



WE WALK
BY



FAITH

Catholic Diocese of Richmond
September 2006

Diocese of Richmond

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Office of the Bishop

To: Diocesan Presbyteral Council, Pastoral Council, Diocesan Staff,
Parish Leadership

Dear Friends in Christ:

Please find enclosed the final copy of *We Walk By Faith*, which we invite you to read and study carefully. It must be stated that this document is not to be construed as a summary of the Catholic faith. This document presumes that the reader already has a working knowledge of the Catholic faith as found in authentic Church documents especially the most recent rendition of such, namely, The Catechism of the Catholic Church.

We Walk By Faith was developed from the original document, *We've Come This Far By Faith*, where the categories of *Worship, Word, Community, and Service* were observed. Herein these essential values are described, ideals stated, and reflective questions inserted.

Prior to my pastoral visit, the parish community is to complete a report addressing the "questions for consideration" in the document, ***We Walk By Faith***. In addition, every parishioner is invited to complete their own survey. Once the parishioner's surveys are tabulated and studied in light of the preceding report, you will have completed the "self-assessment" statement. I will refer to this report on my visit.

It is our sincerest hope that the forthcoming process will afford the opportunity for parishes to renew their efforts at supporting the faith lives of the people. As stated in the introduction we are called to prayerfully consider if the parishes to which we are joined are places where we and others may encounter Jesus Christ in word, worship, community, and service.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis X. Di Lorenzo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Francis X. DiLorenzo
Bishop of Richmond

September, 2006

This booklet is produced in collaboration with the Presbyteral Council, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the diocesan staff and five parish councils in our diocese.

Even though this text references church documents, it is not intended to be a formal treatise on theology or spirituality. The assumption for this whole document is that it is consistent with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. *We've Come This Far by Faith* is the precursor for this text and is the basis for the sections titled "Experience and Context."

We Walk by Faith is a guide for a new journey in parish life in the Diocese of Richmond, providing the impetus for new ideas and great conversation.

PROLOGUE

And all who believed were together and held all things in common. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2: 44, 46-47)

1 The first Christians, whose story of a faith received, welcomed and shared is
2 captured in this short quotation from the Acts of the Apostles, would not have been
3 familiar with some of the structures through which the household of faith is now ordered:
4 a parish, a vicariate, a diocese. But they would have understood readily the underlying
5 purpose of these structures:

- 6 • as venues in which the saving **word** is recounted “so that all might grow in the
7 love and knowledge of God” (2Pt. 3:18);
- 8 • as places for the **worship** of the One by Whom, through Whom and in Whom we
9 are saved;
- 10 • as means for gathering believers in **community**;
- 11 • and as springboards for the generous **service** of sisters and brothers inside and
12 outside the Body of Christ, the Church.

13 Like those first Christians, we know that salvation is personal; nonetheless, we are
14 equally aware that the gifts and demands which come to each person in the encounter
15 with Jesus Christ are offered through the Holy Spirit for the building up of the whole
16 Body (*cf.* 1 Cor.12:7). When we walk by faith, we do so as individuals bound to
17 communities or, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “Union with Christ is also union
18 with all those to whom he gives himself” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 14).

19 The Second Vatican Council speaks of the Church as being present in dioceses.
20 “In this particular church, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ truly
21 exists and functions” (*Christus Dominus*, 11). The parish, however, is the local, stable
22 society of the faithful in which the vast majority of persons discovers and celebrates the
23 graces and challenges of the “particular church.” For this reason, our bishop, Francis X.
24 DiLorenzo, has called believers in this “household of faith” to consider prayerfully if the
25 parishes to which they are joined are places where others may encounter Jesus Christ in
26 word, worship, community and service. The material that follows provides a guide and
27 gauge for this work. We’ve come this far by faith. By faith, and with the help of many
28 brothers and sisters, may we joyfully continue the journey.

WORD

They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (Luke 24: 32)

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Faith and Understanding

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Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, present day Catholics are called to know Christ in the breaking of the bread and, with hearts burning with joy, to share the glad tidings of new life in Christ. Today’s disciples are called upon to faithfully proclaim the Word in this day, in this time, in this place.

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We Walk By Faith affirms the value of catechesis as an “essential moment” in the Church’s mission of evangelization (*General Directory for Catechesis*, 63). Parishes, campus ministries and Catholic schools in the Diocese of Richmond seek through their Christian Formation programs to achieve “the definitive aim of catechesis” which is “to put people not only in touch, but in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ” (*GDC*, 80). At the same time, parishes “encourage a living, explicit, and fruitful profession of faith” for all disciples (*GDC*, 66).

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The whole faith community shares in the ministry of catechesis. While the leadership roles of the pastor, catechetical leader and catechists of adults, youth and children are critical, “parents are the most influential agents of catechesis for their children,” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, 234) and all adults are called to be life-long learners. A holistic approach brings together many individuals and ministries within a parish, working together for the effective catechesis of the whole parish.

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In addition, Catholic schools play an important role in the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith. The Catholic school is “not simply an institution which offers academic instruction of high quality, but, even more important, is an effective vehicle of total Christian formation” (*NDC*, 230).

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Finally, although there are no Catholic colleges or universities in the diocese, it is home to 68 higher-education institutions, among them 40 four-year colleges and universities. Campus ministry serves as the public presence of the Church in the academic world.

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Experience and Context

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The Diocese of Richmond is committed to challenging and supporting adults as they develop a mature faith so that they might live as Christ-like disciples in their families and their work places and as citizens in their neighborhoods, cities and country. Disciples with mature faith are called to transmit their Catholic values, beliefs and traditions to the next generation. The diocese, through its parishes, campus ministries and other institutions, strives to enable life-long conversion to Christ and growth in faith by providing age-appropriate faith formation opportunities through religious education, youth, campus and young adult ministry and Catholic schools. *Called to Be Disciples*, the

1 catechetical norms for the Diocese of Richmond, guides parishes in their efforts to “teach
2 them all that I have commanded you” (Mt. 28: 20).

3 In a diocese and broader society that exhibits a wide variety of geographic,
4 cultural and ethnic diversity, our parishes and campus ministries must creatively utilize a
5 wide variety of models of faith formation, including formats such as classroom study,
6 intergenerational groupings, ecumenical and inter-religious endeavors, retreats, small
7 Christian communities, scripture study, home study and online study. The Rite of
8 Christian Initiation for Adults continues to lead persons to conversion to Christ and into
9 Catholic communities across the diocese. In addition, especially in a diocese with vast
10 geographic boundaries, effective and efficient use of technology for communication in
11 general and for study of the Word and Catholic doctrine in particular is necessary. The
12 success of all these opportunities depends on the leadership of the pastor or campus
13 minister and a trained catechetical leader.

14 For generations, Catholic schools of the diocese have been communities of faith
15 and sources of faith formation. Shifting demographics and uneven financial support for
16 schools are being studied so that Catholic schools will continue to thrive and be
17 accessible and affordable to an even broader population.

18 Parish ministries are not ends in themselves but are means to hasten and enter the
19 Reign of God. Catechesis includes multiple tasks because “the maturation of the
20 Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith,
21 liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, missionary spirit. When
22 catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full
23 development” (*Our Hearts Were Burning within Us*, 89). Catechesis calls forth a
24 missionary spirit to go beyond our communities, which can become too comfortable, to
25 be leaven in the world in our roles as workers and citizens and help bring forth the Reign
26 of God, the fullness of evangelization.

27 Ideals and Accountability

28 The parish seeks to proclaim the message of Christ according to the magisterium
29 of his church. In order to be an effective and pastoral ministry of the Word, a parish,
30 campus ministry or school needs to examine what catechesis in action looks like.

31 The parish:

- 32 • Uses the catechetical norms for the diocese “Called to Be Disciples,” as well as
33 those of the church universal and of the United States Conference of Catholic
34 Bishops;
- 35 • Provides access to systematic faith formation for adults, youth and children that
36 leads to true discipleship in the family, work and civic lives of parishioners;
- 37 • Has a written mission statement for ministry of the Word that echoes the parish
38 mission but is unique to its ministry of the Word;
- 39 • Utilizes a Christian Formation Committee to coordinate planning, presentation
40 and evaluation of its ministry of the Word;
- 41 • Has a designated catechetical leader to assist the pastor in his catechetical
42 ministry;

- 1 • Makes adult faith formation the centerpiece of all its catechetical ministry;
- 2 • Encourages, challenges and supports parents as the primary catechists of their
- 3 children;
- 4 • Provides an age-appropriate, approved catechetical curriculum for all members of
- 5 the parish;
- 6 • Is aware of its multicultural composition and the needs and cultural practices of
- 7 the various groups within the parish and provides adult catechesis and formation
- 8 opportunities in the native language of its members;
- 9 • Recognizes and addresses the needs, including accessibility to buildings and
- 10 programs, of those who are disabled in any way;
- 11 • Follows the norms of canon law and national and diocesan policies and guidelines
- 12 for preparation and celebration of the sacraments;
- 13 • Provides a budget which allows for just salaries and benefits for lay employees
- 14 and adequate resources for a successful ministry of the Word;
- 15 • Strives for unity among all Christians and fosters ecumenical and inter-religious
- 16 initiatives.

17 The pastor:

- 18 • Has as his first duty the ministry of the Word;
- 19 • Promotes the importance of catechesis as an essential ministry of the parish;
- 20 • Confers regularly with the catechetical leaders and school principal (if applicable)
- 21 to monitor the various aspects of the parish's ministry of the Word;
- 22 • Provides homilies and preaching on the Word that makes the scriptures
- 23 understandable and presents the challenge of discipleship;
- 24 • Oversees planning for the catechetical ministry of the parish, engages its
- 25 leadership, and annually evaluates the program and performance of its leaders.

26 The catechetical leader and Catholic school principal (where applicable):

- 27 • Have the appropriate catechetical, educational and professional backgrounds to
- 28 lead the Christian Formation program and Catholic school of the parish;
- 29 • Have respect for the dignity and worth of each adult, youth and child, expressed
- 30 in flexibility of catechetical and educational approaches, sensitivity to uniqueness
- 31 and ability to discern and build on individual gifts;
- 32 • Implement the diocesan plan for certification of all catechists and school religion
- 33 teachers;
- 34 • Provide a clear awareness of basic Catholic principles of ecumenism and inter-
- 35 religious dialogue;
- 36 • Insure that a system of record-keeping is in place to monitor adherence to the
- 37 diocesan safe environment policy, including completion of VIRTUS training and
- 38 background checks;
- 39 • Enables the planning of the parish catechetical program, enlists those needed to
- 40 implement it and oversees its ongoing evaluation and growth.

41 The catechists and school religion teachers:

- 42 • Are witnesses to the Catholic faith and inspire others to deeper faith and active
- 43 discipleship;
- 44 • Have basic skills to use of technology for communication and for catechesis;

- 1 • Are fully initiated Catholics in good standing;
- 2 • Have completed or are in the process of completing the diocesan certification
- 3 process;
- 4 • Have completed required safe environment training and background checks;
- 5 • Have received ecumenical and inter-religious formation.

6 The campus ministry:

- 7 • Provides access to systematic faith formation for young adults, faculty and staff
- 8 that leads to true discipleship in the family, work and civic lives of the
- 9 community.
- 10 • Makes adult faith formation the centerpiece of all its catechetical ministry;
- 11 • Is aware of its multicultural composition and the needs and cultural practices of
- 12 the various groups within the faith community;
- 13 • Recognizes and addresses the needs, including accessibility to buildings and
- 14 programs, of those who are disabled in any way;
- 15 • Engages in ecumenical and inter-religious formation;
- 16 • Addresses the goals of higher education and the procedures and practices of those
- 17 institutions being served.

18 Questions for Consideration

- 19 1. How does the parish or campus ministry impart a knowledge of the Catholic faith and
- 20 challenge and support adults to develop a mature Catholic faith?

- 21 2. How does the parish provide age-appropriate and diverse faith formation
- 22 opportunities to children, youth and adults?

- 23 3. How does the parish challenge its members to be active disciples in family, work and
- 24 civic society?

- 25 4. How does the parish use technology to communicate and to promote and expand its
- 26 ministry of the Word?

- 27 5. Does the parish or campus ministry provide references or library resources, or make
- 28 known where such resources are available, to help community members in their
- 29 progress toward a deeper understanding of the Word and teaching of the church?

- 1 6. Describe the catechetical vision and practices that the pastor or campus minister and
2 catechetical leader exhibit in guiding the parish’s ministry of the Word.
- 3 7. Describe the relationship between the parish and the school and how each might
4 better learn from and support the other (if applicable).
- 5 8. How does the parish or campus ministry respond to the need for a trained catechetical
6 leader to direct its ministry of the Word and for trained catechists?
- 7 9. How does the parish or campus community truly “proclaim itself to be the place of
8 authentic ecumenical witness” (*Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms*
9 *on Ecumenism*, 67) and inter-religious witness?
- 10 10. How does the parish or campus ministry integrate and build upon the dynamic
11 interrelationship of Word and Worship?
- 12 11. How might the staff of the diocesan offices assist your parish to develop programs
13 and processes important for full implementation of the WORD dimension for *We*
14 *Walk by Faith*?

References

- Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*. U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. 1993.
- General Directory for Catechesis*. Congregation for the Clergy. 1997. (GDC)
- National Directory for Catechesis*. U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. (NDC)
- Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States*. 1999. U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

WORSHIP

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” (Luke 22: 19)

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Faith and Understanding

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On the night before he died, Jesus gathered at table with his disciples, sharing bread and wine with them in a celebration of prayer and praise. In this gift of his Body and Blood, Christ invites us to experience his ongoing presence, his power and his peace. In the celebration of the Eucharist, Christians keep alive the faith of all the Church teaches and the memory of all that God has done for us in Christ. We become aware of God’s action in our lives today and we anticipate the heavenly banquet where we will see God face to face. The celebration of the Church’s liturgy grounds our identity, deepens our faith and helps us to grow in holiness.

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The Second Vatican Council teaches that “the liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the church is directed and the font from which all her power flows” (*Sacrosanctum Concillium*, 10). The celebration of the liturgy is essential to our identity as Christians and is central to the life of every parish community.

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By celebrating the Church’s liturgy, we are plunged into the Paschal Mystery of Christ. His dying and rising become the saving truth which gives meaning to our lives. The rich tradition of Roman Catholic worship empowers us to be shaped by the prophetic Word of God and strengthened by Christ who is incarnate in the sacraments. Every celebration of the Liturgy draws the local worshipping community into deeper communion with the Living God, strengthening the bonds of peace between people and sending us forth to do God’s work on earth.

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In order to foster a deeper sense of prayer and worship in the Christian assembly, a parish should encourage a spirit of Christian community within the assembly, listen attentively to the Word of God, celebrate the Eucharist in a well-prepared liturgy which reveals Christ’s presence and advance a liturgical spirituality which shapes the parish’s mission to the world. In particular, “the spiritual and pastoral riches of Sunday, as it has been handed on to us by tradition, are truly great. When its significance and implications are understood in their entirety, Sunday in a way becomes a synthesis of the Christian life and a condition for living it well. It is clear therefore why the observance of the Lord’s Day is so close to the Church’s heart, and why in the Church’s discipline it remains a real obligation” (*Deis Domini*, 81). In addition, other forms of prayer, such as the Liturgy of the Hours, services of the Word, Eucharistic adoration and other devotions, should mark a parish’s calendar.

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Experience and Context

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In this diocese, we treasure the gift of Christian worship, which leads us into the heart of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Our parishes and campus ministries seek to foster the full, conscious and active participation of all the faithful, which is both their

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1 right and responsibility as baptized believers. In the celebration of the sacraments, daily
2 prayer and other devotions, we give praise to the Living God.

3 We worship not alone, but in communities that gather to share our common faith.
4 We value the quality of our liturgical celebrations for all our sacraments. Our parishes are
5 rural, urban and suburban, ranging in size from 20 to 4,500 families. Our 40 campus
6 ministries are established at both public and private institutions of higher education
7 whose enrollments range from 700 to 30,000 students. Included in this number are five
8 colleges or universities that are historically for African Americans. The bonds we form in
9 these parishes and on these campuses put a face on the love that God has for us and make
10 concrete the reality of the one family of God. Our diocese encourages the formation of
11 diverse faith communities and recognizes the oneness of these communities with the
12 universal church.

13 A welcoming community is founded in the Eucharistic liturgy and from there is
14 sent on mission to help build the Reign of God in our families, workplaces and civic
15 society.

16 Ideals and Accountability

17 Authenticity in worship requires attention to the ideals and standards of our faith, our
18 traditions and our community.

- 19 • The primacy of Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is demonstrated by the
20 development of clearly-identified liturgical leaders and ministers in each parish or
21 campus ministry, who call forth the gifts of the community to provide for a
22 reverent, prayerful and life-giving liturgy that encourages the active participation
23 of all the faithful.
- 24 • Within the rich tradition of Catholic worship, a range of styles is both valued and
25 encouraged. Given the great diversity within our faith communities, leaders will
26 identify liturgical styles and practices which are best suited to the local
27 community, while respecting the requirements of the texts of the universal church.
- 28 • Liturgical catechesis is necessary for the ongoing life of each parish. Thus, leaders
29 will promote liturgical catechesis on the local level, improve the quality of
30 participation by all parishioners, call forth men and women to liturgical
31 ministries, form liturgical ministers in both the practice and spirit of the liturgy,
32 provide resources to improve liturgical music and use great care in the renovation
33 of places of worship.
- 34 • Parish leaders should provide resources for the preachers of the parish to continue
35 to be trained in this art, including systemic ways of improving the preaching in a
36 language that is not the native one of the preacher.
- 37 • The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the normative process of Christian
38 initiation for adults and children of catechetical age and should be fully
39 implemented in each parish or campus ministry.
- 40 • Parishes are asked to participate in the ministerial formation programs offered by
41 the Office of Worship.

- 1 • Regional leaders will review the schedule of Masses and other liturgical
2 celebrations in their region, to consider ways that schedules might be changed or
3 adjusted to encourage greater participation in the church's liturgical life while
4 using our resources most effectively. Recognizing the centrality of the Eucharist
5 to our Catholic identity, parishes are asked to commit to working in concert with
6 our Bishop in exploring ways to address the shortage of priests which imperils
7 access to the Eucharist.
- 8 • Liturgical formation in the parish or campus ministry should highlight the
9 necessary connection between our prayer and our actions. That is, liturgical
10 celebrations are meant to change our way of life, focusing our attention on the
11 worship of God and the teachings of Jesus as applied to our daily living.
- 12 • Parishes and campus ministries should review their physical plant and manner of
13 worship to seek ways to improve access to our liturgical celebrations for all
14 people.
- 15 • Parishes and campus ministries will provide experiences of non-sacramental
16 prayer in common with Christians of other churches and ecclesial communities.
- 17 • Parishes should provide the sacraments and other prayer and formation programs
18 to incarcerated Catholics in jails and prisons within their parish boundaries.

19 Questions for Consideration

- 20 1. To what extent are the youth and children of the parish invited to be a part of the
21 liturgical celebrations?
- 22 2. Does the parish track attendance at Mass? (This information can be helpful in making
23 decisions about liturgy; for example, scheduling of Masses)
- 24 3. How do the liturgical celebrations of the parish or campus ministry take into account
25 the various ethnic groups represented by those present in the parish or campus
26 ministry?
- 27 4. How does the parish assure the occasional celebration of carefully designed bilingual
28 or multilingual liturgies to bring the different ethnic groups of the parish together?
- 29 5. Does the music program provide music at liturgy that is appropriate to the community
30 and context of the parish or campus ministry? Does the music program enhance the
31 Eucharistic liturgy and other worship services? How is this assessed?

- 1 6. To what extent do the preachers of the parish receive resources to continue to
2 improve their homiletic skills? Do the homilies within the parish provide true spiritual
3 nourishment for the people of God who gather at the liturgy to be fed at the table of
4 God's Word? How is this assessed?
- 5 7. Does the parish or campus ministry offer formation opportunities for liturgical
6 ministers? Does the parish or campus ministry communicate about diocesan liturgical
7 formation opportunities?
- 8 8. Do the hymnals, liturgy programs and other printed worship aids encourage the
9 participation of the assembly? Are these printed materials worthy of use in the
10 liturgical context?
- 11 9. To what extent do the leaders of the parish or campus ministry call forth and invite
12 people to share their gifts through liturgical ministry? When was the last time that the
13 parish or campus ministry invited people to be trained for liturgical ministries?
- 14 10. In what ways do the parishes within each region look for opportunities to share
15 liturgical resources? How do parishes in a region cooperate in the formation and
16 training of liturgical leaders? How could the parishes adjust Mass schedules or times
17 for communal reconciliation services and other celebrations to make better use of the
18 liturgical leadership within that region?
- 19 11. Has the parish or campus undertaken a thorough review of the accessibility of its
20 buildings and property for those who have some form of disability? What
21 accessibility issues exist in the current buildings or practices? What assessment tools
22 could be used to address these issues? Are those affected involved in assessment or
23 decision making?
- 24 12. Is the worship space accessible so that people who use wheelchairs, crutches or other
25 mobility aids can serve as ushers, lectors and Eucharistic ministers?
- 26 13. How is the sacrament of Reconciliation encouraged to stress the importance of this
27 practice in promoting spiritual development of individuals and the whole parish?

- 1 14. How might the staff of the diocesan offices assist your parish to develop programs
- 2 and processes important for full implementation of the WORSHIP dimension for *We*
- 3 *Walk by Faith*?

References

Sacrosanctum Concillium: The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (ed.), New York: The American Press, 1966.

Deis Domini. Papal Encyclical, Pope John Paul II. May, 1998.

COMMUNITY

For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (I Corinthians 12: 13)

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Faith and Understanding

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The faith by which we walk is by no means a private or individual affair. It begins with personal holiness and grows into the community. Indeed, the call to holiness is universal and communal.

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It has pleased God ... to make [people] holy and save them not merely as individuals without any mutual bonds, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges him in truth and serves him in holiness (*Lumen Gentium*, 9).

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It is our human nature that we discover the meaning in our lives through our relationships with one another and with the wider world around us. Such relationships constitute community. The community that we call Church is constituted in the same manner. Even when the divine-human encounter is most personal and individual, it is communal, in that it is made possible by the mediation of the community of faith. Through the unifying presence of the Holy Spirit, individual believers are woven into a single large family (Dulles, 53).

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In reality, this single large family is made up of people from many different cultures and backgrounds. We acknowledge that each culture has its own way of expressing the important aspects of life and our practice of charity should dispel all suspicions and prejudices toward those who are other. But beyond this, we should sincerely value the uniqueness of every culture represented in our community since each culture has a role to play in the plan of salvation. The Gospel lived out in the parish community touches the foundation of all cultures and also creates a culture: a people united in one faith and one Lord. All should be welcome (*Welcoming Parish*, 19).

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We express our union as a Christian community by the bonds of creed, worship and fellowship. These visible bonds are the grace and gifts of the Spirit. They are an extension of, and at the same time lead us back to, a deeper spiritual communion with the Lord (Dulles, 46, 51, 53). By living in community, worshiping together, proclaiming the Word and responding to the Word in service, the parish becomes an effective instrument of evangelization, the earthly sign of the redeeming grace of Christ (*WP*, 14).

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Evangelization should become a way of life for each and every member of the parish community: in the family, where discipleship begins; in small groups, which provide support in the challenge to live the Gospel life and in gatherings of the community as a whole, where active participation in worship acts as a sign to all (*WP*, 1).

Experience and Context

We value the universal nature of the Church. Our diocese, a portion of the people of God, spans the state of Virginia from the mountains on its far western border eastward to the Atlantic Ocean. Our parishes are enriched by the variety of races, ethnicities and cultures that shape our local traditions. We are urban, suburban and rural. Our communities are made up of individuals and families all strongly motivated to live out the message of Christ and to spread that message to others. Our members include both those who are the descendants of generations of Catholics as well as those who are newly initiated in the faith. Our church is blessed with the enthusiasm of youth and the wisdom of age. As a local church, we seek to support people from all cultures and backgrounds and of every age and to encourage them to become actively involved in our mission. Our pastoral leaders, both ordained and lay, are called upon to practice a service of presence, to be approachable and available to our communities. We believe that by being with the people of God, especially in times of crisis, those who minister are a reflection of God's constant presence to us all. We recognize and strive to rise to the numerous and complex challenges facing our communities, to meet the needs of all our members and to give witness to the world around us.

As our faith communities grow, we are confronted with the ongoing challenge of welcoming and integrating the newcomer. Along with the rest of the nation, southern and central Virginia continues to experience an influx of immigrants from around the world. Many of our new parishioners are part of this immigrant population. They bring with them different customs and different expectations for the church. Such circumstances create a new emphasis on ministers who can respond across cultures and on parishes and campus ministries where all cultures are appreciated. Moreover, the presence of these new members offers us an opportunity to learn ways of becoming culturally diverse at all of our community gatherings, especially liturgy. All across the diocese, liturgies are celebrated regularly in a variety of languages. Twenty-three of our parishes celebrate a Mass each Sunday in Spanish.

A strong and vibrant spirit of ecumenism and interfaith cooperation is a hallmark of our parishes and campus ministries. Mindful of times in our own diocesan history when Catholics were viewed with suspicion and even hostility, we take seriously our commitment to establish and maintain good relations with other Christian denominations and with communities of different religious traditions. As a diocese, we actively promote a better understanding and greater respect for all people of faith through our involvement in a number of interfaith efforts. Our Ecumenical Commission is in dialogue with equivalent bodies from other Christian traditions. Our parishes, pastoral leaders and campus ministers frequently join in prayer services with other communities. Also, many of our parishes enter into creative partnerships with other religious groups to help meet specific local needs and to share in spiritual growth. In an even more personal way, ecumenical and interfaith marriages, which constitute more than half of all marriages in our parishes, offer us a significant challenge for expressing our unique Catholic identity and at the same time, for building bridges of understanding in wider ecumenical and interfaith relationships. Through all of our activities in this regard, we profess our hope that God will ultimately unite us all into one family in Christ.

1 We also recognize that many of our parishes must enter into creative partnerships
2 with each other in an effort to reconcile the increasing growth of faith communities with
3 the decreasing numbers of available priests. The ever-increasing awareness of the
4 shortage of priests has placed pressure on congregations to build bridges of understanding
5 with their neighboring parishes.

6 As parishes continue their journeys of faith, there will be greater recognition of
7 their interdependence. The concept of “clustering” strives to coordinate the pastoral care
8 and to manage the needs of multiple parishes through the cooperative efforts of both
9 clergy and laity. The desire of parish communities to maintain their individual identity
10 must be balanced with the need to share their available resources and talents. Our
11 individual parishes must acknowledge by both word and action that they are bound to
12 each other as different parts in the one body of Christ. As such, each part must work in
13 harmony with the others, respecting the value that each contributes to the whole.

14 Finally, we want to welcome warmly into our parishes inactive and alienated
15 Catholics. It is our intent to provide settings in which people will be comfortable enough
16 to express any concerns which might have led them from participation in the church. We
17 pledge ourselves to address those concerns to the fullest extent allowed within the
18 teachings of our church, and to hear and voice the call to continued conversion of heart.

19 Ideals and Accountability

20 Parishes and campus ministries striving to become more fully the People of God and to
21 share Christ’s mission to proclaim the Good News truly demonstrate their call to live as
22 community when they continuously endeavor to reach out in a warm and hospitable
23 embrace of individuals, families and other groups and entities.

- 24 • Individuals
 - 25 ▪ Fostering their personal relationship with the Lord through his church;
 - 26 ▪ Increasing their knowledge and awareness of God’s saving grace both in
 - 27 their lives and the wider world;
 - 28 ▪ Encouraging them to carry out the mission of evangelization in all areas of
 - 29 their own lives;
 - 30 ▪ Offering opportunities for stewardship of time, talent and treasure.
- 31 • Families
 - 32 ▪ Recognizing in them the “Domestic Church,” a reflection of God’s love
 - 33 for all humanity;
 - 34 ▪ Supporting them in their role as the first place where the faith is
 - 35 transmitted to children.
- 36 • Youth and young adults
 - 37 ▪ Offering them opportunities for their faith to mature;
 - 38 ▪ Making them aware that they are always at home in the Church.
- 39 • Elderly
 - 40 ▪ Valuing their wisdom and experience;
 - 41 ▪ Protecting their dignity and enhancing the quality of their lives.

- 1 • Sick and disabled
 - 2 ▪ Ministering to their spiritual and physical needs;
 - 3 ▪ Removing any barriers that prevent them from participating as full
 - 4 members of the community.
- 5 • Immigrant and refugee
 - 6 ▪ Welcoming them as full and active members of the community;
 - 7 ▪ Encouraging them to share the unique gifts of their diverse cultures with
 - 8 the community.
- 9 • Inactive and alienated Catholics
 - 10 ▪ Listening to them;
 - 11 ▪ Reconciling them to Christ and his church.
- 12 • Clustered Parishes and Neighboring Catholic Communities
 - 13 • Focusing on mutual needs;
 - 14 • Recognizing common goals and objectives and the needs of their areas;
 - 15 • Evaluating and allocating available resources;
 - 16 • Nurturing cooperative efforts between parishes.
- 17 • Other Christian communities
 - 18 ▪ Celebrating shared faith and heritage;
 - 19 ▪ Sharing resources.
- 20 • Communities of other religious traditions
 - 21 ▪ Growing in mutual respect and understanding of each other's beliefs and
 - 22 traditions;
 - 23 ▪ Working together for the betterment of a shared society.
- 24 • Non-church affiliated
 - 25 ▪ Responding to their needs and concerns;
 - 26 ▪ Giving witness to them through our actions as community;
 - 27 ▪ Inviting them to join and become part of the community.

28 Questions for Consideration

- 29 1. What programs, ministries, activities and resources does the parish or campus
 - 30 ministry offer to help enliven and deepen the faith of its members?
 - 31 • How often do these take place? (weekly, monthly, annually)
 - 32 • How many people regularly attend these events?
 - 33 • What parish committees coordinate and oversee these events and how
 - 34 many parishioners are involved in the planning?

- 35 2. How does the parish or campus ministry actively invite all its members to take
 - 36 part in the sacramental life of the Church?
 - 37 • Is preparation for the sacraments a shared ministry?
 - 38 • What programs are used for the various sacraments?

- 1 • How many people are involved in conducting these programs?
2 • Is sacramental preparation seen as an opportunity to invite individuals to
3 be a more active part of the parish community?
4 • Does the parish strive to provide opportunities for all the sacraments to be
5 celebrated in a community context?
- 6 3. How does the parish or campus ministry share its ministries and resources with
7 other neighboring parishes?
8 • What interaction is there with neighboring parishes?
9 • Is there an awareness of the needs of neighboring parishes and of the area?
10 • If part of a cluster of parishes, how are resources allocated and managed?
11 • What services are shared?
12 • What cooperative efforts exist?
13 • How many people are involved in the cooperative efforts?
- 14 4. Through what programs does this parish or campus ministry express its
15 commitment of outreach to the poor, the sick and the homebound, the youth and
16 young adults, the elderly? How many parishioners are involved in these
17 programs? Who coordinates and oversees them? How successful has the faith
18 community been in implementing these programs?
- 19 5. To what extent does the membership of this parish or campus ministry honestly
20 reflect the ethnic and cultural make-up of the wider community in which it is
21 situated? Are the traditions and practices of these cultures adequately and
22 appropriately integrated into faith activities and sacramental preparation and
23 particularly into liturgy and worship?
- 24 6. How are parishioners who are college students or young adults encouraged to take
25 an active role in the various ministries of the parish? How are their talents and
26 skills properly recognized and adequately employed for the benefit of the whole
27 community?
- 28 7. How are former members who return to the parish and members who participate
29 less frequently welcomed by the pastoral leaders and parishioners? Are they
30 invited to become more active in the community?

- 1 8. What are some of the concrete challenges to families living in the area and what is
2 this parish doing to help families meet the challenges?
- 3 9. To what extent does the parish or campus ministry actively seek out, extend an
4 invitation to and consciously welcome into the community immigrants and people
5 from different cultures and inactive Catholics and the unchurched?
- 6 10. In what ways does the parish or campus ministry actively engage in dialogue,
7 joint ministry and fellowship with other Christian denominations and with
8 congregations from other faith traditions?
- 9 11. Is the parish and its leadership well-known to the local community and recognized
10 for its participation in various local initiatives? Are these leaders representative of
11 the parish community in terms of age, race and culture?
- 12 12. What methods does the parish or campus ministry use to communicate with all its
13 members?
- 14 • Is the office staff sufficient, well-trained, hospitable and accessible? How
15 is their effectiveness gauged? Where necessary, are there a sufficient
16 number of staff members who are bilingual or multilingual?
 - 17 • Is the bulletin well prepared? Does it contain valuable and timely
18 information?
 - 19 • Is a directory of parish members printed and distributed on a regular basis?
 - 20 • Does the parish have a newsletter in either print or electronic form?
 - 21 • Is there a parish website?
 - 22 • Is there a telephone tree or some similar means of rapid communication
23 with all members?
 - 24 • Is email used as a method of mass communication?
 - 25 • In integrated or multicultural parishes, are all forms of communication as
26 bilingual or multilingual as possible?
- 27 13. How does the faith community use media and personal contacts to identify
28 inactive and alienated Catholics? Are settings provided in which people might
29 feel comfortable enough to express any concerns which might have kept them
30 from participation in the church? Does the campus or parish address these
31 concerns to the fullest extent allowed within the teaching of our church? How do
32 we warmly welcome into our parishes those who take steps to return?

- 1 14. What are some of the gifts present in the parish or campus ministry that the
2 members would offer to other local churches or ecclesial communities? What are
3 the gifts in other churches or ecclesial communities which would enrich the
4 parish's Catholic life?
- 5 15. How does the parish or campus community recognize and support absent
6 members of the community, for example, those who are sick or serving in the
7 armed forces or are incarcerated in local jails and prisons?
- 8 16. How might the staff of the diocesan offices assist your parish to develop programs
9 and processes important for full implementation of the COMMUNITY dimension
10 for *We Walk by Faith*?

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SERVICE

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. (James 2: 14-17)

1 Faith and Understanding

2 As followers of Jesus Christ, we revere the Word of God and use it as a guide for
3 our lives. As Catholics, we also realize that the Holy Spirit continues to speak through
4 our Church. This living tradition of Catholic social teaching helps us to understand our
5 complex world through the eyes of our faith.

6 Together, Scripture and Catholic social teaching provide a vision of the Reign of
7 God that can guide our efforts to do justice and build peace in our divided and troubled
8 world (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2419-2423). This vision shows us where we
9 are going and it lights the paths that lead us there. If we are faithful to that vision, it can
10 transform our individual lives and reshape our communities.

11 In our daily words and deeds, both as individuals and as communities of faith, we
12 live the vision of God’s reign by promoting human life and dignity, forming right
13 relationships, fostering the participation of all people in community life, protecting the
14 integrity of God’s creation and practicing solidarity across race, nationality and language.

15 We understand ourselves as a people who follow Peter’s mandate: “As each one
16 has received, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter
17 4:10). We strive to manage responsibly the gifts God has given to us and share
18 generously our resources of time, talent and treasure with the Lord and with one another.

19 Experience and Context

20 People across our diocese clearly value action for justice and peace in the larger
21 society as a key component in our faith communities. Our people try to make manifest
22 the Reign of God by living out the Church’s preferential option for the poor and
23 vulnerable (*CCC*, 2448). We assist those in need, seek social justice in our communities
24 and our nation and show our solidarity with world neighbors in many different ways.

25 It is clear that our faith communities are proud of their social outreach to those
26 who are poor and marginalized in society. We reach out to our sisters and brothers in
27 many ways through our parishes, Catholic Charities agencies and diocesan programs. In
28 addition, many parishioners seek to promote human life, seek justice and protect creation
29 by shaping public policy through legislative advocacy.

30 Christ made care for the sick incumbent upon the Church (cf. Lk. 9:1 and 10:9),
31 indeed it is a “saving work” (cf. Mt. 25: 36). Health care ministry takes place throughout
32 the diocese. Life long health services are available in Catholic hospitals and nursing
33 homes as well as through the ministries of long term nursing and hospice care. Visitation

1 and anointing of the sick are a regular part of the ministry of parishes. Parish nursing is a
2 growing ministry in our diocese. Chaplaincy in hospitals, Catholic and non-Catholic, and
3 in the medical schools in the diocese is a high pastoral priority as well. Institutional ethics
4 committees also provide a forum in which Catholic concern for the respect for life and its
5 application to difficult cases and stressful situations in which patients and their loved
6 ones find themselves can bring focus and understanding of the truths involved. At all
7 these levels, the Church can provide the elements necessary for healing even where cure
8 is no longer possible: the Gospel's meaning of life, a social environment of love and the
9 tools of forgiveness of oneself and others (*Evangelium Vitae*, 67).

10 Among the challenges that our diocese faces is adult formation, particularly
11 preparation of adults for their ministry in the world. Our faith communities have not
12 always offered educational programs for our adult population. We especially need to
13 form adult Catholics to be “light to the world” in their vocation as spouse or parent,
14 family member, worker, citizen. We also need to educate people to respond to our
15 Church’s call to be global citizens who are committed to personal acts of charity as well
16 as to social action for systemic change.

17 The people of our diocese have recognized two important current trends that
18 affect our ability to live out the social dimensions of our faith. First, there is a tension
19 between the values of our faith and of the secular culture. Growing secularization can
20 denigrate traditional moral values and lead to conflicts between church and society on
21 many social issues. As a people of faith, we are called to transform the basic structures of
22 our society and to stand for the value of life in all its manifestations (*Faithful Citizenship*,
23 2, 12). Second, the reality of terrorism, war and violence both at home and abroad
24 pervades our lives and affects our hearts and minds. Again, there can be a divide between
25 our Church’s call for justice, forgiveness and peace and other impulses toward violence
26 and vengeance.

27 Ideals and Accountability

28 The role of the justice and peace/social ministry in parishes, schools and campus
29 ministries is to bring the vision of the just and peaceable Reign of God to life in the daily
30 activities of the faith community and its members. This mission has three components:
31 action, reflection and transformation.

32 There are several major ways in which our faith communities can act to meet basic
33 human needs and protect God’s creation. Since Catholics are a small minority in most
34 areas of our diocese, many of these efforts to meet local needs are done through
35 ecumenical, interfaith or other local partnerships.

- 36 • Respond to immediate local needs of people who are poor and vulnerable.
 - 37 ▪ Staff and support food pantries, clothes closets, soup kitchens and
 - 38 emergency financial assistance;
 - 39 ▪ Provide transportation to elderly or disabled people for medical
 - 40 appointments or deliver meals to shut-ins;
 - 41 ▪ Provide temporary shelter to homeless people;
 - 42 ▪ Provide material assistance to pregnant women in crisis;
 - 43 ▪ Minister to the needs of those who are incarcerated in jails and prisons
 - 44 within parish boundaries.

- 1 • Act in solidarity with our sisters and brothers beyond our borders.
 - 2 ▪ Resettle refugees who flee violence in their homeland;
 - 3 ▪ Twin with parishes, schools and organizations in our sister Diocese of
 - 4 Hinche and other areas of Haiti;
 - 5 ▪ Serve the needs of our growing Hispanic population through advocacy for
 - 6 immigration reform and connecting with legal, health and educational
 - 7 resources (Catholic and public schools, ESL, etc.).
- 8 • Support efforts to protect our natural environment, including education about the
- 9 intersection of justice and peace and environmental issues and the promotion of
- 10 recycling and conservation.

11 Parishes, schools and campus ministries are also called to reflect on social conditions
12 and on the principles of our faith. Since we are members of a universal church, we are
13 called to consider conditions here in our local communities as well as larger national and
14 global issues in light of Scripture and Catholic social teaching.

15 Our faith communities can reflect on our faith and social issues in many ways.

- 16 • Preach homilies about Catholic social teaching.
- 17 • Offer prayers of the faithful on important social issues.
- 18 • Ensure that Christian formation programs incorporate church social teaching at all
- 19 levels of instruction and teach the difference between charity and justice.
- 20 • Organize small groups to participate in social justice formation programs such as
- 21 JustFaith.
- 22 • Invite guest speakers for adult education programs on particular social issues.
- 23 • Have the parish and campus ministry Justice & Peace/Social Ministry Committee
- 24 and Pastoral Council study and reflect on church social teaching documents.

25 Faith communities work to transform social structures so that underlying causes of
26 human needs and ecological devastation can be alleviated. This is a different kind of
27 action that gets at root causes; it does not stop at alleviating symptoms.

28 Our faith communities should seek opportunities to transform society.

- 29 • Advocate for just and compassionate public policies at the state and federal level
- 30 by responding to action alerts, through the Virginia Catholic Conference.
- 31 • Mobilize their people to seek needed changes in city or county ordinances,
- 32 through local faith-based community organizations (often funded through the
- 33 Catholic Campaign for Human Development) or other local coalitions and the
- 34 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- 35 • Promote the sale of fairly traded goods, using the resources of Catholic Relief
- 36 Services and other organizations, thereby providing desperately needed income to
- 37 small farmers and crafts people and helping poor nations achieve ecologically
- 38 sustainable economic development.
- 39 • Consider the functions of the parish physical plant in the context of sustainable
- 40 and humane use of resources.
- 41 • Implement nonviolent conflict resolution programs with young people and help to
- 42 overcome violence in our communities.

Questions for Consideration

1. What staff or systems are in place dedicated to the justice and peace/social ministry?
2. How is support provided to the justice and peace/social ministry, in terms of both personnel and budget?
3. In what way do volunteers serve in or support local interfaith or civic organizations that:
 - address specific human needs such as homelessness and hunger?
 - provide assistance to battered spouses and children?
 - provide alternatives to abortion for women faced with an unplanned pregnancy?
 - work for social justice in the community (for example, affordable housing, inclusive zoning, etc)?
 - empower low-income persons, such as groups funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development?
4. How does the parish or campus ministry participate in legislative advocacy through the Virginia Catholic Conference, the Virginia Council of Churches and the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy? How is awareness raised about legislative issues?
5. Does the parish or campus ministry promote global solidarity through twinning with Haiti or another developing country, educating on global issues or participating in Operation Rice Bowl or other programs of Catholic Relief Services? How is global solidarity promoted in the parish or campus ministry? What educational, participatory or travel opportunities are offered?
6. To what extent does the parish or campus ministry integrate education on Catholic social teaching and opportunities for service learning into its religious education programs and in the parish school? Does it promote participation in JustFaith and similar justice education programs?
7. Is there is a literature rack? Does it include materials on justice and peace and respect for creation?

- 1 8. How does the parish or campus ministry integrate justice and peace and respect for
2 creation into liturgical celebrations (for example, Prayers of the Faithful, homilies,
3 music and the sign of peace)?
- 4 9. How do preaching and catechesis enable members to bring the principles of justice,
5 peace and respect for the life and dignity of all people into their everyday life and
6 work?
- 7 10. How does the parish or campus community seek opportunities to discuss and address
8 social and ethical questions with followers of the Gospel and other religious
9 traditions?
- 10 11. Does the parish and school (if applicable) conserve energy or recycle paper, plastic
11 and cans or otherwise demonstrate care for God's creation (for example, using
12 ceramic mugs instead of disposable cups)?
- 13 12. Are facilities accessible to persons with disabilities (those who are hard of hearing,
14 who use wheelchairs or who are developmentally delayed)? Are programs designed
15 to meet these parishioners' needs? How are facilities and programs assessed for
16 accessibility? Do we use people-first language when speaking or writing to a person
17 with a disability?
- 18 13. How does the parish encourage participation of traditionally marginalized groups,
19 such as racial and ethnic groups, women, low-income parishioners and persons with
20 disabilities, in parish life and its leadership?
- 21 14. How does the parish call its members to be just stewards of their resources of time,
22 talent and money? Does the parish provide ways of being financially accountable to
23 its members?
- 24 15. Do the parish and school (if applicable) pay a living wage to its employees? Do the
25 parish and school (if applicable) provide employee benefits in accordance with
26 diocesan personnel policies?

- 1 16. Are parish facilities available for use by community groups addressing human needs,
2 such as Alcoholics Anonymous and other support groups? How are community and
3 neighborhood concerns integrated into the life of the parish?
- 4 17. Does the parish make use of the resources available through the diocesan Office of
5 Justice and Peace?
- 6 18. How might the staff of the diocesan offices assist your parish to develop programs
7 and processes important for full implementation of the SERVICE dimension for *We*
8 *Walk by Faith*?

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EPILOGUE

Brothers and sisters, consider your call. (1 Corinthians 1:26a)

1 St. Paul's invitation beckons Christians to remember that every walk in faith
2 begins with a divine summons. Our Lord then prompts a further consideration, "You
3 have not chosen me. It was I who chose you to bear fruit that will last" (Jn. 15:16). So it
4 is that each Christian receives a vocation, a "call" that is personal, but destined
5 nonetheless for the benefit of others. God *calls* us and in the same moment, God *sends* us
6 as messengers of His good news to the world (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 900).
7 "United with Christ in baptism and confirmation, every one of Christ's faithful is called
8 to be an apostle" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, I, 3).

9 At the same time, the Lord, who instituted the Church (*CCC*, 874) and called the
10 Church to mission (*cf.* Mt. 28:19), also promised not to leave us orphans (Jn. 14:18).
11 Through the Holy Spirit, He endowed the community with every spiritual gift (I Cor.
12 1:7), including the common task of discerning where the gifts of the individual might best
13 serve the community already constituted (I Cor. 2:12, 14). There is no call to ministry
14 that does not originate with the source of our first call, Christ (*CCC*, 874). Nevertheless,
15 this further call is comprehended, nurtured and encouraged within the Body, often at the
16 level of the parish family. Our parishes need also to be places where leadership is
17 discerned, welcomed and sustained.

18 One challenge of the present age is this conundrum: believers, while ready to "ask
19 the Father to send laborers into the harvest" (Mt. 9:38), are often reluctant either to
20 answer this particular call or to encourage others to do so. In this case, it is the image of
21 Christ which should compel us for He came "not to be served but to serve" (Mk. 10:45).
22 Surely, there's an element of sacrifice in being a catechist or a visitor of the sick or a
23 preacher of the Gospel or a shepherd of souls. But who can speak believably to others of
24 the cross unless one is willing to admit it into one's own life?

25 None of us ought to be apathetic or disinterested passengers on the journey of
26 faith. With an eye to the call of the young Samuel (I Sam. 3:1-18), we may act in our
27 parishes in either the role of the priest Eli or that of the young prophet. We may assist
28 someone in discerning a call to leadership in the Church; we may be the one assisted. As
29 we walk by faith, may we be equally ready to respond if the Lord, through His Church,
30 calls us to lead even as we follow: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening" (I Sam.
31 3:10b).

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NOTES
