

Enhancing the parish vision – Ignite the Fire, BSC, Seminole

Just as the disciples walked with Christ for 3 years learning from Him, our Parish over the past twenty years has been doing the same thing. And the time we spent growing with Christ has paid dividends. We grew from 1800 families to 2200 families. Our ministries grew from 12 to about 40 ministries. We became a community of Catholics that truly encountered Christ.

During those 20 years, just as the disciples did, we encountered failures and disappointments. Remember that the disciples were sent out to cure the sick and drive out demons, and some returned saying they couldn't do it. But Jesus didn't give up on them, instead He increased their understanding and led them to a deeper faith. For us, we encountered some self-inflicted shortcomings: program starts and stops, sometimes lack of follow through, lack of communication, etc. Some things we encountered were out of our control; economic collapse in 2009, leadership changes, 9/11, hurricanes, and now a pandemic. Yet despite these obstacles and challenges, we continued to grow in Christ, thanks to His amazing Grace.

Today we stand on a precipice. Just as the followers of Christ, at the Ascension of Christ had to decide whether they would continue as Christians, return to their former lives, or follow Christ's directive to go out to all the world, we too must decide who we want to be as Catholics in the near future. We could continue to be the Parish we are, a good and faithful community, or we can be bold and courageous and take the next step and become a robust family of Disciples. The same Holy Spirit that led the Apostles 2000 years ago, is leading us today, are we as a community prepared to follow?

All your priests, the staff, and the Parish Leadership Team have said "YES" to the Holy Spirit and developed a plan to guide us to become that robust family. By Divine Providence, we were led to using the concept of "Forming a Family of Faithful Disciples" (Joe Citro) created for the capital campaign of 2019, because we felt it encapsulated who we wanted to be in 3-5 years. Our vision is a robust parish family that in word and deed proclaims our Catholic Faith in all our actions and interactions. Our mission is simple, Scripture, Sacraments, Charity, Mercy.

Our plan will have three phases each will be developed based on the successes and challenges of the previous phase. Each phase will have metrics to help determine our effectiveness. These will be publicized so that you, the parishioner, can hold us, and each other, accountable. While we will lead the phases of growth, the real success comes from your full and active participation in the plan.

The first stage will be "Ignite the Fire". During this phase we will lay the necessary framework to becoming family. We will improve communication across all mediums. We will provide opportunities for each person to learn how to share their story of Faith, and to share their Faith with their brothers and sisters. We will provide opportunities to get more involved in charitable actions. And lastly, we will provide more catechesis for all ages, so we can experience our Faith in a deeper, more meaningful way.

We are so excited to live out our new Vision. We can't wait to share all this with you, our brothers and sisters. Together, with your participation and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will truly become a Family of Faithful Disciples.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rick Pilger, I.C.

Brent Sowards

Pastor

Parish Leadership Team