



# OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

A ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

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A RESPONSE TO THE ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN  
AND THE IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL  
FOR OUR OWN PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

*St. Philip Neri, founder of Oratorians  
and visionary behind the Counter-Reformation  
of the Catholic Church in Rome, pray for us.*

## INTRODUCTION

In April 2015, the Archdiocese of Atlanta published its Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan (APP) after study by several levels of focus groups. In the APP, parishes were given flexibility to develop their own Parish Pastoral Plans (PPP), given their unique situations, but with an archdiocesan suggested methodology.

The pastor of Our Lady of the Mountains Roman Catholic Church (OLM), Fr. Charles Byrd, after meeting in June 2015 with other Northwest Georgia Deanery pastors, posted on the parish website, first, a copy of the APP, and, second, the PPP methodology he planned to use. Following the Parish Team phase, and in collaboration with the Pastoral Council, the Finance Council, our Staff, and others, we produced this document.

It compresses the four APP themes into three (combining the "Knowing" and "Living" our Faith themes), while combining, separating, and re-allocating APP priorities. We also added as well a new priority to the PPP incorporating future facility needs. All of this resulted in 13 priorities being allocated to three themes in an overall re-prioritized format for the PPP. Finally, as small as OLM is, we decided to reduce the APP suggested implementation teams to one team composed of the pastor working in consultation with the Pastoral Council and the Finance Council.

Overall in the PPP development process, the controlling questions driving decision-making were:

- (1) What are we already doing well as a parish that should not be changed;
- (2) What are we doing that we could improve; and
- (3) What could we start doing that would make things better?

This OLM PPP Document is approved by the Pastoral Council and the pastor.

## PASTOR'S COMMENTS

I have completed my seventh year at OLM, and it has been a very fruitful seven years. Together we have accomplished great things. In many ways, OLM was still functioning more as a mission than it was as a parish when I arrived, and we have, over the course of the seven years, striven to give the parish structure and order and a vision that helps it grow into what I believe is a great American parish.

Given the economy in the last seven years, we have still managed to expand and improve our facilities considerably (and without debt). We have more than doubled our religious education space during this time, and improved the exterior and interior of the buildings from top to bottom.

We have also built a liturgical music program from scratch, formed a Liturgy Committee, overseen the implementation of the new translation of the Roman Missal, chosen a feast day, added two annual events (our Parish Feast Day celebrations and our Annual Cristeros Festival), built a youth program, formalized policies on countless things, built a digital presence on the web and social media, and created a parish that is almost peerless on some levels (or so we have been told), and a parish that influences other parishes around the country many times our size.

Moreover, OLM has so many great people working on so many levels doing remarkable works of charity here in our community, reaching out to the wider world. It should also be stressed that this is a collective effort all around, and people who expect more also give more. Our collections are up 35% in the last seven years. In all of this, and with a view towards the future, and in confidence for what our Lord has in store for this blessed place, I do hereby endorse the contents of this Pastoral Plan for OLM!

In Faith,

Fr. Charles A. Byrd

## SOME INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Our part-time deacon, staff, members of our Pastoral Council, Finance Council, and others collaborated in this process.

The assessment tool seemed contorted in language at times, so we left some questions unanswered because of the oddness of their wording.

Overall, the tool seemed tilted toward urban parishes, and thus, not always applicable to a rural parish. OLM is a small, rural parish with only about 450 active and registered “family units.” As is the case with more remote parishes, we make do with limited space and see that as a sign of growing pains, but these physical restrictions limit what we can offer to our parishioners. Still, most of our answers on the Parish Assessment Tools were fours.

Given all that, we will attempt, now, to unpack the results in this process.

# KNOWING (AND SPREADING) OUR FAITH

In our minds, there was a lot of overlap in these two ideas, so we joined them together in our response. Using the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan as a starting point, and using its vision and points, we formed our own Parish Pastoral Plan.

## THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP US KNOW AND SPREAD OUR FAITH

At OLM, we have done a lot to advance the Gospel through the worldwide web and other new forms of communication.

What are we doing well?

- The creation of our parish website ([olmjasper.com](http://olmjasper.com)) has been a great accomplishment for OLM. We have used it to catechize, form, and evangelize our parishioners, but its reach has been remarkably broad (even international) at times. It has also been an outstanding model for other parishes around the country.
- We have created a Facebook page. Sometimes we reach 500 people, but we've had posts that reached over 65,000, too!
- Our use of social media (with the parish, CFF, youth, our choirs, our Knights, etc., participating) is also proving to be an excellent tool to pass along information, but also to endorse well-produced videos and articles on the Faith.
- While it is decidedly old-school technology, we have commissioned many works of art for our parish, including icons, a mosaic, some carvings, stained glass windows, and even music. These, too, are "technologies," and have the ability to communicate truths in an enduring way into the ages (far beyond the fleeting electronic technologies that seem so ubiquitous). We are proud to say that OLM is contributing significantly to the patrimony of the arts of our Catholic Church.
- We have supplied most of our classrooms (and all of our new classrooms) with audio-visual equipment.
- We have implemented electronic giving, and for those giving electronically, we have provided cards in the pews that they can put in the collection basket to denote they give electronically.

What could we do better?

- We are in the midst of planning and implementing a major re-design and update of our parish website. Our goal is to make the site even more user-friendly and to better interface with ever expanding social media tools.
- We do catechesis online through our website, but also by accessing modern programs that are designed for long distance catechesis. But the question is, no matter how sophisticated we get, how do we get our people to pay attention?
- The parish made a conscious effort to reduce the size of our bulletin some years ago based on cost and environmental concerns. Our hope was that more people would look to their computers in this so-called paperless society. We continue to monitor this for progress.
- Although we complain about parishioners not reading the bulletin, how many go to the website? How many use the internet? It is always a challenge to communicate to our people and there are no perfect solutions.
- CFF has a Facebook Group. Of the 90+ families enrolled in CFF, only 17 have signed on as friends, even though we have advertised and asked families to take advantage of it. Although we have great technology, we need to find a way to get folks to use it!

What could we start doing?

- Parish ministries might begin to look at the parish Facebook page as a way to communicate to folks in a different way, and by so doing, we would have more people looking at the parish Facebook page.
- Our parish might look to expanding outreach by initiating “virtual classroom” opportunities through webinars and skype.

## ADULT CATECHESIS AND THE EXPLAINING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

It goes without saying that there has been a catechetical crisis in our Church in recent generations. We can look to the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* under the exceptional years of St. John Paul II as a turning point that helped us find our footing after a period of ambiguity and confusion. But there are those

who have been left uncertain in the Faith, as they were formed during that period before the publication of the *Catechism* when uncertainty abounded. Moreover, because we are far-flung and most of our people live in a world where public education is our only option, there is no small amount of ignorance about our Faith. We know that our work in CFF is supposed to be auxiliary, but do our parents have the foundation in the Faith that they need to pass on our Faith? Consequently, we recognize that adult formation is an essential component to our future. We cannot just allow CFF to be all there is in a world so indifferent and even hostile to our Catholic Faith.

What are we doing well?

- Because we lack space for adult catechesis, we are encouraging our adults to use the formation tools available on CDs, DVDs, and online. These are being used within small group discussions on and off campus, and some are being accessed by individuals in the comfort of their homes. These include subjects offered under the FORMED Program (to which OLM has a subscription), Fr. Barron's *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, *Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained* (Augustine Institute DVD/license), and Lighthouse Catholic Media. We also keep our parish library well stocked with books and DVDs for our adults to use.
- As we have already said, our parish website has been an excellent tool for adult formation as well.
- We rescheduled our Wednesday daily Mass from the morning to the evening with hopes that more of our working adults would be able to come to at least one Mass during the week. We also are encouraging our different adult groups to see that Wednesday Mass as an anchor for their own meetings.
- We also encourage on-going adult formation throughout the year through our Didache Wednesdays, wherein we attend Mass, and afterwards, go down to our Parish Hall for a pot-luck dinner and presentation on some aspect of our Faith.
- Most Advent, Christmas, Lenten, and Easter Seasons, the parish gives out books and/or CDs relevant to the season to our families. We also have on hand pamphlets on various subjects throughout the year to help them better understand and appreciate their Faith.

What could we do better?

- The irregularity of adult formation lectures makes it hard to plan around them consistently. Some effort might be made to find a more predictable schedule for these events, recognizing the difficulty of reserving what limited space we have for so many different activities. We must also consider the vicissitudes of the liturgical year that might make a regular schedule of lectures difficult. Again, we could examine the possibility of offering the “virtual classroom” to adults, especially the homebound.
- Our *Conversations on Catholicism* between the Masses is very popular, but it is also very crowded. We need to create a better space for adults to meet. If we could, we are certain there would be much more interest in adult formation.
- Emphasis on the Domestic Church is key. How can we share what we do not know? And while knowledge is not essential to become Catholic (as we baptize infants, and, in the case of emergencies, even confirm them), knowledge is essential to living the Catholic life. The more we help others live their Faith at home, at work, and in their daily lives, the better.
- Many Catholics are not even aware of how little they know about their faith. Can we prepare a list of topics that a well-educated Catholic should know and have? Maybe we should design a curriculum to provide the education for these knowledge gaps. Can we do this education in small groups at home versus having these sessions at church? Maybe a quiz online or in the bulletin, with answers being given the following week?
- Someway, we must educate our older parishioners in the use of the website and Facebook page, and then use both to educate our parishioners. We can continue to make both places where parishioners want to go to. Also, we could offer classes to help those uncomfortable with computers learn how to access the tools available.

What could we start doing?

- We do not have regularly scheduled missions throughout the year. We might encourage a men’s and a women’s mission or retreat or day of reflection annually, to allow one parent to stay home with the children so as to encourage the other parent to come to the mission or day of reflection. Gender-specific talks could benefit those present, and ultimately make our marriages and families stronger.



- Sunday Lunch & Learn might also be an idea worth exploring, where guest speakers stay after Mass on Sundays, and we have a bag lunch or potluck for those who can stay. It is so difficult to get our busy adults to church throughout the week, or even our retired parishioners to come down off their mountains too many times over the course of the week, so we might try something like this to see if it would be appreciated.
- Childcare during the adult sessions would greatly increase adult participation. For this, we need several adults and teens who are competent and reliable as well as certified by the Archdiocese Virtus Program. We could consider paying them.

## PASSING ON OUR CATHOLIC FAITH TO THE NEXT GENERATION

OLM has made a transformation in recent years. It was not that long ago a parish for retirees, but in recent years, it has become a parish with many young families. Some of these families are home schoolers, and they do their own religious education within the context of their daily studies (for as we know, parents are the primary educators of their children).

- OLM is generally too remote for our families to benefit from Catholic schools. Every year, we give towards Catholics schools that are far away and that are far too expensive for most of our people to use.
- OLM does offer a consortium for those participating families who are connected to the Mother Seton Home School program. Twice a week, these families come together at OLM for a more traditional school-like environment for tutorial support, teaching guidance, and Catholic spiritual and social engagement.
- OLM also accommodates other hybrid home schools like Regina Caeli Academy. They have gathered at OLM for several events in years past.

Other families are integrated into public education, which of course rejects, as a matter of principle, a Christian formation. These parents are also the ones who are primarily responsible for their children's education in the Faith (which is essential to the salvation of both parent and child), so our parish offers religious education for our youth as an auxiliary support to these parent's efforts. We call our education

program Catholic Faith Formation (CFF), and we are proud of how we have evolved and adapted to meet the changing demographics of our small but vibrant parish with the help of so many volunteers.

What are we doing well?

- In recent years, we have more than doubled our space for religious education, buying a temporary trailer that gives us two large classrooms, and building our youth Barn with ample space for our teens in middle school and high school. The small classrooms in the basement were opened up to make larger spaces to accommodate more children.
- We have tried to decorate each room on a different theme, as the spaces that our children grow up in helps to teach them some things about the Faith.
- We are blessed to have great catechist teams. Our Anglo catechists have all passed background checks and are certified, or are in the process of being certified.
- Our CFF has classes for children from kindergarten to sixth grade (we had to cancel our preschool class this year due to lack of space).
  - We use Ignatius Press, *Faith & Life Series*, 3rd Edition, for grades 1-6 and a Loyola Press Program for Kindergarten.
  - These students meet in the basement classrooms and trailer.
- Our middle school is called IMPACT (I'm a Motivated, Practicing, Active, Catholic Teen) and includes those in seventh and eighth grades.
  - They, too, use Ignatius Press, *Faith & Life Series*, 3rd Edition.
  - They also use an Ascension Press Bible study called *Encounter*.
  - They meet in the lower level of the Barn.
- Our high school student program is called Living in the Light (LITL).
  - They use the following books, all from Ascension Press:
    - *Chosen—Teen Faith Formation*,
    - *Chosen—Your Journey toward Confirmation*, and
    - *Altaration—The mystery of the Mass Revealed*.
  - We also stress an historical component that is often missing in religious education for teens. We divide Church history into periods of time, and one of our catechists gives a class, or classes, on each time period.
  - The teens gather on Wednesday nights for a more casual time of fun and fellowship called JOLT (Just Our LITL Teens).
  - We had COURAGE in for a talk about chastity.
  - We have had NET Ministries conduct several retreats over the years.
  - They meet in the upper level of the Barn.

- We also promote learning that is specific to our nation, region, and parish.
  - For example, we try to teach each child going through CFF about the Five Georgia Martyrs.
  - The classrooms in the Barn are dedicated to American Catholics like Mother Seton, Fr. Seelos, St. Kateri, and Prince Gallitzin.
  - We offer our LITL teens the chance to go on four Southern Catholic Heritage Pilgrimages in a four-year cycle, so they can understand their own history. The destinations are:
    - 1) St. Augustine, Florida, to learn about 16th century Spanish Colonial Catholicism;
    - 2) Chesapeake Bay area, D.C., and Maryland, to learn about 17th century English Colonial Catholicism;
    - 3) New Orleans to learn about 18th century French Colonial Catholicism; and
    - 4) Macon and Savannah to learn about Irish immigration and Georgia Catholic history primarily in the 19th century.
- We follow the 2002 Archdiocesan Guidelines for the Sacraments of Initiation and Penance, and have preparation for infant Baptism, preparation for First Penance and First Communion in second grade, and preparation for Confirmation, usually in tenth grade.
- We also have a wonderful youth choir. The children love to learn chants, and they help with liturgies throughout the year. Learning the liturgy is one of the best ways to pass along the Faith to the next generation of leaders.

What could we do better?

- Improving and enlarging our physical space would be a good long-range plan (trailers are not ideal).
- Working towards integrating our Anglo and Hispanic religious education classes is an important goal. All these children go to school together, but we separate them for religious education. Oftentimes, the children would benefit more from instruction in English (the language they understand better). The reason we have this separation is lack of space, but also because the parents want their children to be taught in Spanish and to come to a Spanish Mass (which is the language their generation understands better). Regardless, one place we already integrate the two groups is in the high school classes of religious instruction.

- We need to work on keeping our youth in religious instruction until they graduate high school, which means we need to work on their parents! Parents let sports or other activities eclipse religious education, or just stop insisting that their kids go to “Sunday School.” When you total up the number of hours OLM has to catechize children in CFF, it is clear that unless there is significant religious education occurring at home for these public-educated children, their level of catechesis will not be high (we keep stressing, ours is an auxiliary role to their parents). We need to somehow get the parents to put the Faith first in their priorities, not have it as an afterthought, or consider it only when they have nothing ‘better’ to do.
- Often our remoteness from Atlanta makes it impractical for us to benefit from some of the things offered closer to the city for young people, for example, Spirit & Truth Eucharistic Adoration Groups, To Encounter Christ, and On the Deck. If we could maybe start auxiliary arms of these groups in some outlying towns closer to Jasper, we might get our young people to participate more in living their Faith outside of the church proper.
- We invariably have those in “catch up” mode, those who missed, or even bypassed, the normal system for religious education, but are now looking for Confirmation. These young adults (and sometimes older folks!) need their own catechesis in preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation, so we should try to develop such classes.

What could we start doing?

- Having more organized summer programs offered annually (like VBS-sort of things) might be appreciated and a better way to augment our program. This is something that needs enthusiastic, vibrant volunteers and a director who is paid a stipend for his or her efforts. Getting young people to realize how blessed we are would be a great thing.
- We have families who would like a fulltime Catholic school in this area. Would it be possible to combine efforts with nearby parishes to make this a reality?

## A MISSION TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL

Cardinal Dulles once observed that too often in the modern mind we have come to replace proclamation with dialogue. It is good to be able to speak amicably among

our neighbors, but we do have a responsibility to proclaim Christ crucified, risen, exalted, and adored. Catholics in the Protestant South have always been somewhat guarded in this, and to Dulles' points, too often official efforts in the Church seem more based on dialogue rather than on proclamation. What then, if anything, can we do as a parish to spread the Gospel in this part of rural Georgia?

What are we doing well?

- We work ecumenically to promote local charities like North Georgia Pregnancy Center, Head Start, C.A.R.E.S. Food Pantry, the Community Thrift Store and many other charities in our community.
- Our St. Vincent de Paul Society is great and serves a very diverse group of people. The Society is well known in Pickens County and has folks sent to them from numerous charitable organizations and churches within the county. The Society members make it a point to talk with their clients about the Faith, to try to make their clients know that they care not just for their bodies, but also their souls.
- Our Legion of Mary members make regular visits to the folks in the local nursing homes. They often end up making friends and praying with people of different faiths. This interaction has led to some converts to Catholicism.
- The catechists and children in our CFF program prepare packets for the homeless on a quarterly basis and include something about our Faith in each packet.
- We create a welcoming environment, and have an open heart to our neighbors. We have worked to make the church more beautiful, so as to attract visitors. We place stories in the local newspaper about special events at OLM, encouraging some within the community who may never have dreamed of visiting a Catholic church to know that they are welcome.
- We offer the parish as a location for blood drives, and health screenings, and for various non-Catholic ministries like Overeaters Anonymous and Al-Anon.
- Our parish website and Facebook page have both reached further for evangelization than our geographical parish limits.
- We have sponsored concerts for the local community. This autumn, we are having an open house to invite locals to see our new stained glass windows. We will also have an organ concert to take place during the open house.
- We have meetings called *Conversations on Catholicism* on Sundays during the school year in conjunction with CFF, so that those interested in becoming Catholic can find a place to learn about the Faith.

What could we do better?

- Our Legion of Mary members are prayerfully considering door-to-door evangelization, going out to the people of our community one home at a time.

What could we start doing?

- Advertising would be fun! Several years ago, we delivered information about our Masses, etc., to various motels and other places people might check to find out about a Catholic Church.
- Our parish is beautiful enough to attract visitors, which is another opportunity to evangelize, so we could try to encourage visitors.

## INTEGRATING OUR PARISH (OR HAVING A “WELCOMING” PARISH)

Following are some practical observations, in particular with regards to our Hispanic community. We sometimes have a situation where we seem to be running two parallel parishes, sharing the same space, but never seeing each other. We have been working hard towards integrating our parish and overcoming this separation.

What are we doing well?

- Fr. Byrd, our pastor, does not speak Spanish well, but he is competent enough to offer Mass and preach in Spanish. He tries his best to otherwise aid our Hispanic community. This has helped integrate them into the parish.
- Since we have a large Mexican component to our Hispanic community, Fr. Byrd came up with the idea of a Cristeros Festival. Most of the Mexicans had never heard of the Cristeros, and our Knights of Columbus hadn't either, although historically that time in history connected the Knights of Columbus in the U.S. with the suffering Church in Mexico. Above all, the Festival would stress the heroism of those Catholics who endured those terrible times in Mexico. The Mexican community embraced the idea, and last year (2015) we held our first Festival. It was a great success! It drew our Anglo parishioners in and helped them meet our Hispanic parishioners while enjoying Mexican culture and their food. The two communities came together in this, and it has born much good fruit. It has also helped to highlight some of the social woes of Mexico, and stress the faithful connection we share as brothers and sisters in Christ. We had our second Festival this year and it, too, was a great success.

- We try to encourage integration by celebrating certain days within the liturgical calendar as a community, and include Spanish in those celebrations (mainly Christmas and the Triduum).
- We recently added a retablo of Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- We have added an icon of Blessed Miguel Pro to represent our Cristeros martyrs.
- We have added icons of Leander and Isidore of Spain (icons painted in Mexico).
- We now have representatives from our Hispanic community on our Pastoral Council and Finance Council.
- It isn't just the Hispanics who are not integrated. The nature of our parish is such that folks go to this or that Mass and never meet the people who attend the other Masses. We've tried to work to overcome this separation, too.
  - We have produced articles for our website about the history of Catholics in north Georgia and in particular Pickens County, so that our people can get a sense of the hardship and the efforts made by the priests and people of the Church in those early days to bring and live the Faith in this area.
  - We chose a Parish Feast Day and celebrate it with Mass and a picnic on the grounds. We end the day with Adoration. Our Feast Day has become a tradition and pulls in a good cross-section of our parishioners.
  - We moved our Wednesday morning Mass to the evening to try to encourage our ministries to anchor their gatherings on that day to help us come more together as a parish.

What could we do better?

- We would much appreciate being assigned a deacon who speaks both English and Spanish to help Fr. Byrd reach out and interact with our Hispanic parishioners.
- Our training sessions for EMs, altar servers, and readers need to better integrate the Hispanics in our parish. We have made some progress in this area, but need to do more.
- We want to teach both communities to sing the Mass parts in Latin so when we come together, we have a shared repertoire of music.

What could we start doing?

- Our parish is wheelchair accessible on the main level, but there is no elevator.

- We don't have a ministry for the deaf or blind, although two years ago, when a deaf Spanish student needed help, one of our parents stepped up and volunteered.

## LIVING OUR FAITH

### WORSHIP IS ESSENTIAL IN LIVING OUT OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

At OLM, we take prayer and liturgy very seriously. One hour a week is when we give something back to God in thanksgiving for all He has given us. Therefore, we strive to make our worship as sacred and worthy of God as we can.

What are we doing well?

- We began a Liturgy Committee six years ago to help prepare for the introduction of our new translation of the Roman Missal, and to provide for better planning and understanding with regards to the liturgy. Members of the Liturgy Committee are expected to have read through the GIRM, and some other documents from the Vatican with regards to the liturgy so they have a foundation upon which to start this important work. This has been a great success.
- We have a great liturgical music program. We endeavor to follow the GIRM and Vatican documents joyfully, and thereby benefit greatly through the richness of the liturgy. The music program at OLM is exemplary, and it is recognized by parishioners and guests to be an extraordinary treasure and gift, and one that other parishes look to for leadership and example.
- Investing in liturgy is essential. Seven years ago, we had no permanent hymnals or missals, no sheet music, no piano or organ, no budgets laid aside for a choirmaster, organist, pianist, cantors, or instruments. Getting the budgets in place and investing in the resources have been essential to our progress. Now we have these things, and it helps us attract better musicians. We also have a parish liturgical music coordinator who helps us move forward in measured ways.
- Our other ministry programs work great together (lectors, EMOHC, ushers, and greeters).
- Our altar servers work hard and give great example. We are very, very proud of them, and their skill level, and their commitment to prayer and service.



- Similarly, we have made significant investments in liturgical vesture for both a priest and deacon, with matching seasonal frontals to adorn our altar and mark liturgical changes. Our altar linens now suit and fit our altar. We have also invested in dignified altarware and candles appropriate for our altar.
- We strive for balance in the use of Latin and English, Latin for special Liturgical seasons, English for Ordinary Time.

What could we do better?

- For great feasts like the Easter Vigil, Midnight Christmas Mass, and certain Triduum liturgies, we endeavor to have some trilingual Masses (English, Latin, and Spanish) so as to draw our communities together on those great liturgies. More effort might be made towards that end.
- We hired a pianist for the Spanish Mass who can read music. We invested in resources for that community, too. The challenges are literacy, language, and money. Our congregation doesn't read music, our cantors who can read music can't speak Spanish, and the Spanish community doesn't give financially in an amount that is sufficient to bring in more support. We need to find ways to improve this situation.
- We have had too much turnover in our Altar Guild, but that situation has now stabilized. We hope to be more consistent in maintaining the level of excellence that our worship requires.

What could we start doing?

- We might try to encourage Sunday adoration, vespers, and benediction. We tried once before, but our people are too far flung, and they have no real experience for this beautiful devotion. Maybe with more catechesis and planning, we could try again. It was called for by Vatican II, and it is a beautiful way to end a Sunday.
- We might try to implement a 40-hour adoration sponsored by one of our organizations once a year. We in fact are planning one for the 2017 Lenten season.

## CHARITY IS ALSO ESSENTIAL IN LIVING OUT OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

OLM is a very generous parish. We do much to help our fellowmen in Pickens County.

What are we doing well?

- Our St. Vincent de Paul Society is known throughout Pickens County for its generosity in helping financially strapped individuals and families. In addition, they have a Family Uplift program to help families rise up out of poverty and become productive citizens.
- Our Knights of Columbus help sponsor an annual Mardi Gras Charity event which benefits Georgia Mountain Hospice. They are active in our parish community helping widows and single mothers maintain their homes in good working condition.
- Our Women's Guild sponsors a raffle every fall to benefit Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cancer Home.
- The teens who are being prepared for Confirmation do service projects throughout the area. We also host teens from Tampa Jesuit High School for a week every summer; their mission is to help folks in our area by cutting grass, trimming hedges, painting, etc., for those unable to do so themselves.
- The children in our Catholic Faith Formation program do projects throughout the year that benefit people in our community and beyond.
- Our parish contributes generously to several collections for local charities.
- As Catholics, we show charity with love, and love requires truth and doctrine on some level. Given that, we include here the work we do for the least of those among us (the unborn).
  - We have a St. Gianna Molla Pro-life Ministry.
  - We support the North Georgia Pregnancy Center.
  - We support Life Images in their work to provide ultrasounds to pregnant mothers.

What could we do better? / What could we start doing?

- At this point, we are doing just about as much as our resources allow.

## SUPPORT FOR LIVING OUT OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

What are we doing well?

- We offer daily Mass (save for Tuesdays and Saturday mornings) and we lead the recitation of the Rosary before daily Mass.

- We offer an hour of Adoration on First Fridays.
- We offer regularly scheduled times for Confession.
- We have taught Lectio Divina, and have a Bible study every Monday. (One of the challenges here is that many of our parishioners live on different mountains far away from one another. As a result, some have teamed up with Protestant neighbors to study the Word of God within their own far-flung neighborhoods.)
- We encourage our faithful to read through the daily readings, pray the Divine Office, and own a *Catechism* (and read it).
- Women of Grace meets once a month.
- We have a subscription to Formed, so that our parishioners can learn more about their Faith by using this online resource.
- We have a Spanish prayer group that meets once a week.
- In previous years, we sponsored the *Christ Renews His Parish* program.

What could we do better?

- We should work on and improve the domestic Church theme.

What could we start doing?

- We're thinking about adding a poetry and literary society.

## COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL IN LIVING OUT OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

OLM is an isolated parish in a deanery that is stretched thin from here to Chattanooga. We work well with our deanery and try to collaborate, but in truth, we are far closer to other neighboring parishes that are not in our deanery. Still, OLM does see its work as collaborative within the broader church.

How has OLM been collaborative in the support of the broader Church?

- We started the St. Ambrose School of Chant, and sponsored numerous workshops for parish musicians, drawing people from states and parishes around the region (beyond not just the deanery, but even the province). The Summer Sacred Music Workshop, Clergy Chant Workshop, and Workshop of the Basic Chants of the Funeral Rite were offered this past year.

- This year, OLM is teaming up with the Basilica in Chattanooga for another Summer Sacred Music Workshop there.

## EVOLUTION OF THE PARISH

### PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE

What plans have we developed from the Pastoral Plan process, and how can we better implement those plans?

### MORE IMMEDIATE NEEDS WITH REGARDS TO THE PARISH CAMPUS

- We would like to create a large, casual space, like a Cenacle or upper room, for our adults to be able to receive some education while their children are in their catechism classes.
- We need a music room so that our choirs can rehearse in their own place before Mass instead of in the church proper.
- We'd like a choir loft to give our growing choir more space. As it is now, it is crowded into a wing of the church to the side of the altar.
- We need permanent rooms to replace our existing trailer.
- We need a place or office for our deacon.
- A picnic pavilion of some kind would help us with socials throughout the year.

### PASTORAL NEEDS

- We need volunteer sacristans to form an Altar Guild that is more than just one or two people.
- We need someone to help us with annulments (we are in the process of developing some case sponsors).
- We need a full time deacon (ours is retired and helps out as he can); a bilingual deacon would be ideal.
- We need someone to coordinate weddings (and possibly marriage prep).
- We need someone to coordinate funerals.