



MARY

QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS

“Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others.” The great Irish author Jonathan Swift (d. 1745) said that. Vision is bigger than plans, goals, strategies, and programs. Vision is more, it is hope, it is dreams, it is passion, it is what we strive for, it is what we love, it is what life longs for, and it gives life direction and meaning. Can’t we imagine for our children something wonderful, beautiful, something worth having, something worth passing along. In this Beacons process let’s not get bogged down in the stuff of a precise program but let’s strive for the light of the stars. After all, the great image of Christ is not a program but the magnificent Easter fire. Set the world on fire! Let’s see beyond the obvious and strive for the impossible.

We live in a world that continuously wants to bring us down. It says be realistic and grounded, but it means “let’s be ordinary.” My dear people, I have witnessed children, in our communities, here and in Ireland, who have lost hope, who live without imagination, who have no faith. They have lost the sense of dreaming. It’s terrible to see. How could a child of ten say “Father, I don’t believe in God.” Who did that to her? How can a child of eleven be suffering with anxiety, depression, a sense of abandonment, a loss of childhood, a darkness where there should be dreams. Who allowed this to happen to them? Who took it away from them?

At one point in the movie “Michael Collins,” while standing in the library of Trinity College, holding a book, speaking with someone who is doubting the possibility of ever achieving freedom for Ireland, his companion says: “Sure, it’s only a dream.” To which Collin’s replies: “Everything is possible if you only wish hard enough.” It’s a quote from Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie. The actual quote is: “Dreams do come true, if only we wish hard enough. You can have anything in life if you will sacrifice everything else for it.” Dreams are possible, “if you believe enough.” If we are in this Beacons process only to create a better structure, another program, well then, we should fail, we deserve to fail, because that’s pathetic! We want to create a space where faith comes alive, where children dream, where imagination is infused by grace. Now, that’s what we are about. All the things we do should make that happen. I’m tired of seeing sad kids, hearing dark stories, and failing to bring and be a light for others. Let’s build a community of hope, light, joy, happiness, faith, and imagination. That’s our vision, that’s our hope, that’s our dream, and, dear friends, that’s our God given task.

YEAR 3

BEACONS *of* LIGHT

CHANGE HAS ALREADY COME

The Beacons of Light Process is now in its third year, and it may seem to many that our life has continued as it always has, and in many ways, that is true. In their daily life many of our parishioners, if not most, won't feel the impact of Beacons. The most impactful aspect will be any change that will be made to Mass times, and they will change when there is a change in the availability of priests. Another element in the change of Mass times will be the numbers attending Masses. The time may come when it makes sense to consolidate Masses. Right now, that is not an issue for us, but we will have to deal with the situation in the future.

While it might seem that things have been pretty quiet the truth is that lots of work has been happening in the life of our parish as we coordinate all five parishes to form one community of grace. While most people are aware of what is happening in their own church, we may not be so aware of what is happening in general in all five churches. Keep in mind that ordinary parish life has continued, and we already have very active parishes with lots going on. That activity, that ministry, continues. Daily Masses, confessions, baptisms, funerals, weddings, visiting the sick, schools, commissions and committees, charitable works, liturgical and ministerial preparation, adult education, Bereavement, Eucharistic Adoration, supporting families, RCIA, PSR, all our parish groups such as Goldenaires, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Pro-Life Group, Knights of Columbus, Parish Festival, Athletics, Scouts, PTO, LOV, Food Pantry, church cleaning, community dinner, Peace and Justice, and so much more. These all remain the vital aspects of parish life and mission.

OVERALL PLANNING

VISION TEAM REPORTS AND STATUS

Two years ago, we established a Vision Team with sub-commitments to strategies for our future mission. These teams have been meeting regularly and some have already offered interim reports. These reports will form part of the material which will enter the final reports that will be offered to the archbishop as part of our Family of Parishes future guiding plan. These vision reports are guided by the Principles, Vision Points and Parameters outlined in the Beacons of Light Charter, but they are not limited to them. Our report will carry the character and emphasis of our own unique Catholic communities.



WORSHIP • EUCHARIST • LITURGY

The interim plan has been written and will go back to the committee for review and comment. Each church will retain its own liturgy and environment committee under the direction of the pastor and parochial vicars. Overall liturgical norms follow the requirements of liturgical law.

LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION

This group is working on their interim draft which will be completed by November. We have not moved to a single Parish Council, although this has been recommended by the Beacons of Light Scheduling, because we have not yet determined the final canonical (according to Church Law), and civil, legal, configuration of the united parish. We also have not determined the process by which each parish will be united, consolidated, amalgamated, or merged. All of this will impact the administrative requirements and positions necessary and office locations.

EDUCATION, FORMATION, TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION

The interim plan has been written and will go back to the committee for review and comment. All of these elements will continue in each parish as part of regular life.

STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

The interim plan has been written and will go back to the committee for review and comment. Strategies and goals will need to be added to this plan, however, we will need to have a clear idea of how the parish will be formalized/unified before we can finalize this plan.

STEWARDSHIP OF FINANCE

This committee will take the longest to finalize its recommendation as it will be dependent on the formation of the parishes into a particular single or multiple entity. Currently, and for the near future, all churches remain financially independent but share some expenses for shared ministries. All parishes will maintain their own books, finance councils, accounts, and fundraising. Draft proposals of the titles of accounts, recommendations about financial oversight, and finance commission norms will be drawn up but not implemented until the parishes are joined together in a unity. Over the next year this committee will be more active and focused and by July 2025 we will have an overall recommendation document with goals, strategies, processes, and procedures in conformity with canon and civil law. All arrangements will respect the wishes of the donors and the character of the churches and communities.

STEWARDSHIP OF SERVICE: LOVE IN ACTION

The interim plan has been written and will go back to the committee for review and comment. Although the office of Pastoral Vitality continuously sends suggestions and recommendations for parishes to consider implementing, we need to be careful that we do not try to make the parish an alternative to social services. Implementing all the suggestions and recommendations would put a greater burden on the capacity of the parish that we would be struggling to implement and sustain. Our Family of Parishes has an extensive network of care and compassion, love in action, and we will continue to develop responses to local needs as we see the need and have the capacity. Not every parish needs to have all the same initiatives to be what was, in the past, erroneously and naïvely called a “pastorally complete parish.” Our Love in Action response is comprehensive and challenging and witnesses to an enormous generosity on the part of our people. Thank you for all you do to help others its inspirational.

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES + COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Committees have done some initial work on identifying areas of responsibility. Over the next year they will pick up their assessments and develop a plan, strategies and goals. However, some of their vision and planning work is dependent on the configuration of the parish as one community. So important decisions need to be made before they can complete their recommendations. For now, maintenance and communication continue under the division of the separate churches in the family.



HIGHLIGHTS IN EVANGELIZATION AND EDUCATION

01

Beginning this Fall the PSR program for all five churches in Mary, Queen of All Saints parish, have been consolidated into one program and now is held at St. Simon Campus at Plagge Hall. The PSR program will take place every other week and classes will be held from 9am-10:45am. The program will also include sacramental retreats and special information programs. In accordance with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati requirements all teachers will acquire and maintain catechetical certification and educational credits, review, and renewal. In preparation for this year's PSR program, and all the other programs, the hall, offices, youth room, classrooms, corridor, and library, have been painted. It was necessary to fit all classroom doors with locks as a security measure, and students will be provided with Chromebooks (these were provided free of charge as a gift). Classrooms have also been provided with Smart TV's. All five parishes shared in the expense for these necessary innovations. New security cameras have also been fitted in Plagge Hall and Church. PSR will begin on 15th September 2024.

02

OCIA (RCIA), Baptismal Preparation Program, CRHP, and Marriage Preparation Program have been consolidated for the five parishes and will continue to be offered for the Family of Parishes at St. Dominic.

03

Our parish family is also beginning a new initiative, our Junior-High youth ministry will be held at St. Simon. This new initiative took off on Sunday, August 25th. The "youth room" has been painted and refurbished and will become the center for youth activity. The youth group will meet once a month for regular meetings and have occasional events and activities at other times.

04

Our Family of Parishes joined with the Westside Catholic Youth Group based at St. Teresa of Avila, for our High School youth. This program is going very well and seems to be very well attended.

05

We have continued the tradition of Christ Renews His Parish for both men and women retreats. Plagge Hall will also become the venue for both retreats.

06

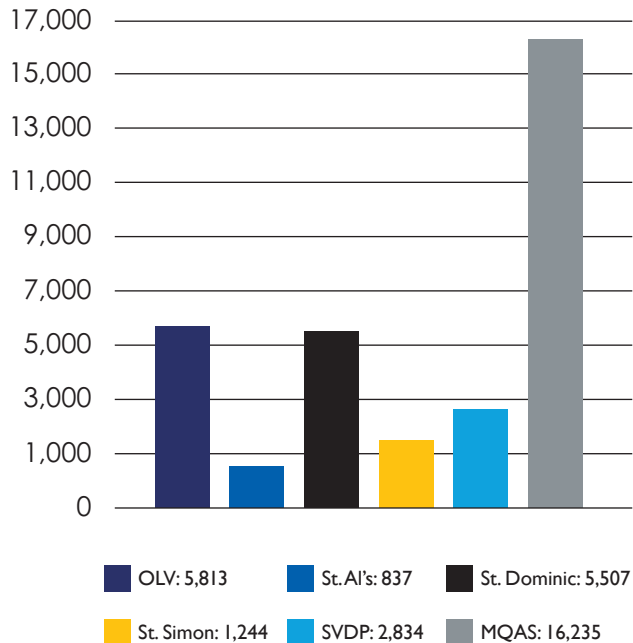
This year St. Dominic School celebrates 90 years since its founding and celebrations to mark this milestone are planned throughout the year.

07

The mission of Catholic Education continues to be central to our identity and keeping both Victory and St. Dominic schools vibrant and successful is a priority. Both of our elementary schools are pretty much full this year with OLV 529 and St. Dominic 448. Demographic studies concerning the Delhi area indicate that although the 1-14 age group population will decline over the next few years there will still be enough children for both of our schools to remain full. There is no room for complacency, however, and our schools will need to compete to remain relevant and full. Our strategy to achieve this will include, a) creating the best educational program and environment in the region; b) emphasizing a program that develops faith, virtue, and character formation; c) maintaining discipline with integrity and compassion; d) advertising and promotion.



MQAS PARISH OCTOBER MASS COUNT 2023



2331

Combined number of
Masses at MQAS parish for
July 2023 - June 2024
(not counting funerals and weddings)

Each Mass gives an infinite
amount of grace. Just imagine
the impact of 2331+ Masses
on our lives and our world.

CAMPUS, STRUCTURES AND MAINTENANCE

ST. SIMON THE APOSTLE

The most obvious innovations at St. Simon Campus, besides the work done at Plagge Hall, have been seen in the church. The apse wall has been painted with a Roman terracotta color. Onto this will be stenciled white crosses. Two statues were placed on either side of the sanctuary, Mary, Mother of Grace, and St. Joseph with the Child Jesus. The beautiful large crucifix that was at the back of church has been returned from restoration and painting and hangs above the tabernacle in the sanctuary. The depiction of the Ascension of the Lord, also restored and painted, is now placed above the main door of the church.

ST. DOMINIC & OUR LADY OF VICTORY

Over the summer both school buildings at St. Dominic and Victory have seen renovation and updating. The major work at OLV was the extension of the gym and this Fall the repair and expansion of the bathrooms, plumbing, and sewage at the concession stand. Security cameras, throughout the property, and lighting have been expanded and upgraded. Tree removal and trimming, cemetery maintenance and HVAC need constant supervision and maintenance and work was carried out over the summer. New safe steps from the rectory to the parish property have been installed. At St. Dominic we saw the completion of the painting of the ceilings in the school corridors, a new concrete access to the gym and pre-school entrance, the replacing of the lighting in four classrooms, the creating of a dining area for the preschool kids, and new flooring in the "nap" room. We are working on a plan to air-condition the gym and dining hall. New classroom lighting and classroom painting will be carried out over the next two years. The entrance area to the library was renovated over the summer and the restrooms in the basement cafeteria area were also painted. Work has begun on renovating the present science lab into the teachers' lounge and it is hoped this work will be completed next

summer. The science lab will be relocated. Security cameras have been fitted throughout the school, carparks, play areas and church, including sacristy and atrium. It is essential that we modernize the school buildings so that they are comfortable for students and staff, suitable for our needs, and we remain competitive with other schools that are alternatives to Victory and St. Dominic. We will be looking into the cost of replacing classroom, office, and exterior doors with security/safety doors. State Government has given grants for this work in the past, although both Victory and St. Dominic were excluded from grants the last round. We hope this funding will become available soon. We have great programs in our schools, with great staff, great kids, which is supported by an outstanding community. Let's keep it that way and continue to soar.

In church, St. Dominic will see the replacing of lights for the Stations of the Cross, and we are looking to add a new "loop" system to help people with hearing issues.

ST. ALOYSIUS ON THE OHIO

Work at St. Al's included the repair of the church roof and the sacristy. While the church roof needed some tile restoration the sacristy needed a complete replacing of the waterproof lining. Soon work will commence on replastering the water damaged area inside the church on the baptism side toward the back. The cost of this work was underwritten by a donor.

There is cracking appearing on the wall in the apse on either side of the high altar. The structural engineer seems to think that this is not new and may be the result of settling or movement some time ago. It will need repair.

A clean up and repair to the old convent next to church at St. Al's has been taking place over the summer. For a number of years, the upper rooms have been used for storage of various materials and these have now been sorted and archived and moved to more permanent storage. Some items have been donated including team shirts, old sports equipment, school furniture, and school supplies. The parish sacramental and financial record books have been moved to the office at St. Simon campus. There has been some water damage to the ceilings, and this will be repaired. The upper rooms need to be cleaned and repainted. You may be surprised to hear that while the house has two restrooms it does not have either a bath or shower, nor is there a stove in the kitchen. The electrical unit in the kitchen will need to be upgraded to accommodate modern appliances. There is no air conditioning in the bedrooms. The bedrooms are not furnished and many of the windows have no working balances. It is a pretty little house with inlaid wood floors all of which need to be refinished. If we want to make use of this house in the future for a priest residence these issues will need to be resolved.

Looking Forward there is a lot of restoration and maintenance to be carried out at St. Al's. Including: Roof, Tuckpointing of Church, Windows, Interior of Church.

The School Building at St. Al's remains a solid building and at present, while investigating alternate uses, we will work to simply maintain the building and make use of it for storage, and as a maintenance workshop.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Over the summer the roof of the school, rectory, and carport have been replaced. The rectory windows have been replaced over the last few years and that will be completed this year. A new air-conditioning unit is being installed upstairs in the rectory building. Due to erosion and rain damage riprap boulders have been placed at the foot of the property on River Road to slow the subsidence onto River Road. Similar work needs to be carried out at the rear of the church and rectory.

FINANCES

At present all parish finances are maintained as separate and independent financial entities. Where ministry is shared expenses are also shared between the five churches. Our financial giving is holding firm, and we continue to remain in

positive territory. At the same time both St. Simon and St. Al's have very limited financial reserves and although they are maintaining weekly offerings they are behind the recommended budget. With limited reserves it becomes very difficult to maintain the buildings and property.

St. Vincent de Paul, St. Dominic and Our Lady of Victory have no debt. St. Simon still has a substantial debt of \$173,282.45 to the Archdiocese for unpaid assessment. St. Al's still has a debt to the Archdiocese for unpaid assessment of \$112,305.78.

MAINTENANCES & PLANNING

We have five different campuses that we are now responsible for, and which require constant oversight and maintenance. Over the next six months each site will draw up a comprehensive list of projects that need to be done and projects we would like to have done. At the same time, we will look to planning projects that will need to be anticipated. It just makes sense to properly plan and strategize for each site. Projects will be prioritized, and financial estimates will be associated with each project. Some of this work has already taken place but a comprehensive assessment for each property would be beneficial.

BEACONS & FINANCES

All five churches still maintain their own finance committees and there has been no merging of funds. All funds are dedicated to their particular church, and this will remain the norm until such a time as all parishes are merged into one. We have a Vision Team Finance Committee who, as we move forward, will review the best possible practices for finance and will present recommendations.

All five parishes, even after unity, must be in a position to support their own particular mission. One of the major questions we will have to eventually face is if we should strive to maintain all that we have or if we decide it is better for us to consolidate and focus resources.

SPECIAL PROJECT FOR A DIFFICULT TIME: CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT

I noticed at home in Ireland that many of the public buildings with lawns and gardens are overgrown. This is not an oversight, nor is it due to lack of funds. Rather, it is an attempt to help sustain the native populations of flowers, birds, and insects. As you are probably aware there is a great danger concerning the loss of butterflies, bees, and native birds here in Ohio. Much of their natural habitat has been destroyed or poisoned. We are looking into the possibility of turning some of our unused green space into environmental habitat to help promote the return of our hard-hit native species. For example, the field behind the rectory at St. Simon and St. Vincent, and maybe even in front of the church at St. Simon, might be used as an environmental prairie area to encourage the growth of the butterfly, bee, and native bird populations.



St. Simon Plagge Hall
beautification



St. Dominic playground update



OLV gym expansion



St. Al's church roof repairs



Make it a practice to
judge persons and things
in the most favorable light
at all times and under
all circumstances.

– **St. Vincent de Paul**

I want to express my gratitude of Fr. Jim Walsh and Fr. Don Rettig for continuing to serve in our Family of Parishes especially at St. Dominic and St. Vincent. It has been two years since the Beacons of Light initiative created our Family of Parishes and Fr. Jim and Fr. Don, who were scheduled to begin retirement, offered to stay on to help and make sure I didn't completely drive everything off the rails. I am very grateful for their willingness to continue their priestly work on our behalf. I am also grateful for their willingness to help watch over the day-to-day operation and good ordering of the parishes, the campus, and buildings. I also want to thank Fr. Chris and Fr. Cordier who continue to keep a full schedule of priestly work and now have been added extra duties due to Beacons. Without them it would not be possible for us to continue the ministries we have all come to depend upon and, sadly, often take for granted. Thanks also to the staff of our parishes and schools for their dedication and patience. We all must work now thinking of multiple sites and communities. Thanks also to all those who form parish committees and share their guidance and wisdom so that we can not just maintain but grow.

I want to thank all of you, the people of our Family of Parishes. For generations you have been a bright light in the darkness, and you continue to do so. I realize that change is frustrating, scary, and unpredictable. Added to that the reality of an Irish priest as the pastor, can it get more unpredictable and frenetic! Thank you for all your good work, kindness, commitment, patience, and your outstanding support. Things don't just happen, people make them happen, and great people, like you, will make great things happen. Although I don't always understand what it is God is doing, I have confidence that He will do it through you. **Together we can make a difference, together, we can create a future.**

Fr. Ben