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## St Mary of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Parish

*Forming saints for Christ and the Church since 1857*

### PARISH PLANNING DAY

On Saturday, 9 January 2016, parish leadership gathered to discuss the current state of the parish and set some future parish-wide goals. This type of formal parish planning day has not been held since just before the Church Renovation. The January 9<sup>th</sup> discussion was a positive and productive morning with thoughtful dialogue about the potential future direction(s) of the parish. The session was attended by the majority of the members (all were invited) of the Parish Council, Finance Council, and School Commission, along with Mrs. Sherri Kirschner (school principal) and Ms. Jill Kuntz (Administrator of Religious Education). The morning's discussion was organized around some lead questions.

**What excites you (is going well) at St Mary Parish?** Top responses were:

- St Mary School continues long history/strong tradition of providing children of Rush County with the opportunity to grow in the Catholic Christian Faith. Also mentioned were the technology improvements and bathroom renovation
- Church Renovation & strong financial support of the *Preserving our Heritage* Campaign
- Parish Leadership & Membership – willingness to volunteer when needs presented
- Growth and success of the Food Pantry

**What do you want St Mary to be?** Some of the responses:

- Role Model within the greater Rush County community – by personally welcoming, witnessing, serving, and evangelizing
- Increase involvement in parish opportunities for faith development and service
- Improving upon our strong Liturgies with greater active participation
- Ensuring the financial and demographic sustainability of our community and ministries

**What should the parish do if we suddenly inherited \$1,000,000?** (It could happen! 😊)

With responses to the first two questions in mind, this fun little exercise brought about many different concrete responses that we then discussed, debated, combined, and ranked. From these, we decided on the final top four goals for the parish.

**Top Parish Goals for the next 1-3 years:**

1. **Continue Campus Renovation** – particular focus on the school building (including masonry tuck pointing, roof replacement, window & HVAC upgrades, improvements to interior finishes of walls & ceilings), plus repaving of the parking lot, and a possible Parish Center (to provide fully accessible meeting hall and rooms)
2. **Hire** (or provide additional training) DRE, Youth Minister, Music Director
3. **Increase salaries for school staff** (Currently SMS teachers are paid only about 65% of comparable Rush County counterparts. It truly is a labor of love!)

4. **Increase Parish outreach** – Form a Parish Welcome Committee, continue to support/sustain the St Mary Food Pantry, identify/initiate community outreach opportunities, some parish volunteer opportunities are on the back side of this sheet