

CONGRATULATIONS!



SAINT JOHN GABRIEL PERBOYRE, C.M.

You have decided to have a Vincentian Parish Mission. Our prayer is that this will be one of the most spiritually satisfying and up-lifting events your parish has sponsored. The success of your parish mission depends greatly on preparation. While there is not a great deal of work involved, the basics of preparation are extremely important. This is one of the reasons we have provided you with this planning guide. We hope it proves to be helpful in answering most of your questions and concerns. Your missionary will be glad to discuss anything further with you.

AS YOU BEGIN TO PLAN YOUR MISSION...

We ask if possible, that the evening mission liturgy be the only parish liturgy taking place during mission week (with the obvious exception of the weekend masses). In addition, we also ask that all parish meetings and normally scheduled groupings (RCIA, prayer meetings, bingo, youth group, etc.) during the mission week be canceled and ask these groups to attend the evening mission. We make this request to establish the importance of a mission with your parishioners and to enable the people to experience the unifying effect of coming together for a singular parish event. We consider this very important. There should be no other functions taking place in the parish during the time of mission liturgies.



PRE-MISSION CHECK LIST

- Time is set for evening mission presentation. All other parish activities canceled.
- Mission liturgies planned. Ministers, musicians, servers, etc, assigned.
- Inactive parishioners contacted and invited to the parish mission.
- Neighboring parishes informed of the mission and invited to attend.
- Baby sitting arranged and advertised during evening celebration.
- Transportation for elderly and handicapped arranged and advertised.
- The social gathering after each night's mission presentation assigned and planned.
- Priest-confessors contacted and lined up for evening of reconciliation.
- Living arrangements made for missionary.
- Free will offering at conclusion of mission.
- Advertising arranged in:
 - bulletins
 - newsletters
 - church announcements
 - school handouts, mailings, etc.
 - school poster contest
 - local radio, TV, etc.
 - phone contact



VINCENTIAN
PARISH MISSIONS



Vincent Depaul

PRE-MISSION MEETING

Schedule a planning meeting several months before your parish mission. The priests, pastoral associates, parish council, directors of liturgy and music, heads of committees, school officials, parish staff, ushers, greeters and youth ministers could attend this meeting. Because a successful parish mission touches all groups within a parish, it is important to draw them into the planning process so the varied groups and committees involved reflect your parish family.

- Appoint one highly responsible and motivated person to head up all mission preparations.
- Discuss this booklet thoroughly and ask each person to identify an area that their respective group might take responsibility for during the mission.
- Set deadlines for task completion.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Prayer and good works offered by the parish are important aspects of preparation. Here are some suggestions:

- The priests and deacons of the parish can incorporate the mission into their homilies and encourage people to pray for and participate in its success. It is critical that the leadership of the parish be vocal about the importance of the mission, the expectation for people to participate, and their own commitment to attend and participate.
- Public prayer for the mission in the form of petitions during liturgy, holy hours, vigils and other celebrations give witness to its importance in the communal spiritual life of a parish. Some parishes have offered novenas as a way to prepare for missions.
- Personal prayer could be urged for the parish as a whole, as well as for special parish groups including youth groups, the home-bound and where applicable, the school. One suggestion might be to incorporate the Mission Prayer into your prayer cycles as a way of breeding familiarity and expectation

SOCIAL

Essential to the evening celebration of mission is the social gathering that immediately follows Eucharist. This is a time for fellowship among parishioners as well as a good time for people to make appointments with the missionary. It is also an ideal way to involve different parishioners in the preparation of the social each night. We suggest having a different group or organization in the parish be responsible for each night's social (youth group, mother's club, grade school, parish council, boy/girl scouts, etc.). Some parishes have identified a certain theme for each night's food that can then be published along with the mission information: Ice cream night, beer & pizza night, wine & cheese night, etc.

ADVERTISING

Getting the word out is one of the most important aspects of preparation. We depend entirely on the parish leadership to create a sense of importance in the upcoming Vincentian Parish Mission. Here are some suggestions:

- Use the parish bulletin, newsletters, announcements, handouts and mailings. Some parishes have made posters to place in the church and school with the missionary's picture and announcement of dates, theme, and talks for the mission. The week before the mission, the cover of the bulletin could be: "Parish Mission: Next Week!", with the details on the inside. Banners could be made (some parishes have grade school classes create them) and placed outside church, in the vestibule or inside the church with appropriate signage. A personal letter could be sent from the parish leadership to each parishioner encouraging their participation.
- For reaching all parishioners, even non-practicing ones, local radio and TV public service announcements can be used. They are free and usually can be arranged by a simple phone call. Also most diocesan newspapers have a section for advertising upcoming events.
- A phone committee could be organized to call every home and apartment in the parish to personally invite each person.
- Ask parishioners to submit names of people they know are Catholic but who have "fallen away" from the faith. Send personal mission invitations to them.

LITURGY

The heart of all Vincentian missions and retreats is the celebration of Eucharist. The mission talk is, in essence, an extended homily that incorporates the theme you have chosen for the week. We depend on you to plan each evening there is liturgy as if it were a Sunday celebration. Highlights of the mission include an evening of reconciliation which can take place during the Eucharist, after the homily, typically on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening. Also we offer the communal anointing of the sick and/or elderly at a time to be determined by the parish and missionary. The hope is that the faithful can experience a profound sense of the holy through song and Word.

- Song:** Ideally the music you choose should be familiar to the congregation so that they can participate in the singing. Try to choose uplifting, energized music for the liturgies. Incorporate as many different groups as possible to sing as a choir on any particular night. One night you might have the adult Sunday choir sing; another night perhaps the children's choir. Use different cantors each night to involve as many people as possible.
- Word:** Again, incorporate as many people as possible into the celebration of the Word. From the young to the old, readers should be given an opportunity to proclaim the Word and offer the prayers of the faithful.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE BASIC SCHEDULE OF THE MISSION?

- Missioner will preach at all masses on the weekend prior to the start of the mission week.
- Missioner will offer to preside at as many masses as Pastor recommends.
- Mission service each evening is the Liturgy of the day, with missioner presiding and preaching.
- Mission Liturgy lasts an hour with a simple reception following.

WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE DURING THE MISSION?

- Missioner will visit sick and homebound as time allows.
- Missioner will have some presence in the school either a visit to each classroom, or a talk at an assembly, etc.
- Missioner will be available for individual counseling appointments.

WHAT ARE THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR MISSION?

- There is no fee for a Mission. Nor any charge for any expenses, e.g. travel. St. Vincent de Paul wanted our work to be dependent on the charity of the parish and people
- A free will offering is taken up on the last evening of the Mission.
- Missioner will provide special envelopes for this offering. These envelopes will also serve to allow people to include their miracle requests along with their donation.

WHAT ACCOMMODATIONS CAN PARISH PROVIDE?

- Missioner usually stays at the rectory. Our needs are simple: private bath and bedroom and use of an office for appointments.
- If rectory is not an option, a nearby inexpensive motel is fine. We prefer not to stay with a family.
- We are flexible as to meals.

