

# Parish Mission Planning Guide

The Parish Mission is an opportunity for us all to renew our Catholic faith. The mission services consist of a proclamation of the Word of God, preaching and reflection, singing and praying together. It will be a grace-filled happening and a time when everyone can experience in a special way the presence and love of God. This guide is designed to assist in preparing for the most effective Parish Mission possible. In planning and preparing for the Parish Mission, *“Let us pray as if everything depends upon God and work as if it depends upon us.”* It is never too early to begin planning and preparing for the Parish Mission.

Keys to a great Parish Mission:

## **Prayer:**

1. Petitions at all weekend Masses, beginning a month before the mission, for the success of the mission.
2. Parish meetings include the mission in their opening prayers.
3. Recruit a team of prayer intercessors. (Specific prayers and instructions are included in the Mission Packet)
4. Encourage Formal or informal holy hours set aside specifically for the intentions of the mission.
5. Provide the mission prayer card for people to use at home. (Included in the Mission Packet, distribute at all masses 3 weeks before the Mission)

## **Participation:**

Begin to organize a Committee to prepare for your Parish Mission approximately three or four months prior to the Parish Mission dates. Parish council members, Eucharistic ministers, lectors, liturgy committee members, greeters, ushers, Catholic school representatives, Knights of Columbus, prayer group leaders, youth group leaders, and religious education director and teachers are just some examples of those who should get involved. Try to get someone from each of those groups on the Parish Mission committee so they can communicate to their ministries about the mission and to solicit help. All other activities should be canceled during the Parish Mission. The priests and deacons of the parish can incorporate the mission into their homilies and encourage people to pray for and participate in its success. It is critical that the leadership of the parish be vocal about the importance of the mission, the expectation for people to participate, and their own commitment to attend and participate. As you gather people for your mission committee, keep in mind that you want to involve as many parishioners in the mission preparations and experience as possible. The key to good attendance is involvement, involvement, involvement

### **Publicity:**

Publicity is a key component in having a large number of people attend the Parish Mission. Parish bulletin reminders should begin 5 to 6 weeks before the Parish Mission in order to allow people to reserve the time on their calendars. Included in this Packet for Parish Missions is a series of flyers that you can download, print and place in the parish bulletin. These flyers are designed to attract interest by gradually revealing more detail about the Parish Mission. Included is also a color flyer that can be reproduced and displayed in strategic places such as bulletin boards for nearby churches and Catholic schools, grocery stores, other retail stores, and businesses owned or managed by parishioners. If your parish has a website is very important to post information about the Parish Mission on your website. There is also an announcement that can be shared with nearby parishes for use in their bulletin. This announcement is suitable for placement in the Diocesan newspaper. (Around the Archdiocese section in the Texas Catholic Herald) Pulpit Announcements should begin approximately 4 weeks before the Parish Mission.

Consider a letter for your priest to the entire parish family, especially those who have become inactive. Invite them to the Mission. A phone team could call everyone in the parish to invite and remind everyone to this special event in the life of the parish. (Samples are included) Remember that inactive Catholics will not hear Sunday announcements and prayers for the success of the mission, nor will they read the weekly bulletin. Mailings, phone calls and/or emails are essential for inactive Catholics to find out about the mission and know they are invited.

### **Childcare:**

Providing child care is important as it allow parents with young children the opportunity to attend if they did not have a babysitter at home. Use enough volunteers so that no individual has to miss more than one night of the Parish Mission.

### **Music Ministry:**

The Music Ministry within your church is an important part of the Parish Mission. Some appropriate prelude selections can be a wonderful way to create a prayerful atmosphere for the people as they arrive. A key element of all the services is the participation of the people; this includes involving them in the singing at appropriate times. Carl will discuss this aspect of the mission in a phone conference with the Mission coordinator.

### **Hospitality:**

**Greeters and ushers** are such an important welcoming gesture. A smiling face and a warm handshake as people arrive will help prepare people to receive the graces God has for us during the Parish Mission.

**Consider** a time of fellowship before or after the Mission each evening. This can be a soup supper sponsored by various organizations in the parish offered before the Mission, or light dessert after the Mission each evening. The time of fellowship is very important to the building of relationships and sharing the joy and enthusiasm of the Mission.

**Final checklist:**

Time is set for evening mission presentation. All other parish activities canceled.

Musicians, usher/greeters, etc, assigned.

Inactive parishioners contacted and invited to the parish mission.

Neighboring parishes informed of the mission and invited to attend.

Baby-sitting arranged and advertised during evening celebration.

Transportation for elderly and handicapped arranged and advertised.

The social gathering after each night's mission presentation assigned and planned.

Advertising arranged in: bulletins newsletters church announcements school handouts, mailings, etc. school poster contest local radio, TV, etc. phone contact

***Pray, Pray, Pray***

***Let God do His work! The Parish Mission will be a great time of renewal and refreshing!!!***