



Vicariate Workbook Feedback Form

Introduction Section

- 1) What parish are you reporting on? Saint Patrick, Wapella
- 2) What vicariate is your parish in? Bloomington-Lincoln

Section 1: Workbook Data

- 3) What were your most significant takeaways as key parish leaders on the information about the diocese (slides 15 - 22)?
 - a. SLIDE 19: Shocked at the statistic...5-7% of parishioners (mostly boomers) provide 80-90% of time and money.
 - b. SLIDE 17: The incredible decline (37%) in Mass attendance.
- 4) What were your most significant takeaways as key parish leaders regarding the information about your vicariate?
 - a. SLIDE 29: Mass Attendance
 - i. Several of the larger churches in our area had a great decline from 2015-2022.
 1. Holy Trinity – down 61%
 2. St Mary Downs – down 47%
 3. St Patrick of Merna – down 37%
 4. Epiphany – down 32%
 - ii. When churches reopened following months of closure for COVID-19, many people did not return...and that trend continues.
 - iii. The percentage of church capacities used indicates quite a few empty pews.
- 5) With respect to the financial and demographic trends found in your workbook, how well do those trends reflect your perceptions of the area?
 - a. Trends seem reasonable.

Section 2: Your Lived Experience

- 1) What are some of the most important institutional/outreach ministries that your parish supports? For example, please indicate any of the hospitals, nursing homes, universities, prisons, food banks, etc. that you support or for which you provide pastoral care.
 - a. Food donations are collected year-round then distributed to Clinton and Heyworth food pantries.
 - b. Quarterly Outreach 2nd Collections for the poor (for rent, heat, utilities, etc.) are given to St. John the Baptist Church, Clinton for management and distribution.



- c. November Angel Tree donations are collected then given to children's Christmas gift charities in both Clinton and Heyworth.
 - d. "Unbound" sponsorship of an aged woman living in Honduras.
 - e. Full sponsorship of lighted Pro-Life Billboard – 4 different banners are displayed throughout the year on Hwy 51 North, Wapella.
 - f. Holy Hour / Eucharistic Adoration one evening per month, as well as the Sundays of Advent and Lent following 9:00 a.m. Mass.
 - g. Holy Communion is taken to homebound and hospitalized parishioners.
 - h. Our parish website - www.saintpatrickwapella.org - is inviting and up-to-date as well as our parish Facebook page - www.facebook.com/StPatrickWapella/.
 - i. Father Horton teaches weekly parish adult education classes in the hall which are also livestreamed online, then available permanently on our parish YouTube page - www.youtube.com/@st.patrick8804/streams.
 - j. Online livestreaming of all Masses (Sunday, Weekday, Holy Day, Holy Hour, Weddings, Funerals) reach the homebound, those who are ill, past parishioners who have moved out of the area, those who live far away but want to share in Masses offered for their loved ones, and those unable to attend a particular wedding or funeral.
 - k. Religious Education classes on Sundays (immediately following Mass).
 - l. We have 5 Parish Teams which include and involve most of our parishioners – we use our parish registry to assign folks to a team, and the teams help run church events and funeral dinners.
 - m. "Welcome Bag" gifts are given to new parishioners.
 - n. Meal support is provided for parishioners needing assistance due to injury, surgery, recovery, etc.
 - o. As a parish, we share our priest with Central Catholic High School, Bloomington. Father Horton is the Chaplain for students and faculty.
- 2) What are the 3 - 5 most important ministries or activities at your parish? Why are these the most important?
- a. Religious Education of Youth (CCD)
 - i. So our children learn Catholic truths and traditions in order to develop their faith.
 - ii. So our children's love for Jesus grows more deeply and they develop a greater respect for the Church that will last a lifetime.
 - iii. If we do not instruct our children, they will not have a desire to love what and Who they do not know.
 - b. Parish Teams
 - i. All parishioners are assigned to 1 of 5 teams and in turn, there is more parish involvement in activities.
 1. Easter and Christmas church decorating
 2. Harvest Brunch
 3. First Communion / Confirmation Brunch
 4. Annual Parish Picnic at Wapella Park
 5. Funeral Dinners: all teams help provide food and workers.
 - c. Adult Education Classes
 - i. It is an opportunity for deepening our Catholic faith as well as gaining knowledge of the Lord and His Church and teachings.



- ii. Father Horton teaches and offers explanations that help us apply what we learn to our daily lives.
 - d. Monthly Eucharistic Adoration / Holy Hour
 - i. It is a wonderful opportunity for one-on-one quiet time with the Lord and allows for growth in holiness.
- 3) In your opinion, what is one of the most successful initiatives your parish has undertaken over the past decade? What made this so successful?
 - a. A renovation project (2014-2018) to restore the church to a more traditional floor plan and beautify the church grounds.
 - i. The Confessional and Sacristy were relocated and updated.
 - ii. New custom made outer and inner doors were installed.
 - iii. Repairs were made to preserve “Christ the King” stained glass window over the front doors.
 - iv. A 3-statue devotional area was added (Jude, Therese, Isidore the farmer).
 - v. Added an outdoor grotto with personal and memorial pavers.
 - vi. New outdoor statue of Saint Patrick in the grotto area.
 - b. In 2021, we completed a new roof project and replaced all the old sidewalks with new.
 - c. Since the renovation, people often comment (especially visitors) on how beautiful the church is and how it enhances reverence and worship. The successes are due to the joy and enthusiasm of parishioners desiring to care for our historic church building (*built 1882*) and grounds because they dearly value our parish community!
- 4) Does your parish currently collaborate with any other parishes in ministry? If yes, please describe those collaborations.
 - a. St. John the Baptist, Clinton
 - i. Quarterly Outreach Collections at our parish are sent to Clinton because they manage the distribution of funds to those in need.
 - ii. RCIA instruction (some years in the past, but currently no candidates in our parish).
 - iii. We provide and serve food for the canteen at the annual blood drive at St. John the Baptist parish hall each February.
- 5) In addition to these collaborations, which parishes have the greatest affinity with your parish whether they are in your vicariate or not? Why?
 - a. St. John the Baptist, Clinton
 - i. Close proximity – 5 miles
- 6) Based on your best assessment of parish Mass attendance, would you suggest adding, subtracting, or maintaining the number of Masses you currently have? Why?
 - a. 1st Answer – Continue with our one Sunday morning Mass.
 - i. By offering only one weekend Mass, community and relationships are strengthened because parishioners are not divided by different Mass times.
 - b. 2nd Answer – There’s some interest in adding a Saturday Vigil Mass.
 - i. For those whose employment requires Sunday morning shifts.



- 7) What is the greatest challenge your parish will face in the next 10 years? What are some ways to best address the challenge?
 - a. Bringing fallen away parishioners back to the Church and to parish life (especially those lost during COVID-19 years).
 - i. Build a team of current parishioners to call or visit folks and ask why they no longer attend. Then try to meet or bring understanding to that need and invite them back.

Section 3: Evangelization Efforts

- 1) What are the strengths of your parish related to evangelization?
 - a. Welcoming ushers, especially to visitors or people new to the parish.
 - b. Friendly introductions by various parishioners to newcomers after Mass has ended.
 - c. Family oriented; Welcoming to young children.
 - d. Excellent parish priest.
- 2) What are the challenges your parish faces related to evangelization?
 - a. Getting younger generations involved in parish life (*younger than baby boomers*).
 - b. Engaging younger adults to participate in evangelization.
- 3) Who are the audiences/groups in your parish boundaries that should be a key focus of evangelization efforts?
 - a. Fallen away parishioners (from recent years and even 10-20 years back).
 - b. Those who are high school and college age.
- 4) What kind of help do you most need from the Diocese to enhance your evangelization efforts?
 - a. A diocese wide effort for reaching fallen away Catholics.
 - i. TV / Radio ads.
 - ii. Billboards "Catholics Come Home."
 - iii. Messages in media communicating invitations to folks to return to their local parish ... "Come on in. Let's talk."
 - iv. Financial resources from the diocesan level helping communicate the message, thus multiplying the local efforts of parishes such as ours.

Section 4: Other Comments

- 1) What other insights or information would your parish like to share about your parish with the Growing Disciples team?
 - a. Our collections and finances held steady throughout COVID-19 years.
 - b. Our Mass attendance is now higher than before COVID-19.
 - c. A growing number of young families are attending our parish.
 - d. Our parish is welcoming to others.
 - e. Our church building and grounds have been and continue to be well maintained.
 - f. The beauty of our church is appealing.



- g. We have a geographic make up of families from a variety of towns and rural locations:
 - i. 36 – Heyworth
 - ii. 22 – Clinton
 - iii. 13 – Wapella
 - iv. 4 – Bloomington
 - v. 3 – Waynesville
 - vi. 1 each from Argenta, Atlanta, Danvers, LeRoy, Normal, and Shirley
- h. Final Note --- We believe we are a thriving rural parish ... and won't ever look like a thriving urban parish.