



St. Mary of the Valley Catholic Church P.O. Box 279 Monroe, WA 98272
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2024-2029 PASTORAL PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT



Blessed to live in this beautiful valley, we are Christians, in union with Pope Francis and Archbishop Etienne, who strive to lift up Jesus, love one another and make disciples.

[~ Fr. Phillip Bloom, Pastor](#)

GRATITUDE'S AND HOPES

Gratitude:

1. Grateful for our Heavenly Father that created us and blessed us, and calls each of us to be a servant; knowing that everything we do good comes from Christ alone.
2. Grateful for our Parish; a beacon of Love, Faith & Friendship, where we are loved and wanted, in a world that needs not to think of oneself but more of giving oneself to help others.
3. Grateful for the Chapel in our church, where we develop our relationship with God, and where we have a place for prayer.
4. Grateful for the Spanish speaking parishioners, reverent, active, involved, and very family oriented.
5. Grateful for the comradery of our Knights of Columbus brothers; men who do good works.

Hope:

1. Hopeful that our canonical Parish family will grow together in continued Love, Stewardship, and true belief in Jesus Christ, diverse, united and stronger; and that our union be reflected in love for each other, like the first Christian Community.
2. Hopeful that the three churches will join together their like ministries when needed, to fulfill community needs such as community dinners, clothing the poor, and providing for the extended community as well.
3. Hopeful that our Parish family can advance our programs for Confirmed youth, and for young families, to support them and build strong faith foundations.

INTRODUCTION TO 2024-2029 PASTORAL PLAN. I MADE THESE NOTES IN RESPONSE TO THE ARCHDIOCESAN REQUEST TO INFORM THE NEW PASTOR OF CHARISMS AND GIFTS OF ST. MARY OF THE VALLEY.

St. Mary of the Valley is located in one of the most beautiful areas of Washington. Situated near the convergence of the Skykomish and Snoqualmie Rivers, it has been a trading and commercial center going back to the indigenous people before white settlers arrived. In the nineteenth century, the rivers served for transport of lumber to Everett. The fertile valley made it a magnet for farmers.

Among these adventuresome folk were Catholics who founded St. Mary Parish in 1913. It was not easy being a Catholic because of the presence of the Klan and other anti-Catholic elements in the dominant culture. Still, Catholics proved themselves loyal citizens whose sons became soldiers and whose daughters served the community in schools and health care.

St. Mary Parish had a series of pastors, many of them outstanding priests. I remember Fr. Jon Frankovic from my seminary days. Known as the “motorcycle priest”, cancer struck him at a young age. Parishioners cared for him in the rectory until his death on July 19, 1992 at the age of 50. He served nine years as pastor of St. Mary of the Valley.

One of my heroes is Fr. Joseph Petosa who served from 1966 to 1971. I admired his love for family, his devotion to the Catholic Church “warts and all” and his example of spiritual fatherhood.

Before Fr. Petosa, however, Monroe had one of the one of the worst abusers in the history of the archdiocese. To this day, families suffer wounds that go back to him.

St. Mary also suffered because of short term pastors, including men who left the priesthood. When I completed 11 years, I became longest serving pastor in parish history. I don't blame my predecessors, but the sense of short-term fathers made many feel a lack of trust.

In contrast, St. Mary of the Valley was blessed by Sister Barbara who served the parish for over 35 years. Her funeral in February of 2018 was a large community event with participation of police and fire fighters whom she served as chaplain.

Because of the positive experience with Sister Barbara, many parishioners were eager to have another sister serving at our parish. We were blessed in 2019 with the arrival of Sister Carmen Trejo. Her service responds to the explosive growth of Hispanic Catholics that began in 80's. St. Mary of the Valley had the first regular Spanish Mass in Snohomish County, thanks to the vision of Fr. Joseph Tyson, now bishop of Yakima.

My predecessor, Michael Obrien, recruited Anita Maceda as parish administrator (P.A.A. - Pastoral Associate for Administration). Her successor, Veronica Mendez, also has very good administrative skills, along with a personal knowledge of the Hispanic Community and parish in general.

Our parish council has focused on issues of racial justice and diversity, in coordination with the Racial Justice and Cultural Diversity Commission of the Archdiocese. Besides Hispanic families, we also have Indigenous, Black, Filipino, Korean, Indian, Pakistan, Nigerian, Kenyan, as well as parishioners from other parts of the world. Each one enriches our parish and broader community.

At the same time, we value European descent families and elderly who provide the anchor for St. Mary of the Valley Parish. We recognize the importance of integrating non-Hispanic families into our parish. We are hoping to hire a Faith Formation Assistant who will work to meet the needs of those young families. Speaking of young families, in recent years we have worked to support parents as the primary educators of their children, especially in the areas of faith and moral development. We want to encourage those parents who home-school or who send their children to St. Michael School in Snohomish.

Still, we recognize that most of our parents send their children to public schools. While we are grateful for many of the educational and extra-curricular activities of our schools, we have serious concerns, especially since the Washington legislature passed Senate Bill 5395 that mandated comprehensive sexual health education (CSHE) for children in public schools. CSHE goes against the vision of the human person and human sexuality found in the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We encourage our parents to take advantage of the possibility of opting out and to take on their responsibility as primary educators in this vital area.

Recognizing that the devil uses cell phones to bring down our young people, I asked parents to discuss, then sign Cell Phone Use Contract with their children. In the Fall of 2023, some 97 children and youth signed that Contract with their parents.

We have worked in recent years to strengthen our sacramental preparation programs for First Communion and Confirmation. We now have two-year programs for both sacraments.

Here are other notable aspects of St. Mary of the Valley:

Knights - Our parish Knights provide a variety of services including community-building breakfasts. They have been for me strong supporters. They are part of way parish strives to promote spiritual leadership by men. The Knights provide hospitality and take up collections at 5 pm and 10:30 am Masses. In recent years we have had success recruiting members from the Hispanic community.

Men's Conference – On March 2, 2013, St. Mary of the Valley hosted the first Archdiocesan Men's Conference "Iron Sharpens Iron". With the participation of a thousand men, a dozen priests and Archbishop Sartain, this annual event provides a focus for men to grow in their relationship with Christ and to support each other as brothers in the Catholic faith.

St. Vincent de Paul - Of all the parishes I have served, St. Mary of the Valley has the most effective SVdP in terms of helping people in our community who have fallen on hard times. By visiting people in their homes or at a mutually agreed site, they provide emergency assistance and help connect people with other service agencies to get at the root causes of their problems. They sponsor a Thanksgiving community dinner and a Christmas Giving Tree right here at St. Mary's with parishioners donating a good portion of the food, and the gifts. Although not directly connected to our parish, the North Sound St. Vincent de Paul has a thriving thrift store at city entrance off highway 522 and Main Street.

Community outreach - St. Mary of the Valley groups work with other churches and nonprofit agencies to further aid the communities in need. Our Funeral Committee hosts the annual Police and Fire Appreciation Luncheon in November. As pastor, I participate in a monthly prayer meeting with local pastors. Sister and I attend other activities that bring faith leaders together.

Growth - As people from Seattle and the Eastside seek more affordable housing, Monroe and Sultan are experiencing explosive growth. Gold Bar, Echo Lake, Tualco Valley and Index are also popular destinations. At the same time, the cost of purchasing or renting a home is forcing many to move to areas that are more affordable. Some of our young Hispanic families have been able to purchase homes in Lake Stevens but continue to participate in St. Mary of the Valley. I sometimes feel that being a priest here is like trying to minister to a shopping mall, so many people coming in and moving away. But we do have a core that is stable and growing.

Buildings - In the 70's St. Mary sold the church and hall on Madison and Hill Street. Fr. Michael Ryan purchased the current property and built a church in the style of that decade. It's a functional church with good space for worship, funerals, weddings, etc. At that time parishioners also constructed a hall and kitchen with possibility that SMV would one day have its own school. With our centennial in 2013 we expanded our parish hall and upgraded the kitchen. To our church we added a family room, hospitality area and gift shop. The rectory across the parking lot is by far the best living space I have had as priest. Called to Serve as Christ had rectory renovation as its project.

Roofs - In summer of 2023 we replaced the roof on our parish hall. Our church and rectory also need new roofs. The church roof is first priority. After we meet our Annual Catholic Appeal goal, additional funds will go to that project. When we replace the rectory roof, I hope to explore the possibility of installing solar panels.

Bell - in November of 2011 thieves stole our parish bell. Replacing the bell and building a tower became an Eagle Scout project. Thanks to generosity and volunteer work of parishioners, the new bell tower was dedicated in July 2012.

Grounds - our parish grounds are bigger than allowed under county provisions, so we do wind up paying annual property tax. Also, the grounds require constant care. We have an excellent facilities supervisor - John Lenac.

Volunteers - we have volunteers who assist John Lenac in the care of grounds and buildings. In the fall and spring, we have clean-up days that many parishioners participate in. We also need volunteers for our bookstore/gift shop, church art & environment, etc.

Liturgical Ministers - we have super dedicated choirs for our three Masses, as well as adult acolytes, youth altar servers, Eucharistic ministers, lectors, hospitality ministers, art and environment, etc. Sister Carmen provides coordination for liturgical ministers.

Bilingual Outdoor Mass and Parish Picnic - Usually on the Sunday before the Evergreen State Fair, we have a bilingual outdoor Mass followed by a parish picnic. Our Knights provide hot dogs and hamburgers, other parishioners bringing side dishes. Our Hispanic choir provides upbeat music.

RCIA - Steve and Jane Ramseyer bring archdiocesan training to their role as volunteer RCIA coordinators for English language parishioners. Sister Carmen coordinates RCIA ("RICA") for Spanish speakers.

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) - Candace Blair has offered CLOW deeply appreciated young families. Other ministries to children include instruments for recessional at 10:30 am Mass.

Cena Show - As the name implies, a dinner followed by a show. When I came in 2009, I was blown away by the talent in our Hispanic community and their ability to organize young people and children in an entertaining event with music, dances, comedy. The people involved in Cena Show have formed "Marcando la Diferencia" to do fundraisers (Kermes de Caridad, Food Sale) to help needy in Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.

Mary Bloom Center - Named for my mom, a medical and educational center founded in 1994. Over the years parishioners have gone to Peru with me to offer a Vacation Bible School to children at the Center's tutoring program. Besides friends and members of my family, parishioners of SMV have supported the work of this medical and educational center serving one of the most impoverished areas of Peru.

Fr. Narciso Valencia - Young Peruvian priest (indigenous Aymara) who visited St. Mary over the years offering spiritual care. His humble, cheerful personality won over both Hispanic and non-Hispanic parishioners. Fr. Narciso died tragically on April 24, 2017. As he was a chaplain for our Knights of Columbus, they planted a dogwood tree in his memory.

Monroe Correctional Complex - second largest prison facility in the state, priests and volunteers from the parish provide services under the guidance of Archdiocesan Prison Ministry.

Hospital and Residential Care - St. Mary provides chaplaincy (Communion, anointing, viaticum, commendation prayers) for patients at Evergreen Hospital Monroe, as well as Regency Care, Brookdale, etc.

Help for Immigrants - St. Mary of the Valley provides help for those establishing their residency and citizenship in our country, for example, by documenting their number of years and forms of service in our community. Last year, Catholic Community Services provided us a grant to offset some of the costs of this help to immigrants.

Healing Masses – Although every Mass is for healing, we have had great response to Masses with imposition of hands and anointing for liberation and physical healing. I have also been impressed by the Mercy Nights at St. Michael's with Exposition of Blessed Sacrament, confession, anointings, individual prayers for healing, etc.

Blessing for Anniversary of Matrimony – From my predecessor I inherited the beautiful practice of blessing those with anniversary of matrimony. Normally this takes place on the second weekend of each month, accompanied by wine & cheese, sparkling cider after the 5 pm Saturday Mass.

Eucharistic Adoration – the motor of our parish: Saturday 6 pm till Sunday 8 am, Thursdays 9:30 – 10:30 am, First Fridays 10 pm to 8 am.

Partners in the Gospel - With gratitude for our past and hope for our future, St. Mary of the Valley looks forward to bringing her gifts and aspirations to our new parish family with St. Michael, Snohomish and Holy Cross, Lake Stevens.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS FOR YOUTH AND DIVERSITY

Our vision is for St. Mary of the Valley to be a Holy & Holistic Church Community, focusing on unity with Jesus Christ, celebrating diversity and gratitude, and supporting all age groups and nationalities.

Our aim is to deepen faith integration, strengthen community bonds, and ensure that the church serves as a dynamic, inclusive, and nurturing home for all members.

We strive to be a center for learning, healing, and safety, emphasizing the importance of a positive environment where faith is integrated into daily life.

Recommendations:

During this process, we recognized the need for a holistic – a universal and complete – approach to engaging our youth. They do not exist in a silo or a vacuum, rather, like all of us, they are wholly reliant upon the relationships with those around them. Relationships with their peers, with their parents, and with their community. To do this, we've come up with the following overarching goals and specific recommendations for the students in our parish – both young and old. We are all students – disciples – of Christ, after all, regardless of our age or current school registration.

Enhance Faith-Based Learning and Engagement:

- Develop diverse programs across all age groups including faith formation classes, educational challenges in Catholic teachings, and discussion groups tailored to different demographics (parents, youth, seniors, single adults, men, women, etc.).
- Integrate faith formation into Church activities through specific events like youth Masses with explanatory components and retreats for personal and spiritual growth.

Promote Community and Social Interaction:

- Integrate faith into daily activities by organizing regular social events such as book clubs, cultural nights, and sports activities that cater to the parish as a whole and as different community groups, fostering a sense of belonging and active participation.
- Facilitate networking events, social gatherings, and interfaith programs to encourage broader community integration and support.

Volunteering and Service Opportunities:

- Encourage active participation in community service projects and ministry opportunities that reflect the diverse interests and abilities within the church, including mentoring roles for seniors and service projects for single adults and youth.
- Engage the community in outreach efforts like soup kitchens, elderly assistance, and public expressions of faith like praying the Rosary in public spaces.

Utilize Digital Platforms for Engagement and Outreach:

- Leverage social media and online communities to maintain engagement with youth and provide resources for parents.
- Expand the church's digital presence to include educational materials, live-streamed events, and virtual discussion forums to reach a broader audience and enhance community interaction.

Youth Engagement and Activities:

- Offer diverse and enjoyable activities that integrate faith into daily life, such as youth camps, game clubs, sports teams, interfaith programs, talent shows, and youth music groups, and concerts.
- Challenge youth with deeper educational materials on Catholic teachings, church history, and sacraments.
- Encourage active youth participation in church services, including a youth Mass, and broader community service opportunities.
- Leverage social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube, to engage youth and establish an online church community.

Single & Young Adults Engagement and Activities:

- Offer networking events, retreats, and social gatherings designed to build community and foster deeper connections.
- Create sport teams to play in local leagues (softball, baseball, football/soccer, flag football) or other churches.
- Create discussion groups or forums on topics relevant to single adults, such as relationships, career development, and personal spirituality.
- Hallow app has a community & chat feature for subscribers.
- Flocknote.
- Include service projects and ministry opportunities tailored to the interests and talents of single adults, promoting active participation in the church community.

Parental Engagement and Education:

- Train parents in Church Doctrine to better educate their children.
- Organize parenting classes, book clubs, and support systems to foster community involvement and address feelings of alienation or past grievances with the Church.
- Provide resources to link parents to alternative school options, like homeschool groups, hybrid programs, and online academies.
- Promote the affordability and accessibility of Catholic schools; grants, scholarships, payment plans help with actual cost.
- Perspective point: Most day-cares and preschools charge more for tuition than Catholic schools... if already paying for care, why not continue when time for school to enroll in a Catholic school?

Senior Engagement and Activities:

- Facilitate involvement in mentoring roles, where seniors can share wisdom and guide younger generations.
- Seniors are a great resource for homeschooling families and schools, they can provide perspective on historical events, pass on traditions, help with a specific lesson or topic, etc.

Men's and Women's Engagement and Activities:

- Organize themed social activities like barbecues and sports events that appeal to men, and fashion shows and etiquette classes that cater specifically to women.
- Host men's and women's manners and courtesy classes: dining etiquette, formal dancing, dressing for the occasion, etc.
- Host a formal dinner and ball/dance every year to use skills learned in classes.
- Host events and support groups to discuss issues relevant to women and offer workshops and discussions that focus on the roles and strengths of men within the family and the church, providing a safe space for sharing experiences and supporting one another and fostering a deeper understanding of spiritual and societal responsibilities.
- Conduct sessions focused on topics such as the dignity and nature of men and women, including teachings from the Theology of the Body.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT

Heal our wounds,
our strength renew;
On our dryness pour your dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away:
Bend the stubborn
heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.

On the faithful, who adore
And confess you, evermore
In your sevenfold gift descend:
Give them virtue's sure reward;
Give them your salvation, Lord;
Give them joys that never end.
Amen.

VEN, ESPIRITU SANTO

Riega la tierra en sequía,
sana el corazón enfermo,
lava las manchas,
infunde calor
de vida en el hielo,
doma el espíritu indómito,
guía al que tuerce el sendero.

Reparte tus siete dones,
según la fe de tus siervos;
por tu bondad y tu gracia,
dale al esfuerzo su mérito;
salva al que busca salvarse
y danos tu gozo eterno.
Amén.

