parish. He honored the commitment made by his predecessor to say Mass on Christmas Day for our growing Catholic community. In time, this mutual faith relationship grew into friendships with many of the residents who also shared a

secular interest in golf with Monsignor O'Connor. As Rancho Murieta's Catholic population grew, Monsignor promised his support of a priest to say Mass for the residents on Saturday evening. The community embraced the offer enthusiastically and Saturday Mass was held in the community room of the local fire house or in one of the rooms at the FAA Building.

In 1995-96 Mr. Fred Anderson, a wealthy parishioner and long time resident of the area offered to donate property to the Diocese for the building of a Church. Monsignor O'Connor supported the idea by shepherding the project through the Sacramento Diocese under Bishop Quinn and 'mission' status was granted. The financing for the construction met little resistance in the community as many members pledged generously to the building fund. St. Vincent De Paul Church was dedicated in 1998 by Bishop Wiegand.

6.2 Parish Mission Statement

In March of 2009 the Pastoral Advisory Council adopted the mission of the St. Vincent de Paul Mission.

The mission statement is, "We, the people of SVDP Roman Catholic Church, root our lives in the Eucharist. We seek to live as Disciples of Christ, influenced by our patron saint. We reach out in faith, service and support to all."

6.3 Parish Overview

St. Vincent de Paul Church has approximately 325 registered families of two diverse groupings --- young families with school age children and retired seniors. Prior to the recent downturn in the economy, demographics showed a steady increase in both groups. Younger families were seeking the relative security of gated community country living and a safe area in which to raise their children while retirees were seeking the serenity of the bucolic countryside and the allure of two golf courses. The congregation is predominantly Caucasian and is economically in the middle to upper middle income bracket. A good number of school age children attend area parochial grammar schools and high schools.

6.4 Parish Pastoral Council

Prior to the arrival of Fr. Peter Bosque the lay leadership rested with the Parish Committee. Monthly meetings were held with Monsignor O'Connor. Topics of discussion were social activities, social justice ministries, physical plant management and the planning for a social hall which was built and dedicated in 2004.

When Fr. Peter Bosque arrived, church leadership took a different direction. Under his guidance a Pastoral Pastoral Council was formed in 2006. Gradual changes

occurred in the focus and mission of the Pastoral Pastoral Council. Fr. Bosque promoted the development of lay leadership by including and empowering the laity as a primary force in the leadership and management of their spiritual community. He urged the Council to assess and critically evaluate our current needs and Parish programs and their effectiveness on the community both now and in the future. Fledgling though it may be, the Council of twelve members is currently doing just that ... and experiencing the joys and challenges of becoming Church as the People of God.

Fr. Bosque also recognized our community's need and desire for ordained leadership. He accomplished this by bringing on Deacon Dennis Merino and Deacon Ned Quigley. Their presence, caring and devotion have enhanced all aspects of our church community.

The Pastoral Advisory Council has worked on or is working on the following issues: Facilities Usage Agreement, Council By-Laws, Liturgy, Adult Religious Education, Youth Ministry, Social Justice. Research has also begun on policies, procedures and issues involved in St. Vincent de Paul Church obtaining status as a Parish of the Sacramento Diocese.

6.5 *Finance Council*

With the arrival of Fr. Bosque, financial supervision for St. Vincent de Paul is under the countenance of St. Joseph's Finance Council. There are no members of St. Vincent de Paul Mission on the council. As stated above, the Pastoral Advisory Council is hopeful that one day we will be a recognized Parish in the Diocese with rights and privileges accorded.

6.6 *Parish Office*

St. Vincent de Paul Church has no paid administrative staff even on a part time basis. PAC consensus is that part time help is warranted now and the need for such help will only increase in the future. The purchase of an office computer system to interface with St. Joseph is being considered.

6.7 *Liturgy Committee*

The Liturgy Committee plans special Liturgies for high Feast Days such as Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. There are eight active members on the planning committee, forty-two lecturers, sixty-six Eucharistic Ministers, and fifteen ushers. The committee also holds Scripture sessions for young children every Sunday through the school year. The coordinators of this committee are Deacon Dennis Merino and Marsh Cornelius

6.8 Arts & Environment

The purpose of the committee is to maintain the narthex and sanctuary in an aesthetic manner that reflects the liturgical seasons and feasts, and to heighten the awareness of the festive, solemn, or penitential nature of these seasons. This committee of five, lead by Mary Ann Corsaut, have decorated the Church throughout the year to provide an environment that is not only pleasing to the eye but one that also creates an impression of the rich and abundant graces unique to each of the seasons.

6.9 Music Ministry

The principal function of the St. Vincent de Paul Music Ministry is to provide a "leader of song" role for liturgical music at the 5 PM Mass on Saturday and the 9 AM Mass on Sunday. The Saturday Mass sings more traditional music with piano accompaniment supported on occasion by a trumpet player. The group is led by Ms. Liz Fitch and has about six to eight parishioner voices leading the congregation.

The Sunday Mass group, led by Ray Guertin, is a growing acoustic group (9 members currently) that sings more contemporary liturgical music supported by two guitars, a bass player, a pianist and an occasional drummer.

Leaders of both groups select their own music for Mass during Ordinary Time. Coordination of music between both groups occurs on major holidays.

Under the auspices of the "Edge" program, St. Vincent de Paul established a Music Ministry for Youth under the tutelage of Mr. Tom Bagley, a professional musician (and bass player at the 9 AM Mass) and parishioner. All youth of the Parish who play instruments or want to sing are invited to a weekly Friday night jam session where both secular and liturgical songs are practiced. The Youth are currently preparing themselves to play at the 9 AM Mass every four to six weeks.

6.10 Altar Service

There are currently twenty-three Altar Servers. Recruiting has been very successful and uses the adage "Each one, teach one." The children meet once a month to review procedures and sequences related to their duties, which includes the social aspects. The program is lead by Jimmy Collons.

6.11 Social Justice Ministry

The ministry provides support to Loaves and Fishes, Sacramento Life Center, Moral Values Program of Elk Grove, Christmas Giving Tree, and the Prison Ministry, conducted by Deacon Ned Quigley.

6.12 Ministry of Healing

The members of our local St. Vincent de Paul Society make convalescent home visits on an arranged schedule with two homes in Elk Grove. Piano music is provided by Liz Fitch and the members read gospel passages allow for meditation on the readings. Cookies are provided to the residents. The visits are lead by Lynn King and eight to ten participants.

Our Mission is also planning a Consolation Ministry and visitations to the Homebound.

6.13 Monday Night Prayer Fellowship

This is a weekly gathering in church to pray the Rosary, recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, and other prayers. The group, as many as twenty strong, also have studied and discussed the weekly Mass readings, held Bible studies, and viewed and discussed movies on selected saints. The activities are coordinated by Lynn King, Fran Mendenhall and Connie Laxague.

6.14 Catholic Faith Formation

The Catholic Faith Formation program begins with children between kindergarten and fifth grade. They meet one day per week. They follow the curriculum in the "I Believe" series. Donna Bowles is the coordinator and leads a group of 10 adult catechists. There are currently fifty children enrolled in the program. The First Holy Communion class has eight participants this year. One of the biggest events of the year is the Stations of the Cross in Mary's Garden at the end of the year. It is followed by a social event.

The Catholic Faith Formation program also started an activity in 2007 title "The Edge." The activity is comprised of middle school youth, and is designed to meet the educational, spiritual, emotional, and social needs of young adolescents. Participation is encouraged and friends are always invited. There are three adults and three to four high school junior and seniors serving as leaders and executors of the curriculum prepared by the EDGE coordinator. There are currently twenty seven youth being trained. The coordinator is Ellen Moe.

The group is been actively involved in the following:

- Elk Grove Food Bank Canned Food Drive,
- Moral Values Program in Elk Grove -- "Big Give" clothing and supply drive, Giving Tree donations at Christmas
- Recycling for a Cause: collection of recyclable items; money buys items for those in need. Beneficiaries: Moral Values Program, a needy school in Sacramento, and Shriner's Hospital Burn Unit
- Stations of the Cross for Youth
- Community Teen Dance and Band Event

Planned Future Activities:

- More community teen events
- Confirmation Family Educational Series: for families of youth being confirmed

6.15 Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

In 2008, St. Vincent de Paul began their RCIA program. The mission felt there needed to be a program available for those adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic faith. The program is lead by Bob Hanson and Deacon Dennis Merino. There will be one participant baptized, six confirmed.

The mission hopes to continue this program annually. There is also interest in initiating a Catholics Returning Home program, Adult Faith enhancement and continuing Faith Formation program.

6.16 Families of Faith

Families of Faith is a program that provides family catechesis through a small church community. Since 2007, Teresa Field and Janet Cann have been co-coordinators. There are approximately thirty-two active members in the program.

In the past two years, we have gathered as a formal group in our homes to study our faith as families. All of the families take part in planning sessions for the group. Each 4-hour session includes group time, breakouts for children and adults, and fellowship through a meal together. The curriculum is built around the Bishops' key learning objectives for Catholic Faith Formation.

This year we have covered the following topics:

- Understanding the Mass – Small group Mass with Fr. Ryan
- Mary Said Yes: What it means to be a Saint
- My Relationship with God the Father
- Advent the Gift of Giving: Jesus the greatest gift of all
- Following the Star – the Sacraments
- Jesus is My Rock
- Stations of the Cross, Washing of the Feet and Seder Supper

- Pentecost and the Holy Spirit

We plan on working with Deacon Dennis to invite additional families to join our Family of Faith Formation for the 2009/2010 year, using announcements at church, in the bulletin, and by holding an orientation session. During the 2009-2010 year, we will hold the sessions at the SVDP church to better accommodate a larger group and will engage outside speakers to attend the sessions. We will continue to include all families in the planning and education processes.

7 Appendices