



PROJECT:

TIP OF THE SPEAR

GOD'S VISION
FOR ST. GEORGE'S PARISH

WHERE WE FIND OURSELVES



"I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission ad gentes (to all peoples). No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples."

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

THE URGENCY

In our part of the world, the Catholic Church is suffering from internal and external decline. Only 1 in 5 Catholics remain practicing by the time they reach adulthood. Only 31% of Catholics believe Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. If membership in the Catholic Church is declining less than mainline protestant churches, this is mostly due to ongoing immigration of Catholics from the global south.

CHRIST'S GREAT COMMISSION

Christ himself has left us with his "Founder's Vision," which is timelessly original, groundbreaking, and not something that we just invented:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**



MATTHEW 28:18-20

In light of Christ's Commission, and considering where we find ourselves today, we have been asking the Holy Spirit to help us determine what He specifically calls us to do as God's Church in Westboro, praying that He will bring about renewal in our community.

Now we see with new clarity that Christ's Church, and our parish in it, exists to make disciples of Jesus and form worshippers of the Living God through evangelization, prayer, sacraments, and Catholic teaching.

At St. George's, we are called to live in the fullness of the Catholic tradition, both individually and as a parish. To settle for anything less than holiness and mission would be playing the game "not to lose" or "to slow down the decline." By boldly taking up our vision, we play "to win and to grow," in order to reap the fruits of real conversion and true renewal.

To refocus on what role we play, in this particular time and place, within the wide expanse of Salvation History, we want to be driven by the new **VISION FOR ST. GEORGE'S**:

OUR PARISH VISION

*St. George's exists to form
courageous disciples of Jesus,
who joyfully live the mission
of the Catholic Church.*

*As we connect, learn, pray, and serve,
we bear witness to the living Christ.*



BREAKING IT DOWN

"ST. GEORGE'S EXISTS..."

The Vision expresses the specific, yet all encompassing goal of the parish as envisioned by Christ and His Church. It enables us to point to why we are here and what we are called to do.

Although simple and direct, it is an ambitious goal that needs and breeds courage.

"... TO FORM ..."

"To form" captures many of the responsibilities of a parish and its members (which are really synonymous with discipleship):

- To evangelize, that is, to invite someone to respond and entrust their entire life to Christ, and carry out the apostolic Mission of the Church.
- To accompany others through a conversion experience, during our life-long pursuit of holiness and mission (essentially from conversion to heaven).
- To catechize (e.g. in sacramental preparation) and deepen one's faith with ongoing Christian education.

"... COURAGEOUS ..."

Courage is the "virtue of bravery in facing difficulties, especially in overcoming the fear of consequences in doing good."

- Courage is the characteristic of our patron St. George and marks our particular way of doing things at St George's. It articulates the sacrificial love of the Martyr Patron - the charism we believe is gifted to this parish.
- We must pray for the specific courage needed in this age to live as Catholics and to be missionary disciples.

"... DISCIPLES OF JESUS ..."

A Disciple of Christ is someone who has made a personal and conscientious decision to give his or her entire life to God (John Paul II). This decision is made in the context of intimate and authentic relationship to the person of Jesus, fully realized within His Church.

Most of us, who were baptized and confirmed as infants and children, will need to discern when/if as adults we have truly committed to the promises made to Christ at these celebrations.

“...WHO JOYFULLY LIVE THE MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH”

Joy is the supernatural fruit of the authentic pursuit of holiness, "rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:17). **Joy and courage** are both mingled in the witness and expression of Christian love.

In the Catholic faith we find the "fullness of grace and truth" (Vatican II). At St George's, we are called to live in the fullness of the Roman Catholic tradition. Our goal and desire is to invite people into this fullness by evangelization, catechesis, and accompaniment.

- Living the fullness of the Catholic faith (as a missionary disciple) entails the pursuit and cultivation of **authentic holiness and apostolic missionary zeal**.
- Holiness and (apostolic) mission are the two things in which we want excel, as is our **responsibility** as Catholics, **individually and as a parish**.
- This means that we also have a **next generation mindset** - indicating that the disciples in our parish will be encouraged to live as leaders in their own right.

The intrinsic **connection between love and courage** is the illuminating and comforting message we have from St. John's First Letter:

"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

(1 John 3:16)

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love."

(1 John 4:18)

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith."

(1 John 5:4)

MOVING *FORWARD*:

LETTING THE VISION LEAD THE WAY



St. George's exists to form courageous disciples of Jesus, who joyfully live the mission of the Catholic Church.

As we connect, learn, pray, and serve, we bear witness to the living Christ.



Our Vision for St. George's is not only a program for achieving a goal. It is Our Lord's call to fully realize our identity as His One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, right here and right now.

The Vision operates as the north star that we follow to complete our God-given mission as a parish. The Vision serves as foundational criterion in our decision-making, as well as for our attitudes, beliefs, and parish culture.

Our Vision will guide St. George's Parish in:

- How we align our ministries in their structure, goals and legacy (a discipleship pathway)
- How we define our strategies and tactics in why, how and where we engage as parishioners.
- Having a next generation mindset, ensuring that our parish produces future leaders who will be able to spearhead ministries that conform to the Great Commission for God's Church and to their own call to holiness.

DEFINING TERMS

DISCIPLESHIP

Through conversion, a disciple concretely decides to give his/her life to Jesus. Disciples love God, and love their neighbor as God loves us.

The choice to be a disciple is made in the context of a personal relationship to Jesus Christ, and fully realized in His Church. Disciples can point to a singular moment and/or to several key moments in their lives at which they made a conversion of mind, heart, and will.

Disciples respond to God's universal call to holiness and mission, which are two sides of the same coin.

HOLINESS

- A gift of God, grounded in baptism and renewed or deepened in the sacraments.
- Forgiveness of sins and consecration for service to God and His Church.
- Imitating and following Jesus.
- Obeying the Commandments (greatest of which is Love).

MISSION

As authentic disciples, Christians (laity and clergy) actively proclaim the Gospel in all circumstances of their lives. This mission is fulfilled by words and actions.

LOVE

- God's greatest gift: the Holy Spirit.
- Greatest act of love is Jesus' Passion.
- Willing the good of the other, as other.
- Greatest way to love someone is to invite them to know, love, and serve God.

EVANGELIZATION

Evangelizing means seeking to convert, in two senses:

- The first moment in the process of conversion (invitation to give one's life to Jesus).
- The entire process the Church follows to accomplish her God-given mission.

NEW EVANGELIZATION

- Intended specifically for Catholics who have fallen away and make up the majority of many post-Christian societies.
- An age of "a re-centering of the Church on Christ and on the proclamation of Christ as the answer to the question that is every human life." (G. Weigel)

RECOMMENDED READING

SCRIPTURE

- Matthew 28:16-20
- 1 John 3-5

PAPAL DOCUMENTS

- Evangelii Nuntiandi (1975)
 - Pope St. Paul VI
- Redemptoris Missio (1990)
 - Pope St. John Paul II
- Evangelii Gaudium (2013)
 - Pope Francis

BOOKS

- Made for Mission
 - Tim Glemkowski
- Forming Intentional Disciples
 - Sherry Weddell
- Evangelical Catholicism
 - George Weigel



*"There is no fear in love, but
perfect love casts out fear."*

1 JOHN 4:18

*"By this we know that
we love the children of God,
when we love God
and obey his
commandments."*

1 JOHN 5:2



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