



# One Parish Plan: Who Are We?

A Message from Father Johnson

**PARTNERS  
IN THE GOSPEL**

Last weekend and this weekend, I have been preaching on Partners in the Gospel. I would like to share with you a summary of message I have been communicating through these homilies.

The Catholic Church is built on the rock of Peter's confession of faith. In response to Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter responded: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." God the Father had revealed this to Peter. It is this faith in Jesus Christ that is the rock on which the Church is anchored. The mission given by Christ to the Church, to every parish, and to every baptized person, is to go and make disciples of Christ, and that means, that the work of every parish, is to nurture and develop in each person a living relationship with Christ in the Church. We as parishes are to help people encounter Christ: through worship and prayer, through catechesis and study, through works of mercy and justice, and through fellowship and witness.

## What is Partners in the Gospel?

Partners in the Gospel is an initiative of the Archdiocese to help us as a diocese and as parishes more effectively make disciples and spread the Gospel. It is a strategic pastoral planning effort for the Archdiocese of Seattle to re-invigorate and renew our local Catholic Church given our current realities and resources. It poses the question, "How can we best use our resources to support vibrant, sustainable, mission-focused parish communities across Western Washington?"

## Why now?

1. **To adapt to changing demographics.** Where the Catholic population is located and its make-up has changed over the years. In the early days, priests and sisters came from Quebec to serve the French-Canadian fur trappers. We built many churches in towns with large lumber mills and mining operations. In the wake of World War II, we responded to the baby boom by building parishes and schools in the "close-in" suburbs of Seattle, Tacoma, and elsewhere, often serving large families with 5-12 children. Today, we have different immigrant populations in different locations and, of course, family size has changed.
2. **Practice of the faith has changed.** While the number of Catholics has increased, Mass attendance has decreased in many places. In the Archdiocese, from 2010 to 2019, Mass attendance declined 11%. Between 2019 and 2025, Mass attendance declined by a further 6%. (Some good news - in our own parishes, we have been blessed that our attendance has been stable or increased in recent years.)
3. **There is a shortage of priests, especially priests who can serve as pastors.** We have always had to rely upon priest from other countries, notably from French Canada and Ireland in earlier years and these days from Africa and India. While we have many good vocations, we currently have only 80 diocesan priests to serve 174 locations. It is projected that by 2036, we will have 66 diocesan priests available to serve.

These realities make it clear that we will have to plan, adapt, and change to continue the mission Christ has entrusted to us. So, two years ago, after careful listening, the Archbishop grouped the parishes together as families to do strategic planning to figure out, how, with the given realities, priestly vocations, and parish resources, can best accomplish the mission as one parish – (Note this is one parish, not one location, or church.) Over, these past two years, we have been able to begin to get to know one another. It has been a joy to see how parishioners from the different churches have supported the different parishes, from Holy Innocents' Food Bank, to participating in St. Anthony's feast day, and supporting St. Jude Crab dinner. The "can-do spirit" and desire to work together, which I have seen, is a real credit to you all!

## One Parish Plan Process

This year's task will be to develop a One Parish Plan. The goal of the planning process is to envision parish life and to plan how we will work together as one parish to make disciples and facilitate the encounter with Christ in Redmond, Duvall and Carnation. Last year, I called together a Parish Family Advisory Council to advise me and lead the process. They come from all three churches and a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. They all have a passion for the faith, have been dedicated and involved in the parishes, and are eager to see us thrive and work together for the mission Christ has given us.

This fall we will have a series of surveys and listening sessions in two phases to gather input from you, the parishioners, of St. Anthony, Holy Innocents, and St. Jude to help develop one parish plan.

**The first phase asks the question: "Who are we?"** The aim is to develop a shared understanding and appreciation of the history, the people, the gifts, and the ministries central to each parish and to explore the opportunities and challenges we face today. This weekend we kick off the first phase with a survey to help us answer these questions. We will also be having listening sessions in each church in September to gather your input and thoughts to identify the strengths, challenges, and opportunities among our churches.

**The second phase in October, asks the question: "Who does God want us to become?"** Given our current realities, where is the Holy Spirit guiding us? How does God want us to grow and best accomplish his work? Again, we will have surveys and listening sessions to gather your input, prayer and discernment.

Your input from these two phases will be gathered and analyzed by the Parish Family Advisory Council. During January and February, they will meet to pray, brainstorm and formulate a draft of our One Parish Plan. In the Spring, that plan will be presented to the parish family for your feedback, prayer and discernment. Then it will go back to the Parish Family Advisory





## A Message from Father Johnson... continued

Council and the pastor for further revision. The goal is to have the plan ready to submit to Archdiocese for review next summer. Suffice to say, we will need your participation, your input, your prayer and discernment to prepare a good plan for our communities.

### We need you!

### Your thoughts, your prayers, your discernment!

#### So, I am asking of you, 5 things:

1. **Deepen your relationship with God.** For this process to be a success, we will all need to renew our faith life: Our prayer, our practice of the sacraments, our study of the faith and scripture.
2. **Pray for the Partners in the Gospel Process**, that it may bear fruit in Archdiocese, in our Churches and in our discipleship – That it will help us become better Catholics and evangelists.
3. **Participate in the process**, take the surveys, participate in the listening session, pray over the questions asked, listen to your fellow parishioners, discern the movement of the Holy Spirit.
4. **Be open to the movements of the Holy Spirit** and his guidance and change. In order for the Israelites to get to the promised land, they had to leave home, spend some time in the desert, cross the Red Sea and the Jordan to reach the other side. Jesus tells us the way to heaven is through taking up our cross and following him, which means we have to die to self to experience the new life of the resurrection.
5. **Finally, pray for vocations to the priesthood** and encourage them in your own families and in our churches.

Thank you for your love of your parish communities and for your involvement in this process. It is your faith grounded in Jesus Christ and Peter's confession of that faith that will sustain us in this process. Peter believed but, he did not always get it right. He even denied when times got tough. But he always placed his trust in the Lord and after the resurrection, three time he professed his love of the Lord Jesus: Yes, Lord you now that I love you. Dear parishioners, I have come to know of your deep love of the Lord. Together, let us renew that love as we embark upon this process of becoming one parish. May that love shine through us, build up our Church, and lead many more to encounter the saving love of the Lord Jesus.

Sincerely in Christ,  
Fr Johnson

## One Parish Planning Process - Phase 1

We invite you to be part of this journey of listening and discernment through the Gifts Survey and our upcoming listening sessions.

### Gifts Survey

Every parishioner is encouraged to participate in our Gifts Survey, **open now through Monday, September 14**. Your voice matters!

The responses will help us recognize and celebrate the gifts present throughout our Parish Family and will help shape our upcoming listening sessions. Take a few minutes to tell us:

#### Who are we?

*Need a paper survey? Printed copies are available in the Narthex for those who prefer or need one. When possible, we encourage completing the survey online to help us efficiently gather your responses.*



**Scan to take the Survey or visit [bit.ly/PF25survey](https://bit.ly/PF25survey)**

### "Who are We?" Listening Sessions

The aim is to develop a shared understanding and appreciation of the history, the people, the gifts, and the ministries central to each parish and to explore the opportunities and challenges we face today.

#### St. Anthony

**Saturday, September 12**

**After the 5PM Mass**

**Downstairs in the Parish Hall with a potluck (English and Spanish)**

#### Holy Innocents

**Sunday, September 27**

**After 8:00 AM Mass**

**After 10:30 AM Mass (English and Spanish)**

**Downstairs in the Parish Hall**

#### St Jude

**Sunday, September 20 3 – 4:00 PM Lovett Hall**

**Sunday, September 27 3 – 4:00 PM Lovett Hall**



### About Partners & the One Parish Plan

For more information about Partners in the Gospel, please visit our Partners webpage with the QR code, the kiosk in the Narthex (St. Jude), the Partners in the Gospel table (Holy Innocents), or the Archdiocese's website at <https://archseattle.org/partners/>

