

How can I Help Renew our Parish?

It's true that the Church founded by Jesus cannot be lost or refounded, but every Catholic parish is in constant need of renewal. Our Church as the living Body of Jesus alive among us is a perfect society, but this same Church, made up of recovering sinners, is always in need of new life among its members.

Individual parishioners can do great things to help renew their parish. First of all, they must really want a holy and alive parish. Sadly, many modern American Catholics seem to prefer an inactive parish. They do not want to be challenged. They do not want to grow in their commitment to Jesus. They do not want to truly listen to the news about Jesus. They do not want to change in any way. They are more afraid of change than they are of hell; Or so it seems. Happily, the Lord also has many faithful Catholics hidden in every parish who long for something more.

Every parish needs a core of recovering sinners who are willing to rise above all this coldness, and to find ways to draw their fellow parishioners from cold and lukewarmness to warmth and light around the campfire of God's love. This is God's idea of Holy Church. This is also what our hearts really long for.

Now what can an individual parishioner do about this? You know already it has to begin with sincere prayer for our parish, but there is more. Spend some quiet time with Jesus using very few words. You will somehow know what to do next. Obey that little voice at all costs. Remember this voice never contradicts the pastors of the Church. That fact helps us discern that it is really from God.

The following are a few possible frameworks into which we may fit our new assignment from the Lord. Parish renewal often proceeds as follows:

1. Renewal in Individual Holiness.

- Regular daily prayer and Bible prayer.
- The witness of modesty in dress
- Wear some public sign of Catholicism
- Daily Mass as possible. Eucharistic Adoration
- Frequent Confession
- Meatless Fridays and self denials

2. Renewal in Christian Family Life.

- Family Rosary and regular meal prayers, bed time prayers, etc.
- All homes blessed by a priest or deacon
- Holy icons, statues of saints, and crucifix proudly displayed.

3. Renewal in Community Fellowship.

- Come to coffee socials after Mass.
- Dedication of time and talents to God
- Do not be part of negative complaints and rebellion.
- All parish meetings proceed in the light of the Holy Spirit.
- Growing sense of Catholic identity

4. Renewed Participation in Parish Liturgical Life.

- Better understanding of the Holy Mystery of the Mass.
- Generous offertory participation as part of worship
- More people at daily Mass

5. Renewal of outreach Evangelizing and Social Concerns.

- Have good training available in these opportunities.
- Know Catholic values in voting
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Generous stewardship