



SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH
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Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I greet you with the joy of our Risen Christ! We see the Easter season as a time of great renewal and emergence of life in our Church and it is in that spirit that I write to you today.

As you know, Sacred Heart and all of the parishes of the Diocese of Spokane underwent the beginning phases of the *Know, Love, & Serve Pastoral Planning Initiative*. Sacred Heart utilized several methods to ascertain the desires for our future as a parish. In the model of the Diocese, we have taken the top five mentioned or requested items discovered in the pew card survey as well as the listening sessions and will use these as the leading edge of our growth and evangelization for Sacred Heart in the next 5 years. This letter will serve as a reference for those five areas and how we are going to respond to your input.

Goal 1: To Engage in the New Evangelization

Mentioned often and throughout the materials received in the survey and listening sessions was a sense of wanting to do more to help evangelize our community and the world. It is an immense testimony to the power of your faith as a Christian community to want to help spread the Good News and to help draw others to a life of faith in the Church. There were several comments regarding the increased attendance at Mass on the weekends and how that already seemed to be a positive sign of the Spirit working amongst us. To that end, there was also a concern that each of us would take a more active role in the responsibility for providing a path to salvation. Several people suggested that we might do this most effectively through the example of our own lives. We can do this as individuals and families by remembering the spiritual and sacramental roles we play in the Church through our baptismal commission to share in the ministry of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. By living lives of prayer and preaching God's love for all people in our own lives, we share in the royal inheritance of Jesus Christ!

Another theme reflected in this area was the need to support the efforts of the Church. I have been pleased to find a people of generous heart here at Sacred Heart

and am often overwhelmed to see the response of our parish to the needs of our community and of the Church. I invite each of you to take time in prayer and reflection to give thanks to God for his many gifts to us and to ask, "How may I serve?" I know many of you give so much of your time and treasure but it is good to ask from time to time what is needed as opposed to what we want to do.

The final area most posited in this theme was the need to increase communication throughout the parish, especially to the community at large. To this end, I am asking parishioners and professionals to evaluate our public presence in terms of communication. I am asking questions such as how we might improve our website, whether or not a Facebook page for the parish would help to let people know what is happening here as well as to invite them into our community. This summer, we will evaluate the current layout of the bulletin to determine how we might use it as a more effective tool for communication.

Goal 2: Create a Greater Awareness of Religious Education & Programming

If I were to ask an average parishioner to describe our Religious Education programs here at Sacred Heart, I imagine that I would hear a list of the many programs in place for the education of our children such as sacramental preparation, Sunday classes for children, youth group, and vacation bible school. However, a good number of our parishioners desire to promote awareness of and participation in our religious education programs by people of all ages.

To address the issues of awareness and need for adult education programs, I will be working with Theresa Paul and the Religious Education board to determine what programs would draw the most participation from parishioners and what days and times are most conducive to enhanced participation. We will also look at ways to better communicate the availability of these programs outside of the scope of the "usual methods". I will also work with our deacon, Jim Evermann to identify opportunities for retreats and days of recollection for individuals, small groups, and for the parish at large.

There is already a grassroots movement in this area. At the beginning of Lent, Mr. Al Farrand asked for permission to start a morning men's prayer group. I was more than happy to grant him that permission and the small but intrepid group of men meets every Tuesday morning in the social hall for an hour of prayer and fellowship.

Goal 3: To Restore Sacred Heart as a Tithing Parish

Sacred Heart has a unique tradition in its desire to serve the poor through the process of what I call Corporate Tithing. By this, I mean that we have, over the course of many years, made financial donations in the name of the parish to various community

efforts which serve the poor and promote justice. That tradition continues through the work of the Caritas Committee and will continue for the foreseeable future. While budgets fluctuate from time to time, we must be aware of God's blessing on our parish and share that blessing accordingly. Sacred Heart can point to a habit of financial generosity in everything from supporting our centennial celebration to giving over \$18,000.00 in last year's Catholic Charities Christmas Collection. Add to that the ministry of the St. Francis Guild (formerly St. Vincent DePaul) and the assistance provided by them in short-term emergencies and it is easy to discern that Sacred Heart already is a tithing parish by any definition. It is important to remember that we are able to do this sort of work because of your continued generosity.

Goal 4: To Provide Outreach to Individuals & Families in Need

There was a general concern for how we care for families in need at Sacred Heart. This issue is different from families outside of the parish community in that people have a genuine concern for parish members who might be having some sort of difficulty and are in need of assistance. Sacred Heart has a committee to help serve the needs of parishioners who find themselves in crisis or in need of assistance. The Helping Hands Ministry here was designed to ensure that parish families who find themselves in need of assistance had somewhere to turn in that time of need. As you may well know, asking for help, especially from friends, can be a daunting task with all of the attendant feelings of embarrassment and humiliation. I would ask all of you as parishioners to attend to this need in a couple of ways. First, if we are all more aware of the lives of those around us, we are more in tune when there is a need, spoken or unspoken. Through the simple act of getting to know each other better, we can all share in the work of knowing when a person or family is having trouble and are able to offer help before they feel the need to ask for it. By knowing each other as more than just faces we see at Mass, we know each other enough to show that level of care and concern. Second, I invite you to sign up to participate as a member of the Helping Hands ministry. "Many hands make light work", says the proverb and many hearts make the load lighter. Having an active role in helping other parishioners will not only lighten your heart but make the load easier for others to carry.

Goal 5: To Evaluate Maintenance Practices and Modifications of Physical Spaces

It is no secret that our physical plant leaves us wanting in several areas. We have an 80 year old building which has been modified several times in the past to accommodate the growing needs of a growing parish. Our social hall and kitchen have limited capabilities of providing an appropriate setting for large group functions and events. Our classrooms and storage areas border on inadequacy, and in some instances, are not healthy spaces for our children. And do I even need to mention the parking situation? Add to all of this the great amount of deferred maintenance over the

past decades and we have a real infrastructure crisis at hand. The survey and listening sessions had two views of a similar theme regarding the physical plant at Sacred Heart.

The first was a desire to investigate what would be necessary to bring our physical plant up to date in terms of usability, maintenance, access, and safety. There was an express desire in this area to expand our church, social hall & kitchen, classrooms, and offices to meet the needs of our growing parish and to investigate options for expanding and better managing our parking lot.

The second called for Sacred Heart to investigate the possibility of finding a suitable site in Pullman and building a new church and office facility within which would be adequate classrooms, meeting spaces, kitchen & social hall, and parish offices. Of course, such a site would also have an ample parking area as a prerequisite.

In response to these similar calls for renewal of infrastructure, I have asked Mr. Rich Heath to chair an exploratory ad hoc committee to investigate both options, including a cost estimate and proposed timeline for each. This committee will be fully formed by the end of May and will, with the grace of God, have a result for the parishioners to review by the end of 2014. The committee will have five members made up of maintenance, construction, legal, and real estate professionals to ensure that the end results are as accurate as possible. Once the work of the exploratory ad hoc committee is finished, a larger steering committee will be appointed to help facilitate whichever path is chosen.

In conclusion, you can see that there is a real and vibrant desire to ensure that the second hundred years in the history of Sacred Heart Catholic Church are just as stirring and Christ-centered as the first. I give thanks to God each day for the opportunity to serve this community of believers as the pastor but also to be united with all of you in the mission of spreading the Gospel message of Christ's love for all people to our parish community and to the community at large.

I am, very sincerely yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Fr Jeff Core
Pastor