

Companions on the Journey

February 20, 2022

Dear Friends,

Several months ago I asked some of the members of the parish Commissions and the Pastoral Council to help develop an up-to-date description of Saint Anthony's with an assessment of our present status and an analysis of our ongoing and future needs. The analysis would also have a description of the qualities and attributes that any new pastor assigned to serve here might have. The idea behind the developing of such a description is to submit it to the Archbishop and the Priest Personnel Board by late this fall so they can have the information before them as they discuss and discern whom the Archbishop should send here as pastor of Saint Anthony's moving into the future.

Once I asked this, there was a period of several months when these parishioners reached out and examined various organizations that could help us in this process. In the meantime, the Archbishop was looking to engage with an organization that could help him develop a game plan for the renewal of the parishes and the archdiocese with the development of a long range strategic plan. The Archdiocese entered into a relationship with Catholic Leadership Institute (CLI) to develop such a strategic plan. The Catholic Leadership Institute was also the finalist from the parishioners in their efforts. And so, the issue became moot. All the parishes are now working with CLI to develop such a strategic plan for the renewal of parish life.

Part of this process is a survey tool. It is called the Disciple Maker Index (DMI). It has been developed and used for about ten years now. It has been revised and tweaked. It is a good tool to help get a sense of where people are and what the needs of each parish are, what are the strengths as well. There is a survey that each parishioner can take online from the comfort of their own homes. There will be listening sessions too. All the data that is gathered will be made known to each parish (their own parishioner's feedback) and to the Archdiocese to give an overview and large picture presentation of what need to be addressed and where we are to focus our attention moving forward.

I bring this to your attention because you will be hearing much more about the Disciples Maker Index very shortly. I am asking for as many of you as possible to go online and fill out the survey. It will help Saint Anthony's and it will help the Archbishop too. Last week I wrote in this space about the Synod in Rome next year and how the Holy Father is asking for input from all around the world. Well this isn't quite as worldwide an effort but it is very pertinent to our lives here in Philadelphia and in our parish. I am asking and encouraging your cooperation. I have to fill one out one of the surveys even though I will be turning 75 in another two months.

Our present task is to try to do the best we can to have our parish ready and prepared for the appointment of a pastor in June of 2023. I ask your assistance. I have asked to be able to stay on as pastor until that time to celebrate fifty years as a priest. I believe the Archbishop will grant my request. If he does, it is my intention to have a giant parish party/picnic in June of 2023 to celebrate the goodness of God over all these years. Our parish will be 137 years old at that time and we want Saint Anthony's to be alive and thriving for many, many years. I have always counted upon you for your prayers and support. This time too.

Peace

Msgr. McHenry