

Saint Isidore and Maria Torribia Parish

Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Our Mission

*We are a Catholic Community of faith
united in our Love for Jesus Christ.*

*We strive to maintain and carry the message of hope
and salvation to others through our works
of evangelization and examples of sacramental life.*

Our Vision

We will promote a stable Parish with a vibrant, spiritually nourishing, learning environment to grow ourselves and others as disciples of Christ.

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Why Plan?

The benefits of planning—particularly a strategic plan for an organization—are many fold. Not only must we provide “spiritual nourishment” for our current parishioners, but we must also grow future generations in the faith as well as evangelize more people who hunger for what only Christ can provide and the Catholic Church can facilitate so beautifully.

With the ultimate goal of meeting the parish’s mission and achieving our vision, the strategic plan provides a formal, written, and agreed-to document for guiding the way ahead.

Importantly, a strategic plan guides and informs our budgeting and fund execution. Thus, we know:

- What to budget for and
- Just as importantly, *when* to budget for it, while
- Prioritizing funding between competing goals—
- All in a deliberate sequence.

A Short History of How We Got Here

Circa late 2018, our parish experienced a relatively sudden financial crisis, brought on by numerous factors, such as declining enrollment, our youth slowly slipping or moving out of the area—among other causes. The crisis was so severe that the reality of having our parish closed loomed large and very real.

To combat the crisis, a dedicated team of parishioners met routinely for over a year, supported by professional facilitators and financial advisors provided by the Diocese. It’s not an exaggeration to say that this team saved the parish and righted our financially floundering parish.

But once the “ship was righted,” the need to prevent a similar financial crisis was recognized, and elements of the former planning team and new members morphed into the strategic planning team.

The Planning Process

The newly formed strategic planning team followed a traditional strategic planning approach, by identifying:

- A new vision statement to support our current mission statement.
- Our Parish’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—i.e., performing a “SWOT analysis. (See Attachment 1)
- Brainstorming sessions to identify overarching goals to leverage our strengths, mitigate our weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and reduce threats.

The brainstorming sessions and follow-on discussions, ending with seven (7) overarching goals and then suggested objectives to meet those overarching goals.

While the Parish is dedicated to the specific goals at this time (but do see where you can provide feedback), the objectives to meet those goals are still seen as “semi-solid” to allow goal teams some flexibility and innovativeness to achieve the overarching goals.

Our Proposed Strategic Plan

The following is our proposed Strategic Plan for Calendar Years 2023-8.

Goal 1. Establish Stability Within the Parish.

1.1 Create a sense of community and connection to increase Parish loyalty through frequent communication and encouraging parishioner volunteerism and involvement.

1.2. Outreach to current Parish members. Note: outreach to non-Parish members, or Parish members not seen for some time, is discussed under Goal 6, Evangelize.

1.3. Identify parishioner talent.

1.4. Publish a Parish directory.

1.5. Establish a Liturgical Steering Committee.

1.6. Accentuate Parish missions, e.g., respect for life.

Goal 2. Grow and Retain the Next Generation.

2.1. Start a Youth Group, by reaching out to parents with young children/teens.

- Consider different groups for 4-6 , 7-8, and 9-12 grades.
- Identify/recruit parents with children who would be interested.

2.2 Hold a Children’s Mass.

2.3 Encourage and recruit altar servers.

2.4. Explore purchasing Children’s Literature.

Goal 3. Create a Music Program

3.1. Explore a paid Music Director.

3.2. Explore the adequacy of current sound systems in each church.

3.3. Explore technology, e.g., big screen TV's with preferably retractable screens and other supporting information technology to help parishioners see the words of each hymn.

Goal 4. Promote Faith Formation

4.1. Provide an opportunity for Bible study.

4.2. Implement/Promote FORMED—an online repository with many Catholic subjects for parishioners of all ages.

4.3. Standardize the Religious Education Program within the Parish.

Goal 5. Explore, Invest, and Leverage Information Technology Within the Parish.

5.1. Explore new website provider, e.g., Webley vs. using WordPress, the current website provider for the Parish.

5.2. Identify features of other Parishes' websites.

Goal 6. Evangelize

6.1. Foster a welcoming community.

6.2. Hold more community events.

6.3. Reach out to non-Parish members or Parish members who have not been seen in sometime.

6.4. Train the Evangelist.

6.5. Marketing plans to spread the message.

Goal 7. Establish Building Maintenance Plan for Improved Services

7.1. Establish Safety procedures (e.g., active shooter).

7.2. Establish unique maintenance plans for each church in the parish.

So What Happens Next?

Plans are wonderful and necessary. The typical problem with “the plan,” however, is nearly always with the plan’s execution in working toward achieving objectives that lead to meeting overarching goals.

This is where you come in.

Yes, you.

First, your thoughts . . .

For a period of thirty (30) days, the parish will post this plan on our website/provide hard copies at each of the churches to allow you a chance to review the plan and provide feedback.

Your feedback on the goals and objectives will be sincerely appreciated. Would you add or subtract anything—(and tell us why you feel that way)?

Have a suggestion for the given order/timing of goals and their objectives? Again, let us know (and tell us why you think that)!

Send your comments via email to ssimt@dor.org, or email Joe Crance at jbcms2@gmail.com.

Then your follow-on participation . . .

While some elements of the strategic planning team (i.e., obviously our pastor, deacons, and a few more) will stay onboard to help guide the overall plan and report progress/issues to the Parish Council, we need volunteers to help lead and support the various goals and their objectives.

Do you need to be an expert in a given goal area to participate? While some level of expertise would be ideal—e.g., if you're good with information technology or sound systems, Goal 5 is for you!—being a guru in a given area isn't absolutely necessary. A willingness to learn, support in an administrative way, or just do research for any goal's objective, "full" or part time on a goal team, all would be great!

If you're interested in becoming part of the solution and helping grow and support our Parish, please contact the Parish office by phone at (607) 359-2115 or email us at ssimt@dor.org, or email Joe Crance at jbcms2@gmail.com.

Attachment 1: The SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)—What are they, and why should we care?

To get “there,” we need a firm understanding of the “here (and now).” By analyzing our parish’s internal strengths and weaknesses, while assessing external opportunities and threats, we can build a viable strategic plan with a good chance of success.

Terms explained:

- Internal to the organization are:
 - Strengths:** our current assets and talents we can leverage to meet our Vision/Mission
 - Weaknesses:** the lack of assets or talents needed that hamper or even restrict our ability to achieve our Vision/Mission
- External to the organization are:
 - Opportunities:** avenues we can/should take advantage of to help achieve our Vision/Mission
 - Threats:** external elements that act as viable inability/opposition to achieve our Vision/Mission

The completed SWOT Analysis is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis for Ss Isidore and Maria Torribia Parish.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacraments/Traditions • The Mass/Homilies • Community 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of reverence for the Liturgical rite • Education/Knowledge of the Faith • Reaching the homebound • Lack of “follow through” • Community outreach • Missing 18–30-year-olds
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Being there” for parishioners • Leveraging (even more) technology. e.g., social media, email blasts, videos, education • Benchmarking with other parishes 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memories of past scandals • Lukewarm Catholics • Gravitating toward other churches • Others’ view of Catholics as a “closed society” • People cannot “relate” • Lack of understanding about the Mass, Service, and The Church itself