

# **Edmonton Catholic Parish**

**A Welcoming Parish: Under the Patronage  
of  
Saint Thérèse of Lisieux**



**Parish Assembly  
27th October 2019**

**Pastoral Areas for our future  
Love of God—Love for Others**

## Love of God

*"There is only one thing to do here below: to love Jesus, to win souls for Him so that He may be loved. Let us seize with jealous care every least opportunity of self sacrifice. Let us refuse Him nothing - He does so want our love!"*



## Love for Others

*"Without love, deeds, even the most brilliant, count as nothing."*

*(Saint Thérèse of Lisieux)*

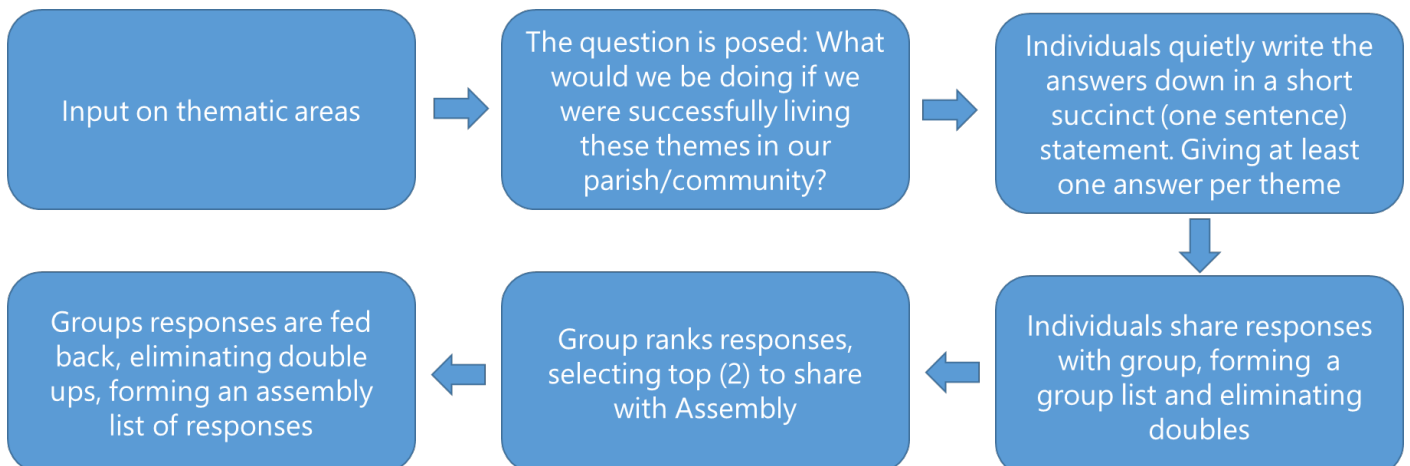
*"The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelises, if it proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be 'the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters'. This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed cluster made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.*

*(Evangelii Gaudium, 28)*

## Assembly Process

In order to focus our efforts, and also to be inclusive of all parishioners' input on how to 'be parish', we required a formal process of listening to each other and discerning our way forward together. In order to, discern our way forward in this endeavour navigating the complex desires, emotions, understandings etc. we utilised a tailored version of Nominal Group Technique to listen, and allow Holy Spirit to enthuse and direct our paths. For the purpose of this process the **thematic areas of the 2020 plenary** process were utilised to focus our questioning.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will guide your path.  
(Prov 3: 4-5)



### Thematic Areas:

1. Missionary and Evangelising
2. Inclusive, Participatory and Synodal
3. Prayerful and Eucharistic
4. Humble, Healing and Merciful
5. A Joyful, Hope-filled and Servant Community
6. Open to Conversion, Renewal and Reform

After receiving input on these topics the Assembly was broken up into small groups for discernment and feedback. In each group there was a group leader who's task it was to facilitate, in an orderly way, the group process.

### The question

*"What would we look like, or, what would we be doing if we were successfully living this theme?"*

Each participant was asked to quietly reflect on this question and imagine the parish successfully living each thematic area, then write down 1 to 3 short punchy statements that characterise this success. (All ideas were shared and can be found in the Appendix). Reviewing the list, the group was then asked to rank their top 1/3 of responses, the top 2 responses for each group were shared with the Assembly and formed the **priority responses** that went back to the Pastoral Council for prioritisation.

### The Fellowship

After the discernment and feedback was completed we all shared in a time of fellowship and a wonderful lunch. The atmosphere was great as we did what we do best in our parish; spend time together.

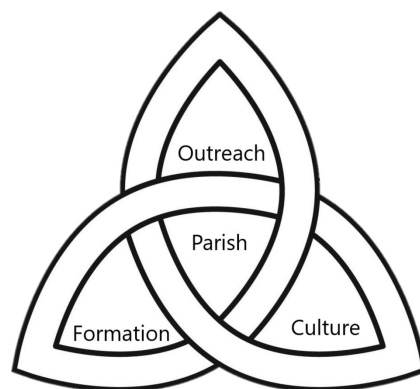
## Pastoral Council Discernment

After the Assembly it was the task of the Pastoral Council to further discern the prioritisation of the responses. To do this four questions were established prior to the Assembly by which each statement could be assessed, further discussion was also engaged to expand some ideas and merge similar concepts. Based on this assessment the responses were ranked identifying our priority areas which, as a community, we will direct our attention. The outcome of this assessment highlighted **three main areas of attention to focus on the coming 1 to 3 years**. All the responses fitted into the main areas of: **Formation, Outreach, and Parish Culture**.

## Pastoral Responses

### Outreach

- Welcoming teams-Before mass welcome new people
- Celebrate people in our community and welcome new people
- Reaching out – sick, old people – visitations—An active commitment to local vulnerable people
- Evangelise family and friends first
- Re-engagement/support of families of those who are newly baptised
- Keep opening up participation groups; ongoing invitation of inclusiveness—Hold regular parish events, additional to mass to draw in a wider range of people
- Organise parish activities for adults, youth and children
- A cherishing of all life, through education, prayers and remembrances; including a commitment to our environment; a dedication to mothers and unborn children etc. Life in all its forms.



### Formation

- Understanding the meaning of the mass and persevere with this understanding
- Re-affirm importance of Eucharist including explanation of what it means
- Greater emphasis on confession—Times set for regular reconciliation as a community and promoted

and explained

- Faith events, parish days, celebrations, social gatherings, friendships, meals
- Increase opportunities for fellowship and faith sharing within the parish (they'll know we are Christians by our love).
- More volunteers involved in cleaning church, events, running of parish etc.
- Support parishioners in engaging annually in retreat

### **Parish Culture**

- Being a parish that is open/extends a welcome to all who may want to be a part of our community
- A parish where we all work together to enjoy the good news and help where needed in spreading the good news
- Encourage, accept and listen to all (Culturally diverse, old and new people, shy and confident) members of the parish and for them to be involved
- Create safe and respectful place for discussion and vulnerable people
- Be inclusive of other cultures, especially youth and children
- Everyone involved in sharing the ministries at liturgies
- Loving God serving others
- Blessed with sharing friendships
- Attitude of openness to renewal and reform
- Lead by example, hold true to faith, be church to others

## **Pastoral Areas Requiring Further Discernment**

### **Outreach**

- Opening the church to other groups to use
- More inclusivity of non-Catholics in our celebrations
- Renewal for the sanctity of the Eucharist; regular prayer events, more adoration, benediction, prayer for church and religion—More people attending services and respect for the Eucharist
- More compassion and support for victims of sexual abuse
- Make help available for parishioners in need
- Suggestion box in church (queries, questions)

### **Formation**

- Diversity in group prayer groups where we teach prayer – age, gender etc

### **Parish Culture**

- “Be There” for others in daily life
- Live your faith with the holy spirit evident
- All parishioners to greet each with a smile
- Start in the family

All other input from the Assembly can be found in the Appendix. Please note: this is not a process of what we won't do, but rather an identification of what we **will focus on in the coming years. All are expected to discern God's will in their lives and diligently walk in that path.** If there is something not on this list you feel motivated to achieve, that may be all that is required to make something a priority.



## Actions moving forward

Early in 2020 we will action each of the pastoral responses. Each area requires a final step of discernment "how are we/do we practically achieve this goal"? This will provide us with tasks and goals which are achievable, measurable and able to be celebrated. It also provides each of us with clear boundaries within which we can give of our time and talent without it overwhelming us. The only way to be effective in our life together as a parish family is that each one of us contribute what we can (no one is expecting more than that).

## What is being seriously requested of each of us.

As a baptised Christians we are anointed priest prophet and king. In Confirmation we commit to living this truth. As St Paul tells us "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Rom 10:13-15)

It seems clear that Holy Spirit is challenging us to act prophetically in our community; this is who you are. St Irenaeus tells us that the glory of God is a person fully alive. We are fully alive when we realise our identity in Christ and live from this truth. As the words of our own baptismal anointing declare "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life"



### The Personal Challenge

**In the next two months reflect over the list of pastoral responses, and the work you already do, and get a sense of what areas you will contribute towards in the parish. At the beginning of February participate in the action meetings.**

**Let us see what Holy Spirit can do in us and through us!**

## Appendix —Complete list of Assembly Responses

### A Joy-filled, Hope-Filled And Servant Community

- To See each other as a happy family
- To be joyful and full of hope – we will be a servant community
- Joyfully serving others
- Blessed with sharing friendships
- Listening and helping those in need e.g. lonely, old, sick
- Celebrate people in our community and welcome new people
- Welcome is the by word of the parish
- Share thoughts and be willing to help out in any way possible
- Embrace change and allow the spirit to lead us
- Invite people back to our church
- Make help available for parishioners in need
- Before Mass welcome new people
- Faith events, parish days, celebrations
- Ecumenical Events
- Good gatherings, friendships, meals
- Vinnies and Rosies – more appeals to participate
- More volunteers involved in cleaning church, events, running of parish etc.
- Parish website and events calendar
- Be more supportive through active promotion of organisations assisting mentally challenged and marginalised
- Be more supportive of marginalised and excluded Catholics e.g. divorced, recovering alcoholics and drug addicts including those who are quietly on the edge.
- Recognise and make feel welcome parish newcomers
- Form groups from our parish to participate in outreach together
- Focus on church celebrations and feast days
- Outreach to our own parishioners/community with a social inclusion focus
- Greater awareness of social justice impacts in the local community
- Focus on ways of being more hospitable
- Commitment to an annual outreach project
- Increase opportunities for fellowship and faith-sharing within the parish (they'll know we are Christians by our love)
- Someone to be there when you need them
- A great parish where we are happy, hopeful and WOW with a hope filled view of the future.
- Greater numbers in volunteering our time and services to the disadvantaged
- Start a Gospel study group
- Doing everything in God's name, not expecting anything in return.

### Humble, Healing and Merciful

- Perhaps a special Mass for those lapsed Catholics
- Learn to compromise, forgive and show mercy
- Christ is our healer and is merciful to all

- Parishioner visits to those hospitalised, house-bound due to illness or injury
- More home visits to those in need (ill, troubled, etc)
- We are no better than them
- 'Come as you are' approach continued
- Start in the family
- Learn to be humble and merciful and we will be healed
- Taking care of others and forgiving
- Be grateful for these gifts
- Healing is forgiving, make peace with those that hurt us
- Openness to healing prayer
- Merciful is the key
- Regular opportunity for Confession
- Genuine reconciliation with and respect for First Nations peoples and their culture
- Remove elitism within the church at various levels
- More compassion and support for victims of sexual abuse
- Outreach to the vulnerable and good community partnerships
- Continuation of Healing Masses
- People open to hearing and listening to each other's views in a spirit of love
- Set times for regular Reconciliation as a community, promoted and explained
- Pastoral teams for the sick, hurting and lonely
- Leading meaningful dialogue with our First Nation People
- Listen when others talk
- Great to know we have a parish where help is readily available
- Home visits to those in need and where needed
- Being a servant and not a leader
- Provide formation on the importance of journeying with others before judging their errors
- Commitment to reducing our environmental impact
- Commitment to indigenous partnerships
- Commitment to regular intra faith partnership and prayer

#### Inclusive, Participatory and Synodal

- Clergy and Laity – more shared decision making
- Openly welcome people of different cultures, and celebrate our differences
- Keep opening up participation groups; ongoing invitation of inclusiveness
- Believing God is in the life of everyone that I meet today
- Making connections with other parishes/churches
- Greater involvement with women, youth and the marginalised
- Opening the church to other groups to use
- More ecumenical interaction with other faith traditions
- Love the person not the sin by keeping with gospel values
- Youth programmes – invitation to participate
- Respect for life especially the unborn
- Welcoming teams

- Celebrate our cultural differences e.g. food, Mass
- Continuous invitation for people to share their gifts with Liturgy, music etc
- Continue development of our Pastoral Council and other governance mechanisms (regular review)
- Look at our structures-grow them beyond the priest, we might need a (paid) pastoral associate
- Regular leadership training for all Ministries (greater cultural and gender diversity)
- Hold regular parish events, additional to Mass, to draw in a wider range of people.
- Consider employing a parish associate
- Encourage others to join us
- Vision of a society where no one is left out
- Be inclusive of other cultures, especially youth and children
- Organise parish activities for adults, youth and children
- Assist with transport to Mass for those without
- Putting all thoughts and Ideas to one Goal – Live and let live
- Involvement in community events
- More Parish young people involvement at Plenary Council
- More inclusiveness of non-Catholics in our congregation
- Create safe and respectful place for discussion
- Make sure all ethnic members take part
- Everyone who has a wish to be a part of our community should be allowed and welcome to participate
- Getting on with others and listening to their ideas
- Accepting changes and accepting new people in the church
- Listening to other ideas
- Be transparent so that people can observe what is happening and see how they can become involved.
- Encourage people to come forward
- Encourage, accept and listen to all ethnic, old, new, shy and confident members of the parish and for them to be involved.

#### Open To Conversion, Renewal And Reform

- Reaching out – sick, old people – visitation
- 2 Lead by example, hold true to faith, be church to others
- Theological studies, adult faith education
- Take Jesus Christ to those who don't know Him
- Employing Faith based teachers in Diocese
- SVDP Conference – Rosies, more joining and support
- An active commitment to local vulnerable people
- Learning the truths of our religious tradition and how to apply them to this age – better adult formation
- Testing new models of missionary – we need to form and pay Pastoral Catechists, not just State School
- All parishioners to greet each other with a smile
- A parish where we all work together to enjoy the good news and help where needed in spreading the good news

- To reach the people who do not believe in God, and try to explain the good news to them
- Bring back the Saturday Vigil Mass
- Go from house to house to find all the Catholics in our parish
- Create appropriate faith formation resources (online and other) and encourage parishioners to engage with continual growth in faith formation
- To explain to people how far the world has gone away from God
- Families who come for Sacraments are encouraged to grow in their Faith
- People coming back to Faith, Church and Prayer
- Busy doing Church Work
- Speaking well and helping others in their faith
- Live your faith with the Holy Spirit evident
- Evangelise in Unity with other Christians
- Parishioners know their faith and confident to share it
- We have someone to talk to about our innermost problems
- Helping people with their life journey through faith
- Live like Jesus told us
- Non threatening options for parish to engage with general community
- Sharing your faith experience
  - Actively reaching out to non-practising Catholics in the parish
  - A parish where we live as an example of Jesus-giving, accepting, non judgemental
  - Being a parish that is open and extends a welcome to all who may want to be part of our community
  - Reflecting on the Gospel as the early church did, to recognise those who are vulnerable
  - Understanding why you are part/not part of our community of faith
  - Reengagement/support of families of who are newly baptised
  - Proactive in dispelling myths/open about our community, so that we are approachable.
  - Be active e.g. Outreach SVDP
  - Despite backgrounds, strive for peaceful life
  - Evangelise family and friends first
  - Encourage Ecumenical Community and Environment
  - More involvement/encouragement of youth
  - Reach out to people with social and emotional issues
  - Having a strong faith foundation individually first
  - 'Be there' for others in daily life
  - Accept changes due to lack of priests
  - Have an open mind and listen
  - Connect with people in a joyful and respectful way
  - 'Live the message'
  - More opportunity to renew and reaffirm our faith
  - A parish that remains consultative of the community
  - Loving and embracing the person and keeping with Gospel values
  - Theological studies, faith formation, Bible study, groups, resources, study materials
  - Suggestion Box in Church (queries, questions)

- Focus on the family groups
- Celebrating our roles as men and women
- Stronger focus on Jesus and His message and the faith He taught us
- Faith discussion groups
- In a form of dialog and love and generous heart
- Attitude of openness to renewal and reform
- Open to other's ideas
- Being at peace with change
- Listening to other's ideas
- Changes be communicated clearly with good consultation
- Regular opportunities for deepening faith are available for all
- Reaffirm the basis of our belief and the need to deepen our relationship with God
- Courage to be a moving, fluent parish
- Reform to include less clericalism, more laity involvement
- Opportunities to understand opposition to reform
- Re-engage with young people
- Support parishioners in engaging annually in retreat opportunities
- An annual retreat or renewal activity
- Listen and like what others say (respect)
- Having more discussion groups where these things can be discussed in community
- Be welcoming to people from other faith groups
- To encourage more and more people to have friendly conversations, not only with their friends
- Be happy to change, wherever it is necessary
- To hear stories of priests and nuns about why they joined
- Ongoing and obvious commitment to safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Working more collaboratively with other parishes

#### Prayerful and Eucharistic

- Benediction revived
- Silent Prayer (listen to deepen faith)
- Rainforest Prayer space
- To be prayerful in your approach to people and recognise the treasure that everyone is
- Reviving and celebrating traditions
- Understanding the meaning of the Mass and persevere with this understanding
- To be a greeting people, especially to the new
- Diversity in prayer groups where we teach prayer-age, gender etc
- Loving God, serving others
- Happy, contented and blessed
- More people attending services and respect for the Eucharist
- Opportunities for group prayer are regular and open
- More enthusiastic praise and worship in Mass
- Desire to pray before the Lord and give thanks
- Everyone involved in sharing the Ministries at Mass

- Value – Pray and Masses etc
- No matter how you Pray is important and relevant
- Reaffirm importance of Eucharist including explanation of what it means
- Encourage Bible Nights at home
- Make First Communion more special
- Connect with Blessed Trinity through prayer (personally and jointly)
- More and regular lay led liturgical prayer services
- Feeding the hungry, not just ourselves
- Greater focus on contemplative prayer practices
- Different styles of daily prayer talked about and encouraged
- Opportunities for parishioners, especially children and youth to learn about the Mass: actions, traditions, ties to Scripture
- Daily Prayer and more access to Eucharist
- More participation in prayer meetings
- Greater emphasis on Confession
- Prayer gatherings and celebrating Mass as whole parish congregation
- Palm Sunday Celebration including acted-out Stations of the Cross
- Have workshops to show how to be prayerful
- Organise something to help people practise daily prayer
- Pray/ask God to help us reach needy people (physical and emotional)
- Cherish life, mass dedicated to mothers and unborn children – education and prayers, remembrances
- Renewal of the sanctity of the Eucharist
- Regular Prayer Events, more Adoration and Benediction
- Pray for the Church and Religion
- Prayers of Intercession-Christian focused, non political, more participation from laity
- Prayer teams for parish needs, special intentions