

Here is what we have accomplished together at St. Martin de Porres Parish since Pentecost Sunday of last year, in addition to our regular ministries, services and liturgical celebrations:

Archbishop Allen Vigneron released his pastoral letter, or “letter from the pastor” to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit: “Unleash the Gospel.” The parish staff and leadership have been reading and reflecting about the vision the Archbishop has for us, with specific goals and objectives to be put into place.

We will have a two-night workshop in late August to review his letter, which the Archbishop calls, not HIS letter, but OUR letter, the result of the Synod 2016 which took place two years ago. All Catholics had a part in that gathering.

One off-shoot of the Synod was to have a Festival of Ministries last fall. Dozens of parish organizations, ministries and services were showcased, and 90 people filled out a stewardship commitment sheet to participate in this parish work. Meetings were held to better coordinate our parish events, activities and fund-raising efforts so that our parishioners would not be overwhelmed and suffer from donor fatigue.

The parish has a one-year subscription to FORMED, an internet Catholic information service to help us and the unchurched and fallen-away Catholics to grow in our knowledge of our Catholic Faith and to deepen our spirituality. We hosted Frank Runyeon for our parish mission, which was well-attended and appreciated by our parishioners. Concerts featuring our Minister of Music John McGovern and our Contemporary Music group showed the diversity of prayer through music. I hope to plan an evening of Praise and Worship which will include both of our parish choirs.

Our Divine Mercy Sunday devotion included participation from five parishes. For the last three years, it took place at St. Faustina Church. All five pastors agreed to start rotating the locations of the devotion. I am happy to share with you that next year, it will take place here at St. Martin de Porres.

This past year was a year to celebrate more anniversaries. The Active Christian Women’s Club celebrated its 40th anniversary, and Adrian Dominican Sister Noreen O’Connell celebrated her 70th anniversary as a consecrated

religious woman and her 90th birthday. The Pope Pius X Council of the Knights of Columbus is preparing to celebrate its 65th anniversary, after having been resurrected four years ago.

Our church interior was enhanced with the addition of an image of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, new Offertory collection boxes, and handicap access buttons on one set of our church doors, as well as at the parish center. We are starting construction on a new storage area in the parish center atrium, which will greatly help out in the storage of our many collections and supplies for the various Christian Service projects.

Speaking of Christian Service, in addition to the many outreach projects we participate in, we hope to develop a service for those who need a ride to church. St. Martin de Porres Parish has established a good reputation for the outstanding outreach we do, thanks to your generosity of time, talent and treasure especially for our holiday collections and with the Warming Center.

We are looking for creative ways to improve attendance at our Eucharistic Adoration opportunities, and are open to ideas for continuing adult faith formation. Our number of those in liturgical ministries continues to decline. We need more ushers, altar servers, lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and choir members.

It is no secret that the demographics of the parishes in Warren are changing. Our older parishioners are becoming more infirmed. For the 70 to 90 members who die each year, there are few replacements. With the loss of membership comes a loss of income, which will impact our budget. On the bright side, our parish leadership is brainstorming for a large, once-a-year fund-raiser which will shore up our parish budget and keep us financially sound. I am asking everyone to prayerfully consider increasing your Sunday offering support, especially if you have not done so recently.

In the area of Christian Faith Formation and Religious education, our children are being brought into a closer relationship with Jesus. Our catechists show enthusiasm and their love of Christ. Retreats are available for catechists, and students and parents preparing for First Eucharist and Confirmation.

We are looking for greater opportunities to reach out to our Faith Formation parents to make the practice of the Faith a higher priority in their lives, as the first and best teachers of faith for their children. This may improve attendance at the Children's Liturgy of the Word, which we offer during the 11:00 AM Sunday Mass.

This year, for adult faith formation, we had an 8-week presentation called, "A Biblical Walk with Mary" and an 8-week Bible study seminar, "Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible" with Jeff Cavens.

We started an adult environmental activity making mats for the homeless from discarded and recycled plastic bags during Lent. And we hosted a community awareness program involving identity theft and other scams.

In the coming year, we hope to improve and expand our youth ministry and to work on better communication and collaboration among us.

Enrollment this past year was 174 students representing 123 families, with three families moving out of the area. 35 students were confirmed, and 11 children received First Eucharist. There were 16 families whose last child completed the program, meaning there are no more children from those families to be in the program next year. There were 10 new families enrolled in the program this year. Sadly, we had no candidates for the RCIA this year – no adult baptisms, Professions of Faith or Confirmation -- but we are working on that for next year.

Two persons were talking together before a large church which was being destroyed by fire. The first man spoke in a voice which could be heard above the voice of the firemen: "This is the first time I ever saw you at church." To this the second responded: "This is the first time I ever saw the church on fire."

It's time for each one of us in this church to be "on fire!" This will only happen when we ourselves encounter God in our hearts and in our lives. The highest form of happiness is union with God. This happens when we are fully human, fully alive, fully open to the Holy Spirit, and as Matthew Kelly puts it, "being the very best version of myself."

This is why Jesus Christ came; this is why He sends the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God will make us one with God. When we open ourselves to receive the Spirit of God, we will be strong enough to inspire and empower others. The Holy Spirit helps sinful people to receive the power of God to repent of their sins. The Advocate will help us to stand next to God, and be “on fire” and to “Unleash the Gospel” in our parish, in our Archdiocese and in the world!

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise
and ever enjoy His consolations, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Veni Sancte Spiritus! Come, Holy Spirit! Breathe on us, O Spirit of God!

ALLELUIA and AMEN!