



CHURCH OF THE DIVINE CHILD
1055 NORTH SILVERY LANE
DEARBORN, MI 48128

PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

2011-2013

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**DIVINE CHILD
PARISH PASTORAL PLAN
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(INSERT OPENING LETTER FROM THE PASTOR)

INTRODUCTION

The Divine Child Parish Pastoral Council, under the direction of Pastor, Reverend James Bilot and Associate Pastor, Reverend Clint McDonell, initiated the planning process for the "Divine Child Parish Pastoral Plan 2011-2013," with faith, enthusiasm and great hope.

"Bringing people to the Lord and answering the call to holiness," is the Mission of the Parish of the Divine Child. Our schools, as integral parts of the Parish, are dedicated to achieving academic excellence while centered in Gospel values. It is of paramount importance that we maintain and fortify the distinctly Catholic identity of our Parish. For parishioner and student alike, spiritual, pastoral, intellectual and human formation underpins the Pastoral Plan and constitutes the foundation for living more fully in Christ, individually and collectively.

The Pastoral Plan encompasses our Mission, represents our core moral values and our Vision for the future. In essence, the Pastoral Plan speaks to who we are, what we believe, where we are going, and how we will get there. The Pastoral Plan, its goals and objectives, constitutes a living, organic document. As appropriate, the Vision for the future embodies stated goals and objectives which seek to be specific, motivating, attainable, relevant and trackable. The Pastoral Plan will remain subject to review and revision throughout the course of the plan's implementation.

This Pastoral Plan is an opportunity for renewal, which will encompass areas in which we can and must refresh our Parish. The Pastoral Plan attempts to lay out the component elements necessary in the next several years for the Divine Child Parish to sustain the progress already achieved and to build on history and tradition.

The Pastoral Plan has been prepared through the effort of many individuals, its ownership, however, belongs to ALL members of the Parish. To that end, this is "OUR" Parish Pastoral Plan.

OUR MISSION

THE CHURCH IS THE WORK OF GOD INITIATED BY CHRIST AND HELD TOGETHER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. DIVINE CHILD PARISH IS ENTRUSTED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BRINGING PEOPLE TO THE LORD AND ANSWERING THE CALL TO HOLINESS.

OUR VISION

WE WILL ENHANCE OUR CATHOLIC IDENTITY THROUGH SPIRITUAL, PASTORAL, INTELLECTUAL AND HUMAN FORMATION, SO THAT THE GIFT OF LIFE IS FULFILLED THROUGH OUR CALLING TO WORSHIP, EVANGELIZATION AND PERFORMANCE OF CHARITABLE SERVICE.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE INEXTRICABLE BOND WHICH THE PARISH AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS HOLD TOGETHER IN CHRIST.

WE WILL SEEK ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND CONTINUED GROWTH OF OUR STUDENT POPULATION IN A MANNER THAT IS AFFORDABLE AND ATTAINABLE.

WE WILL REALIZE MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION OF THE CATHOLIC FAITHFUL IN SUPPORT OF THE PARISH AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS THROUGH DEVOTING OF TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE.

WE WILL BE EVER VIGILANT AS STEWARDS AND GUARDIANS OF THOSE RESOURCES, BE IT HUMAN, FINANCIAL OR MATERIAL, TO WHICH WE ARE ENTRUSTED.

WE WILL ASSUME GREATER RESPONSIBILITY IN ASSISTING AND SUPPORTING THE WORK OF OUR PASTOR IN MATTERS AFFECTING GOVERNANCE OF THE PARISH AND ITS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

“Life is not a game, it is a gift.” That fundamental, yet profound statement was reiterated in a recent address to Divine Child parishioners by Bishop Daniel E. Flores, then Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit. The statement that “life is a gift,” is a call to everyone to nurture and grow in faith, grow in virtue and seek the truth.

Our Parish is a community, in essence, our family in God. We share the awesome and powerful responsibility to give support to our Parish through the abundance of time, talent and treasure possessed by our Catholic parish community. When we give support, we are also taking the time to stop, listen and care. In caring, we fulfill the noble and spiritual calling to love one another, as God loves us.

Catholic schools are the responsibility of the entire Catholic Community.ⁱ We must seek ways, therefore, to make them available, accessible and affordable.ⁱⁱ The relationship of our Church to our schools is undeniable. Our Church remains vital and viable if our schools remain healthy. Our Catholic schools not only teach what Jesus taught, they evangelize. They lead to the formation of holy men and women who make God known, loved and served. They lead students to an intimate and lifelong relationship with Jesus in discipleship and friendship.

With Gospel values at the core of the educational process, we also seek academic excellence in the development of skills and intellectual formation in the seeking of truth, so that our students fully develop knowledge, values and virtues in a safe and orderly environment.

Catholic schools pass along the faith, they educate, they shape and they develop future leaders for our Church and society. They seek to prepare the whole child, spiritually, morally, emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically, for leadership and service to the family, the community, and the world.ⁱⁱⁱ

“Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth. This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and His teaching. In this way those who meet Him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord’s disciples, the Church.”

(Pope Benedict XVI. The Catholic University of America, April 17, 2008)

Our Parish faces many challenges which this Pastoral Plan seeks to address. Strengthening our Catholic Identity represents the most significant goal and objective which will allow us to fulfill our Vision and our Mission as a Catholic Parish Community, thereby enabling us to successfully face the challenges presented.

A. SPIRITUAL AND INTELLECTUAL FORMATION

1. Evangelization

Goals:

- (1) Divine Child Parish will fulfill its mission as an evangelizing community.**
- (2) All groups, committees and individuals should have a common vision anchored in evangelization.**

Objectives:

- (1) Parish leaders will attend an annual faith formation retreat.**
- (2) Parish groups will make prayer an obvious, conscious and deliberate priority, with scheduling of a significant block of time for prayer before every meeting.**

2. Youth Ministry

Goals:

- (1) Nurture the personal and spiritual growth of parish youth and empower youth to serve in the life, mission and work of the Church.**

Objectives:

- (1) Develop a proposal for both a parish high school youth ministry program and also a high school campus ministry program with appropriate budgeting, job descriptions and candidate selection processes.**
- (2) Provide Spiritual, Financial and Parish Staff/Volunteer support for the Junior High Youth Ministry Group.**

3. Adult Faith Formation

Goals:

- (1) Implement the principles of *One Faith and Knowledge...Growing to Full Maturity in Christ* (A Vision statement for Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Detroit) pp. 11-13.**
- (2) Promote opportunities for spiritual development through the Worship Commission, including general education programs to increase knowledge of the Catholic faith.**

Objectives:

- (1) Offer a minimum of two programs per year involving Scriptural Literacy and deepening knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith.**
- (2) Enhance opportunities for spiritual development including:**
 - Explanation of the importance of reverence at Mass**
 - Holding of a parish Mission**
 - Continuing a Priest-moderated Bible Study**
 - Spirituality and Catholic faith seminars by priests**
 - Updating of the Parish web site calendar, identifying spiritually directed programs**
 - Increasing information concerning and promoting the Eucharist perpetual adoration; and**
 - Establish an adult Catechesis program**
- (3) Promote and publicize Adult Faith Formation programs.**
- (4) Conduct participant evaluations of all adult faith formation programs at the conclusion of programs and quarterly for ongoing programs; with feedback being shared with the Education Commission.**

4. Vocations

Goals:

- (1) Encourage and support parish members of every age to be involved in the calling forth of the next generation of Church leaders.**
- (2) Extend a direct invitation to parish youth to consider a life of service to the Church.**

Objectives:

- (1) Establish a monthly parish-wide day of prayer for vocations.**
- (2) Develop the use of parish web sites to provide information on vocations.**
- (3) Participate in vocation awareness programs as directed by the AOD Office for Priestly vocations.**
- (4) Support Committee representatives' attendance at the annual Vocations Convocation sponsored by the AOD Office for Priestly Vocations.**

5. Catholic Schools

Goals:

- (1) Administrators and faculty of the elementary and high school will deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and their commitment to the Parish Mission.**
- (2) Strive toward obtaining and maintaining faculty and staff who are Catholic.**
- (3) Uphold benchmarks of Catholic identity in the elementary and high schools.**
- (4) Infuse the message of the Gospel in all aspects of student learning, including participation in extracurricular activities by regularly challenging students to follow the example of Jesus Christ and to develop a personal, lifelong commitment to Him.**
- (5) Allow limited enrollment to those non-Catholic students who will benefit from the evangelizing mission of the Parish and Schools.**
- (6) Schools will engage in the continual process of evaluation, improvement and accreditation.**
- (7) Identify programs which will assist students with special needs.**

Objectives:

- (1) All teachers will have the necessary training and credentials to be Catechists and leaders of religious education.**

- (2) Faculty will be required to complete a minimum of five (5) hours annually of faith formation and enrichment.**
- (3) Every September 1st, the elementary and high school principals will provide the Education Commission and Parish Council with statistics pertaining to the faculty, staff and students identifying those who are Catholic, Non-Catholic and Non-Christian.**
- (4) School principals will monitor the benchmarks of Catholic identity in the schools and report compliance to the Education Commission and Parish Council on an annual basis.**
- (5) The schools will ensure that school life and learning is focused on Worship, Word, Community and Service, through:**
 - Regular celebration of the liturgy, prayer and prayer services in the Catholic tradition**
 - Teaching and living Gospel values, preserving and passing on traditions, beliefs and culture of the Catholic faith which are at the heart of each school's curriculum and activities**
 - Ensuring that the total life of the school reflects the commitment to the faith development of each person and a genuine respect for every individual; and**
 - Providing opportunities for faith-in-action consistent with Catholic social teaching and serve as a witness of faith to the communities served by the school.**
- (6) Supporting and empowering parents and guardians in their primary role of fostering lifelong faith development with their children through parent programs, effective communication with parents and building strong parent-school relations.**
- (7) Schools will establish guidelines pertaining to the level and scope of assistance for students with special needs.**
- (8) Schools will provide, through shared resources between the High School and Elementary School, the services of qualified specialists such as guidance counselors, reading teachers for remediation and acceleration.**
- (9) Limit enrollment to non-Catholic students at a rate no greater than five (5) percent of the total student population per grade, provided that the student's participation is in accord with the Catholic identity and nature of the school.**

- (10) School Principals will regularly evaluate teachers and support staff in accordance with Parish and Diocesan policies and procedures.

6. Religious Education Program

Goals:

- (1) Administrator and faculty of the religious education program will deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and their commitment to the Parish Mission.

Objectives:

- (1) All teachers will have the necessary training and credentials to be Catechists and leaders of religious education.
- (2) Faculty will be required to complete a minimum of five (5) hours annually of faith formation and enrichment.

B. PASTORAL AND HUMAN FORMATION

1. Local Charity Assistance/Outreach

Goals:

- (1) Provide assistance to local charitable causes through volunteer work and Fundraising**
- (2) Engage in Christian Service outreach to others**

Objectives:

- (1) Assist organizations with outreach programs (i.e. Capuchins)**
- (2) Prepare and serve meals to seniors (i.e. St. Pat's/Detroit)**
- (3) Organize and work with American Red Cross to host blood drives.**
- (4) Organize and distribute Christmas baskets to those in need.**
- (5) Assist Sacred Heart Parish with the work of the St. Vincent dePaul.**
- (6) Support the Men's Club**

2. Care for the Sick, Elderly and Dying

Goals:

- (1) Provide care for the sick, elderly and dying.**

Objectives:

- (1) Continue Nursing Home Ministry-Communion Service and Mass.**
- (2) Continue Homebound Ministry-Communion.**
- (3) Continue the writing and sending of bereavement cards from parish/pastor**

3. Pro-Life/Right to Life-Lifespan

Goals:

- (1) Raise awareness regarding "Life Issues" (i.e. abortion, euthanasia, fetal stem cell research)**
- (2) Raise money to support education and programs regarding "Life Issues."**

Objectives:

- (1) Assist Right to Life and other organizations (i.e. Lennon Center, Wee Care)**
- (2) Participate in the Life Chain to promote awareness.**
- (3) Sell Christmas cards, *Roe v Wade* candles, Mother's Day roses, Father's Day pens.**

4. Hospitality within the Parish

Goals:

- (1) Provide hospitality to existing, new and prospective parishioners and visitors.

Objectives:

- (1) Host coffee and donut receptions for new parishioners.
- (2) Utilize door greeters to hand out missals to create a sense of fellowship.
- (3) Utilize ushers to also serve as door greeters.
- (4) Worship Commission liturgy assistants also serve as greeters when passing out Mass music aids.
- (5) Worship Commission members attendance at special liturgical events and Masses.

5. Parish Sponsored Events

Goals:

- (1) Sponsor dances, dinners and ice cream socials for parishioners.

Objectives:

- (1) Host coffee and donuts after 9:30 am Mass in February, April and October.
- (2) Provide assistance to other Parish Commissions and Committees when holding parish sponsored events.

6. Parishioner Involvement in Ministries

Goals:

- (1) Increase parishioner involvement in the ministries which fall under Worship Commission

Objectives:

- (1) Hold an annual ministry fair.
- (2) Communal training of ministers on a semiannual basis.
- (3) Establish contacts for ministries on the Parish web site.

II.

FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP

Our Catholic identity calls us to support our Parish and its Schools as a spiritual element of our charitable responsibility in Christ. Our support is not limited to financial resources but, additionally, necessitates the sacrifice of time and talent. Certainly, our ability to fund the many necessary programs which unify us in Christ is not without sacrifice. It is in the collective sacrifice of time, talent and treasure that we renew and strengthen our faith. It is also recognized and understood that the vitality of our Parish is dramatically linked to the viability of our Schools.

1. Schools

Goals:

- (1) Provide a Catholic School education that is affordable and available.
- (2) Continue to establish future programs.

Objectives:

- (1) Explore feasibility and benefit of a graduated tuition scale at the Elementary School level.
- (2) Establish a tuition compliance policy regarding student admission.
- (3) Establish a tuition assistance program determined by financial need with compensatory contribution of time and talent.
- (4) Evaluate the feasibility (based on financial/human resources and physical space limitations) of establishing both a kindergarten and before/after school programs.

2. Purchasing

Goals:

- (1) Use economies of scale in purchasing power for the Parish and Schools of goods and services.

Objectives:

- (1) Audit Parish, High School, and Elementary School purchasing practices for goods and services, including food delivery and building maintenance.

- (2) Consult with other Parishes and Catholic Schools to determine if purchase of goods and services can be consolidated.

3. Human Resources

Goals:

- (1) Provide competitive wage and benefit compensation packages for Parish and School staff and support services personnel.
- (2) Maintain sound employment hiring and retention principles applicable to educational and support staff personnel in accordance with Catholic principals.

Objectives:

- (1) Audit current hiring, retention and compensation packages for Parish and School staff, as well as support services personnel.
- (2) Review the feasibility of alternate sources of compensation and/or methods and duration of compensation delivery.
- (3) Establish anti-nepotism and conflict of interest policies in regard to hiring, retention and compensation practices.

4. Investments and Fundraising

Goals:

- (1) Maximize return on Parish investments and fundraising activities.

Objectives:

- (1) Establish annual fund to solicit & receive unrestricted charitable gifts for operational purposes in support of education.
- (2) Implement constituent relationship management strategies to effectively identify and cultivate prospects & steward their gifts.
- (3) Promote planned giving.
- (4) Analyze the effectiveness and return on investment of existing fundraising events, including the annual Auction, and determine viability of proposed new fundraising events against same standards.

- (5) Streamline multiple points of contact with external funding sources, i.e.: corporate sponsors, by offering comprehensive sponsorship packages. Also identify new external prospects.

5. Education: Alternate Funding Sources

Goals:

- (1) Maximize revenue from alternate public and private sources to relieve pressure on tuition.

Objectives:

- (1) Access Federal Title funds, as available.
- (2) Seek public and private Grant funds, including Foundation support.
- (3) Establish alternate fundraising activities including special events held on-site and through direct contact with external contributory sources.

6. Parish and School Facilities

Goals:

- (1) Maximize use of existing Parish and school facilities.

Objectives:

- (1) Review future use of facilities for academic needs, meetings/special events space and storage.
- (2) Evaluate whether the Convent is a usable resource presently or in the future.

7. Parishioners: Professional and Trade Assistance

Goals:

- (1) Parishioners possess a wealth of talent and, for many, the time to devote assistance to the Parish and Schools in matters of specialized need requiring expertise in trades and professions.
- (2) Identify those trades and professions which may be of assistance to the Parish and Schools.
- (3) Actively seek parishioners who will be on-call to assist the Parish and schools when needed.

III.

COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

Internal communication between the Parish and parishioner, School and parent/student, is an ongoing function which, though presently effective, should always be improved through frequency of delivery and alternate modes of notification. Whether the communication is by paper, web-site, internet, telephone or face-to-face, it is only effective if it transcends merely conveying a message. Communication is a two-way street, hence, taking time to stop, listen and care is inseparable from effective communication in the Parish and School setting.

In addition to internal communication, the Parish and Schools are well-served in their collective Mission and in effectuating the Vision for the future by maximizing external forms of communication, which portray Divine Child and its Catholic schools in a light most favorable to its rich history and tradition. By such communication, the continued viability of the Schools, with commensurate vitality for the Parish, will be achieved. In essence, effective and broad-based external communication will have a direct “marketing” impact through publicizing the value and benefits of the Parish and Schools by conveying a strong image to the surrounding communities of what Divine Child stands for, and how it serves.

Goals:

- (1) Use of broad based external communication to convey a strong image of Divine Child Parish and its Schools to the surrounding communities.**
- (2) Increase enrollment through publicizing the value and benefits of the Parish and its Schools.**

Objectives:

- (1) Implement a marketing program which maximizes all forms of communication, including internet web sites, advertising and print media.**
- (2) Direct communication, including orientation programs and on-campus visitation, with parishioners, parents and students from other Parishes and/or Schools which do not have secondary education programs.**
- (3) Develop stronger ties to the print and radio media, including Catholic based publications and radio shows, to bring notification of successful spiritual, academic and athletic activities at Divine Child, through press releases, Ads, publications, brochures and invitations to speak.**

- (4) Development of methods to market the success of the academic programs through sharing of standardized test results, graduation rates, success in High school and college programs.**
- (5) Begin marketing for first grade with marriage and baptismal preparation. Discuss enrollment with parents in an orientation session preceding catechism classes. Begin marketing for high school by the fourth grade.**
- (6) As part of a specific marketing program, consider the feasibility of expansion of before/after school programs as a service to parish families whose children are not enrolled in Catholic school.**

IV.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Within the allowance of Canon Law, this Pastoral Plan speaks to leadership and governance. With the reality of financial constraint and ever growing need for pastoral care, the active role of the laity in assisting in a coordinated governance of the Parish and its Schools is a necessity.

By coordinating the existing levels of Council, Commissions and Committees into a cohesive, hierarchal order, the laity will be best positioned to assist the Pastor, as he deems necessary, in addressing the multitude of issues which arise in the Parish and School setting. Involvement of the laity in the governance, hence leadership of the Parish and Schools, will lead to a renewed sense of ownership that will promote new and innovative direction to addressing common issues.

To that end, the varied aspects of the Goals and Objectives set forth in each segment of this Pastoral Plan is the responsibility of all levels of governance within the Parish.

Goals:

- (1) To achieve a governance structure which yields active participation of parishioners in assistance to and under the direction of the Pastor.**

Objectives:

- (1) In accord with Canon Law and Diocesan policy, reinforce the distinct line of authority among the Council, Commission and Committee consultative/advisory bodies.**
- (2) Through the authority and direction of the Pastor, determine the scope of ministerial and discretionary authority to be delegated to each of the respective bodies.**
- (3) Select members of the consultative bodies in accord with Diocesan policy and directive of the Pastor.**
- (4) Utilize members of the consultative bodies to assist in resolving budgetary, enrollment, planning and public relations matters, including tuition delinquency issues.**

CONCLUSION

This Parish Pastoral Plan represents a collaborative effort of the Parish Council in conjunction with the Education, Worship, Christian Service and Stewardship Commissions. The Commissions, through their various Committees, provided input toward development of the specific goals and objectives which are embodied in the Pastoral Plan.

In addition, through an open forum, parishioners provided input for consideration by the Parish Council, which led to several revisions during the deliberative process. In the end, the Parish Council, through a consensus, recommended the Parish Pastoral Plan to the Pastor for approval.

Upon acceptance of this plan, the work begins to fulfill the goals and objectives. Through constant monitoring and review, the Parish Council will track and assess compliance with the Plan. The Council will periodically report to the Parish community of the steps which have been taken to implement the Plan, the level of successful compliance, as well as any changes to the Plan deemed necessary to fulfill the Mission of the Parish of the Divine Child.

**Parish Pastoral Council
January 2011**

NOTES

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- i. Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education *Making God Known, Loved, and Served*, (2006), 1. *see also*: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), 1
- ii. *ibid*, 2. *see also*: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), 1
- iii. Archdiocese of Milwaukee, *Catholic Schools Strategic Education Plan*, (May, 2008), 10