

Thank you to all who attended my installation Mass, and all those who expressed such kind words of support during my first weekend as pastor of SLKF (July 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>).

I have reviewed the Parish Assessment you recently completed, both the text, as well as an interview with the coordinating committee, and wish to thank all of you for the time and thought you put into your answers.

When Archbishop Aymond assigned me to SLKF, he directed that I have special care for good communication with the faithful, for religious education, for administrative efficiency, and for implementation of the Ninth Archdiocesan Synod at SLKF.

The Ninth General Synod of the Archdiocese of New Orleans commenced at the Chrism Mass, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Archbishop Philip M. Hannan held the previous synod from 1984 through 1987.

A Synod is a time the archbishop calls his people together in order to reflect on God's vision and priorities for us as a local church, by listening to the needs, expectations, aspirations, concerns and potential priorities for the work and ministry of our parishes and our church. The archbishop asked: first, "*What does the Catholic community in New Orleans do well?*" And, second, "*What, in our Catholic community in New Orleans, can we improve upon?*"

The result of this consultative process was divided into the Synod's Four Focus Areas: (a) Family Life, (b) Evangelization/Outreach, (c) Vocations (Married, Ordained, and Religious), and (d) Social Justice/Community Involvement.

It is noteworthy that your Parish Assessment generated Six Priorities for SLKF that both overlap with the Synod Focus Areas, and, at the same time, direct us to needs specific to the situation of SLKF: (1) Communications, (2) Outreach, (3) Adult Faith Formation, (4) Financial Transparency, (5) Sacramental Life, (6) Youth Ministry.

The plan for my first year with you is to merge, as far as possible, the Focus Areas of the Synod, with the Priorities of the SLKF Parish Assessment. From this, we will develop a concrete sequence of actions, having as a final objective aligning SLKF Parish life with the vision of the Archdiocese, and with your own expressed hopes for a parish as the center of community life. Preliminary ACTIONS ALREADY TAKEN include:

**Communications:** the bulletin cover has been redesigned with more specific contact and sacramental information. Our parish website has been upgraded by eCatholic, a service provided through the Archdiocese. Please visit: <https://slkfchurch.com/>. The plan is to communicate with you using both printed and electronic formats, according to your preference.

**Outreach:** internal parish outreach is taking place as I get to know all of you. Also, a procedure is being developed for regular Parish Community Days using the Lorio Center you built. Details to follow in future updates.

**Adult Faith Formation:** Two recorded programs have been obtained and will be offered in the coming semester, September through December, 2017: (a) *Oremus*, a series on prayer, and (b) *Unlocking the Mysteries of the Bible*. Next year, after I am settled in, I hope to offer some adult education courses myself. Details to follow in future updates.

**Financial Transparency:** I will be meeting with representatives of the Archdiocesan Finance Office beginning on 25<sup>th</sup> July, to upgrade our operations using *QuickBooks Online*. Additionally, an audit will take place during the week of August 21<sup>st</sup>. Once completed, the upgrade will enable us to maintain live-links with the Archdiocesan Finance office to provide protected record keeping, regular access to expertise in best-practices, efficiency in monitoring receivables and expediting payables, and to provide you with regular financial statements of how your money is being invested in your parish.

**Sacramental Life:** your Parish Assessment included a request for daily confessions available before all masses. This is now taking place, and is reflected on the new cover of the bulletin.

**Youth Ministry:** We are developing an accelerated program which will enable fulfillment of the thirty-session requirement for Archdiocesan Parish Schools of Religion in week-long segments offered at times of the year when school is not in session, and parents are therefore looking for a safe place for their children that will also be edifying to them as human beings. Details to follow in future updates.

At this time of transition, we can serve each other through prayer, openness, and focusing on the future. St. Louis King of France, Pray for us.

- Fr. Mark



*May God  
bless you  
during your  
faithful  
ministry,  
may you  
continue to  
be sustained  
by His grace,  
and may  
your life in  
God's service  
be filled with  
joy.*

