

Dear Friends,

We are about to commence our Lenten journey and as we do so, we present to you the Pastoral Plan of St. Anthony. We have spent a few years working with staff, councils, committees, and parish leadership to develop the Plan. It has been a time of growth and self-discovery. What has emerged is the fruit of a prayerful journey and the participation of many.

As we began the process, you may remember, we did a parish survey. After consolidating all the data that was collected, we worked to develop our areas of focus to respond to the desires and feedback of our parishioners. This led us in a discussion that developed the graphic depicting the three areas on the opening page of the Plan. As we brainstormed about the feedback, three areas came into focus; **Evangelization**, **Community**, and **Communication**. Under these major headings, there were several areas of focus that were brought to light and we could see that they overlapped into the different areas of focus. Then as it all became clearer, we could see how Jesus is at the center of it all. He is our vision and with Him at the center, we will continue to realize His plan for us here at St. Anthony.

Currently, Archbishop Etienne is beginning the process to develop a Pastoral Plan for the whole archdiocese. We had the opportunity to meet him at our deanery meeting last month. At the meeting, he introduced himself to us priests and gave us the opportunity to introduce ourselves. Then he talked about the Pastoral Plan. He said that there will be nothing new, but rather it will be a plan to proclaim Christ and make Him known based on Pope Francis' letter *The Joy of the Gospel*. We, too, began our process by reading and discussing *The Joy of the Gospel*. As Pope Francis states, "*The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.*" This is our vision for the future of the parish in line with the vision of Pope Francis and Archbishop Etienne.

In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis describes the parish as a unique and dynamic place where people encounter Jesus in a community. He encourages each of us as Christians to consider ourselves as **missionary disciples**. To believe in Christ means to make Him known, to share the gift we have been given, to invite others into relationship with Him. We have a vibrant and dynamic parish with many gifts and opportunities and as we all take on the charge, having heard the call to be missionary disciples, the community of St. Anthony will continue to grow and flourish.

Beginning our Lenten journey with the knowledge of the call to be missionary disciples, I invite you to encounter Jesus anew and walk with Him. Preparing for Ash Wednesday, I encourage you to set some time aside to be silent and listen to Jesus so that you can enter into the journey according to His plan. Often, we decide what we are going to do, but as this process has reminded me once again, when we listen with our hearts to what Jesus wants us to do, we are guided on to a place where we wouldn't have arrived on our own and it is always much better than we could have planned or imagined.

In the Heart of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Jack D. Shrum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Fr. Jack D. Shrum
Pastor