

## **The Seven Essential Elements of Parish Life**

The following seven elements are key components in nurturing a healthy faith community. While each of these elements comprises a distinct area of parish life, all of the elements are interrelated. At the center of this relationship is the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist from which we take our identity and sustenance in Jesus Christ.

### **Evangelization**

Evangelization encompasses the way in which a Catholic community spreads the Gospel message. The goal of evangelization is to foster a deep appreciation for the faith among the faithful so that they will be emboldened to practice their faith with enthusiasm and invite others to share in their faith, the result of which transforms society. Evangelization is at the heart of all we do as Church for we are all called to bear individual and communal witness to Christ.

### **Worship**

Worship encompasses the spiritual life of a community, which serves to build up the Body of Christ through personal and communal prayer. We express our faith through our public acts of worship. Through the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist, liturgies, sacraments, and devotions we proclaim our faith and carry out the mission of evangelization by giving public witness to the Gospel.

### **Word**

Word encompasses our ongoing formation and maturation in faith. As with all relationships, we are called upon to grow and deepen our relationship with Christ. To enable such a deepening of our relationship we must come to know Christ intimately through sacred scripture and the sacred tradition of the Church. Such “catechesis” takes place in a wide variety of contexts, both formal and informal, the goal of which is to deepen our love for and knowledge of Christ so that like the Apostles and disciples we are inspired to share the Good News with others.

### **Community**

Community encompasses many of the doctrinal themes of the Church. We are all one body united in Christ Jesus. We form one Church, one people, united by the Father, Son and Spirit. As one body we are called upon to support, celebrate, and nurture each other. As a parish community we are called upon to engender a sense of belonging emboldened by our modeling inclusivity and mutuality. Fostering Christian community is the natural outcome of parish life.

### **Service**

Service encompasses our natural response to living the Gospel message. We cannot come to know Christ without being forever changed. Through our conversion we are called upon to be of

service to others for God has no hands but our own. We cannot be faithful to the Gospel message of Christ Jesus without being of service to others.

### **Stewardship**

Stewardship encompasses the responsible use of one's gifts and resources and the recognition that all of our gifts come from God. We should be humbled by God's overwhelming generosity in our lives and respond to Him with profound gratitude. Stewardship is essential in the life of our Catholic Community because it calls for the responsible sharing of our time, talents, and treasure for the support of the community and the mission of the Church in direct proportion to the gifts we have received from our loving God.

### **Leadership**

Leadership encompasses the laity as well as the priests and pastoral staff of the Catholic Community of Manistee. Leadership involves visioning and re-visioning, planning and promoting, and enabling and empowering. An individual's gift of leadership is placed at the service of the whole Catholic community so that it may successfully achieve the mission of the Church. While the pastor bears the ultimate responsibility and authority within a parish, it is the entire community that is called to serve the parish with their gifts of leadership. Effective leadership is necessary to ensure the success of each of the essential elements and the Catholic community as a whole.