

## **St. Bernard Strategic Plan**

In the summer of 2000, the Futures Committee of St. Bernard Church in North Kingstown, Rhode Island was established to examine the Parish, its programs and activities and assess whether the needs of the parish and parishioners were being met. In responding to the changing needs of a growing parish, the Futures Committee wanted to ensure the parish is postured to meet the challenges of the new millennium. Father Dennis Reardon was in full support of this effort and clearly articulated his desire to create a vision for the parish including a mission and a clear set of objectives. Initial discussions between the Futures Committee and the Parish Council focused upon the importance of long-term planning. It was emphasized that all efforts and activities within the parish be integrated, coordinated and mission-driven.

### **Task 1: Needs Assessment**

St. Bernard began the planning process by entering into a consulting arrangement with Dr. Elaine Notarantonio, Professor of Marketing at Bryant College. It was determined that the first task was to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment consisting of two phases:

#### ***Phase I: Depth Interviews and Focus Groups***

The first phase began in February, 2001 and included personal interviews with the Pastor and key organizational leaders within the parish. A number of issues began to emerge related to communication, parishioner involvement and morale. Focus group sessions were held to further identify issues of concern to the parish. Participants were invited to discuss a number of general issues related to the parish. From these discussions emerged a variety of issues and insights. These were formulated into survey questions and were used as a basis for the strategic planning initiatives discussed in a later section of this plan.

#### ***Phase 2: Survey***

The second phase involved the development of a survey, which was administered in April 2001. The survey's content was based upon the results of the depth interviews and focus groups as well as a review of previous studies conducted by religious organizations. Categories of questions were identified using a) the critical dimensions identified by the Pastor, parish leaders and the Futures Committee; b) responses of focus group participants; and c) common issues faced by religious organizations. A copy of the survey and the results can be obtained by contacting the Parish Office.

### **Task 2: The Planning Process**

In June 2001, the parish held its first Community Forum, presenting to the parish at large the findings of the needs assessment and the results of the survey. In addition, parishioners were informed of the upcoming strategic planning process and were invited to participate. Areas of concern, critical issues, and significant trends that were identified during the needs assessment phase were reinforced during the forum and used to validate

the picture that the Futures Committee was forming in preparation for the strategic planning phase.

Dr. Notarantonio, the Futures Committee, and a group of 25 volunteer parishioners formed a planning team. A workshop was held in August 2001. Workshop participants brainstormed and were encouraged to be innovative in their recommendations. From this session emerged a list of action items which revolved around the five initiatives identified during the needs assessment phase.

During the fall of 2001, the Action Items were further developed. Work teams consisting of individuals who were members of the initial planning team as well as other parishioners who volunteered or were invited to become part of the process were given a time-line to study and make recommendations to the Futures Committee. The teams worked through the winter and spring to develop and refine the Action Items. Recommendations were made either to proceed with the Action Item, gather more information or abandon the proposed Action Item. All of this information has been distilled into our Strategic Plan.

In the spring of 2002, the action teams submitted their recommended action plan to the Futures Committee. The core team carefully reviewed them for their role in fulfilling the Parish mission and carrying out its objectives. The Futures Committee then combined the reports to create the Strategic Plan, and submitted it to the Parish Council. The Parish Council and Father Dennis have whole-heartedly approved this plan and endorsed its presentation at the Community Forum on September 23, 2002.

The Strategic Plan identifies individual action items for each of the areas in the following tables. It also describes the progress in each area to date.

<b>INITIATIVE: COMMUNICATION</b>		
<b>Vision</b>	To establish an image as an institution that recognizes and appeals to the needs of all parishioners and community members.	
<b>Goals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To ensure a consistent and integrated flow of information within the parish</li> <li>2. To maintain communication and visibility with the external community.</li> <li>3. To create a clear image for St. Bernards</li> </ol>	
Action Area	Mission	Members
Parishioner Welcome Program	Develop a protocol, process and coordination of responsibility for individuals and families who are new to the parish. Establish a program for ongoing interaction among all parishioners including coffee after mass and a Hospitality Ministry	Linda Gray, <i>coordinator</i> Linda Riggs Maureen Corcoran Kathy Mastrobono Frank Mastrobono
Parishioner Communication	Establish a printed and on-line newsletter. Determine frequency, types of information, editor and editorial board. Develop other forms of ongoing parishioner feedback and communications.	Michelle Sandham, <i>coordinator</i> Ann Casey Robin Hodor Jane Allen
External Communication	Develop a program, responsibilities and guidelines for ongoing external visibility and communication. Examples include media relations, format and maintenance of web-site.	David Kerwood, <i>coordinator</i> Bob Barry Sandy Rzemien

<b>INITIATIVE: YOUTH EDUCATION AND PROGRAMS</b>		
<b>Vision</b>	To be a destination of choice for all within the community for worship, educational and social events.	
<b>Goals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To consider programs for all age groups from infancy through teen</li> <li>2. To actively include all youth in the liturgy</li> <li>3. To encourage interaction among all age groups and generations</li> </ol>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Members</b>
School Feasibility	Investigate the requirements for the establishment of a Parish School. Ascertain whether St. Bernards has the capabilities to move forward and whether the market can support this endeavor. Coordinate efforts with Diocesan efforts and with the existing structures and premises teams.	Ed Clune, <i>coordinator</i> Eleanor Vallee Ray Vallee Hilda Nicolosi Bill Alexander
Sports Program	Investigate the potential for establishing sports programs for boys and girls. Recommend specific sports and investigate league membership requirements. Determine how these recommendations relate to the current physical structure plans.	George Bauerle, <i>coordinator</i> Diane Tiernan
Other Youth Programs and Activities	Investigate the feasibility of instituting the following youth programs. Recommend implementation plan for each and assignment of responsibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Mass (including youth lectors, greeters, choir and ministers)</li> <li>• Babysitting program for Masses</li> <li>• Adopt a grandparent/child</li> <li>• CYO</li> <li>• Youth dances and programs with other parishes</li> <li>• Vacation bible school</li> <li>• After school tutoring</li> <li>• Religious Formation for K and Pre-K</li> </ul>	Dawn Biron, <i>coordinator</i> Loretta Neill David Roy Kathy Squillante Ann Wright Kathy Brown

<b>INITIATIVE: ADULT EDUCATION AND PROGRAMS</b>		
<b>Vision</b>	To be a destination of choice for all within the community for worship, education and socialization.	
<b>Goals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To become a part of the overall parish planning effort</li> <li>2. To provide a forum for all adults to celebrate faith</li> <li>3. To create partnerships with other parishes in our community</li> </ol>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Members</b>
Speaker Series	Investigate opportunities to establish an ongoing speaker series that would address a variety of issues and interests. Identify sources of speakers, funding requirements and opportunities.	Julie O'Brien, <i>coordinator</i> Marry Gormally Nora Hall Ray Vallee Maureen Corcoran
Adult Faith Formation Committee	Establish a committee, articulating its goals and suggesting agenda items for Adult Faith Formation, including initiatives for leadership development and married couples.	Julie O'Brien, <i>coordinator</i> Bruce Beauchamp Ray Vallee Joan Bodzioch Joe Turcotte Gloria Sherman

<b>INITIATIVE: STEWARDSHIP AND VOLUNTEERISM</b>		
<b>Vision</b>	St. Bernards will be active in social outreach within the parish, community and third world countries.	
<b>Goals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To bring a sense of community and belonging for all parishioners, young and old</li> <li>2. To educate the entire parish on the meaning of stewardship</li> <li>3. To encourage and inspire parishioners to give of their time, talent and treasure</li> </ol>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Members</b>
Parish Nursing and Health Counseling Program	Establish a program to counsel parishioners who are facing health issues. Program might include nursing, food and nutrition services and a clothing distribution program.	Gerry Grabowski, <i>coordinator</i> Rose Biron Newman Maureen Corcoran    Lee Clune Dorothy Barry        Jean Reilly JoAnn Roby            Susan Keimig Pat Lavornia          Trish Delaney
Resource and Outreach	Create a Volunteer Resource Center, along with a youth division, to actively seek, coordinate and pool all parish talents and opportunities for volunteers. Coordinate with parish census, and consider an Emergency Outreach program to cope with disastrous events. Establish a program and/or position within the parish to take responsibility for capital campaigns, ongoing fundraising, gifts and bequests, and grant-writing.	Nancy Delaney, <i>coordinator</i> Susan LaPerriere Ann Casey Beverly Hathaway Bill Feaster Dennis Reddington Jane Allen Fred Schultz

<b>INITIATIVE: STRUCTURE AND PREMISES</b>		
<b>Vision</b>	To be a destination of choice for all within the community for worship, education and socialization.	
<b>Goals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To conduct and complete a feasibility study regarding the physical structure needs of our parish</li> <li>2. To conduct a capital campaign for the purpose of improving our physical premises</li> <li>3. To construct a new church and/or adapt our existing premises to meet the needs of our parish</li> </ol>	
<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Members</b>
Davis Property - New Church Feasibility Study	Conduct a feasibility study regarding the physical structure needs of our parish. Assess feasibility of a capital campaign to improve our physical premises. Assess costs of constructing a new church and/or adapting our existing premises to meet parish needs. Assess feasibility of using Davis property for a new church.	Tom Orsi, <i>coordinator</i> Elizabeth McGrath John Gibbons Walter Pannone Alberta Miller Martha Dwyer Arlene Gardiner George Silva

This Strategic Plan represents a challenge to all members of the St. Bernard community. It requires change, and it is recognized that the task of creating major change in any organization is a difficult one. This task will require strong leadership, and great cooperation. The commitment to a changing vision must continually be communicated, and the Community Forum on September 23 is your opportunity to hear the details of that plan firsthand. We strongly recommend that you attend the forum to learn the parish's plans, and get involved in making St. Bernard a stronger, more vibrant center of worship.