

## **Infusion of Faith at Work into Parish Life**

### **St. Martha Parish Akron, Ohio**

1. Parish Pastoral Council revised mission statement with much discussion among all parishioners—including an emphasis upon living faith in daily life.
2. Throughout the year and especially on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the pastoral staff reminds parishioners that the Lord God calls every believer through baptism to Christian commitment and service in daily life and work, that each Christian has a vocation, a mission, and is gifted and powered by the Holy Spirit to live out this call.
3. The parish celebrates an annual Lay Ministry Sunday in which it recognizes and appreciates not only the internal church ministries but also the ministry or service that people do in their daily lives at home, at work, and in the wider community.
4. Small Christian communities: Between 160 and 200 parishioners, who have been in small groups for between 10 and 15 years, reflect on upcoming gospels. The questions used include prompts for taking a look at how the integration of faith and work can be improved.
5. A core group of small Christian communities meets regularly to determine how to infuse the faith and daily life connection in all the parish does. One member of this core group serves on the pastoral council to remind the members of this emphasis.
6. Labor Day weekend: The focus at all the liturgies is on renewing people's commitment to live out their work lives as a form of Christian service. A bulletin insert focuses on reflections and practical suggestions for doing this. At times a person has witnessed after communion about how he or she integrates faith and work.
7. During one liturgical year, the weekly bulletin included questions for individuals and groups to consider related to strengthening the connection of faith to daily life and work.

8. Homilies and general intercessions throughout the year include workplace examples, some of them coming from discussions with parishioners.
9. Preaching on how to foster social justice awareness and commitment within work and the importance of church people as insiders making a difference in work and public life.
10. Held discussion groups after Mass to reflect upon Scripture and church teachings that call the laity to recognize their fundamental role in transforming the world within their own sphere of influence.
11. On occasion, when Sunday Scriptures focus on a theme such as healing, serving others, teaching, and/or counseling, people engaged in a specific occupation relating to the Scriptures theme have been asked to stand and to be blessed in their work.
12. In the fall when it is recommended to bless the Catholic school and CCD teachers, parish includes all teachers, including those at public schools.
13. In preparing lectors and Eucharistic ministers, asking and reflecting upon the question "How does one live this ministry in daily life and work?"
14. Regular emphasis that the dismissal rite at the end of mass calls people to go into their own mission fields of daily life to serve the Lord there.
15. Within sacramental preparation for reconciliation among youth and parents, emphasize people taking an inventory of their daily life and work and acknowledging in what circumstances they need further conversion.
16. Within parish communal penance services mentioning work concerns within the examination of conscience.
17. Publicize area wide vocational reflection groups for people to join to strengthen the faith-work connection.
18. Held the first "God Revives Our World" mission -- four evening emphasis upon discipleship in daily living. The themes, one for each evening:
  - Where in the World Is Our God?
  - How in the World Do We Relate?
  - What in the World Do We Do and Why in the World Do We Do It?
  - How in the World Do We Make a Difference?

19. RCIA and confirmation preparation and interviews focus in part on how to live out faith at work (whether as a student, homemaker, volunteer, or for paid employment), includes speakers' offering their own faith-work experiences.
20. Marriage preparation, and baptism preparation and interviews include a focus on the lifelong baptismal call and on the issue of careers/jobs and their impact on marriage and parenting.
21. In funeral homilies include any pertinent reflections on the deceased person's work life.
22. Time, talent, and treasure surveys and new parishioners' interviews include an emphasis upon Christian stewardship in daily life and work. Affirm this perspective especially on Stewardship Sunday.
23. People have gone into the grade school and to high school PSR to talk to students about their work and how it is influenced by their faith.
24. Parish retreat was focused upon work related concerns.
25. Lenten series was centered upon ethical issues in our daily lives and work.
26. Social justice program focused upon racial understanding and reconciliation in daily life and work.
27. Family life programs/retreats emphasized importance of being centered and balanced in responding to multiple responsibilities in daily life, exploration of how to set priorities and yet stay open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.
28. Men's group meets monthly and regularly includes a focus on work concerns.
29. Seniors group has reflected upon the meaning of retirement, the value of volunteering, the importance of continuing to make a positive contribution, including mentoring and grand parenting with a faith dimension.
30. Highlight opportunities for evangelization in the workplace—by example and by conversation—when appropriate.
31. Parishioners have been encouraged to participate in a variety of area wide Heart to Heart Communications activities that emphasize the faith-work connection.