

**A message from St. George Parish Pastoral Council members
Helen O'Neil, Maureen Fyke, Shelley Reid, Tony McCafferty, Tony
Paient and Council Chair Hilary Montbourquette.**

We are humbled to be chosen by Father Cesar to serve as your Council and offer the following on Parish renewal for your consideration;

Bishop Bergie's vision for the Diocese of Saint Catharines is to 'Set Hearts on Fire with God's love' *a journey of renewal* with an emphasis on Evangelization. Bishop Bergie is hoping our Diocese will grow by 2,000 new Catholics by Easter 2033, the two thousandth anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus.

The Pastoral Plan for the Diocese also includes an appeal to support the development of new ministries not just here in St George but also across the Diocese which will help create, or expand, Evangelization & Faith formation ministries, that help build lifelong faith.

The Diocesan Parish Missional Health survey conducted last fall offered reflections and feedback from parishioners, including many of you, which generated results that were robust, candid and hopeful. It created a blueprint for this renewal vision. All Parishes now have a clear snapshot of where we are and where new opportunities for growth and renewal exist.

In early March we joined Father Cesar for a Diocese Parish Leadership Day. Organized by Bishop Bergie, it featured a variety of speakers focused on opportunities to be catalysts in Parish renewal.

The theme emphasized that Jesus is 'Light from Light' and challenged all parishioners to be Christ bearers by witnessing to His mission of salvation, the very heart of evangelization.

Our call, our hope, is Jesus calling every one of us into a deeper hope. A hope for a spirit led Church alive with a missionary purpose.

There is a lot of work to do in being a Missionally oriented parish.

To be a 'Missionally' oriented parish is to *reach the lost and serve the least*.

Have you considered serving the needs of our Parish?

We have a variety of Ministries, and we seriously need more volunteers. Sheets are always available at various places in the church.

Volunteering is a path to help evangelize.

In our journey to evangelize we are asked to focus on engaging the UN-churched and the DE-churched, to making first time disciples & to reconnect those separated from the Church while *ALSO* calling lifelong Catholics to ongoing conversion & passionate missionary discipleship.

We need collaborative leaders. *Skilled leadership* is rooted in vibrant and consistent prayer which becomes the engine of Parish renewal.

Having a collaborative approach equips leaders to identify, recruit, empower, support and multiply parishioners.

As is written in 1st Corinthians:

‘For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.’

Your Parish Pastoral Council, through prayer to, and strength from, the Holy Spirit is active. Maureen Fyke has done wonderful work developing our Children’s Liturgy of the Word every Sunday as well as outreach initiatives to St George school. Without youth invested in faith in our Parish, indeed in any parish, we will have no future parish.

Helen O’Neil and her kindhearted team at the Society of St Vincent de Paul reach many, in need, every week. Tony Paiement and Shelley Reid stand at the doors of this beautiful church welcoming the returning, the visiting and the curious to mass. Tony McCafferty is leading our Alpha Program every Wednesday evening, which we hope will lead to RCIA candidates.

There are many others who volunteer: those who take up collections, Eucharistic Ministers, the Choir & music ministry, Altar Servers, the Lectors, those who take up the gifts, Ushers, those who get their feet washed on Holy Thursday, the volunteers who serve at the bi-monthly fundraisers at Delta bingo, The Finance Committee, volunteer caretakers, those who decorate the church and the Holy Altar and so many others, seen and unseen ..and on

behalf of Father Cesar we thank each and every one of you for your selfless service to our Parish.

We need a lot more help if we are going to build a truly vibrant parish inside and outside our physical Church.

The invitation to be a dynamic missionally oriented parish demands we also be a financially healthy parish with a clear, well communicated, vision that Parishioners want to invest in. Our financial picture is pretty good, not great, but thanks to each of you, no matter the size of your donation, make no mistake, it is meaningful, it does matter and it does help pay the bills and fund these important ministries.

Our St George Parish evangelization journey has begun and today we invite you to join us and help attract our share of 2000 new Catholics by 2033

In closing, we entrust this Parish Plan of Renewal to the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who is the patroness of the new Evangelization. May she help us set hearts on fire with God's love across St. George Parish and across the Diocese of Saint Catharines.

Yours in Christ,

St George Parish Pastoral Council

parishpastoralcouncilstgrc@gmail.com