

The Ministerially Complete and Vibrant Parish

Someone once said, “if you don’t know where you are going, how will you know if you’ve ever arrived?” An interesting question. When it comes to parish life – do we know where we are going? Do we have a vision of what we want our parish to be? Do we have an idea of what we are striving for in our parishes, or have we fallen into the ruts of constantly looking back to see what we did last year so we can recruit volunteers once again to do basically the same thing once again this year.

Recently the National Pastoral Life Center did a survey of parishes to try to gather some benchmarks of a ministerial complete and vibrant parish. The following is an adaptation of some of the indicators. If you used these criteria for evaluating your parish, how would you do? Consider ranking your parish on a scale of 1-10.

1. **Liturgy** – that engages people, is prayerful, has good music and preaching.
2. **Evangelization** – the parish reaches out to non-practicing Catholics and plays a visible role in the local community.
3. **Adult Faith Formation** – is emphasized and there are opportunities for adults to grow in their faith in the parish.
4. **Caring Community** – parishioners support one another and reach out to the poor.
5. **Welcoming** – new members are contacted and welcomed to the parish, people of all cultures are welcome.
6. **Respond to Needs of People** – such as single-again, inter-church marriages, sick, homebound, bereaved
7. **Parishioner Involvement** – lots of opportunities to get involved, they get training, are given leadership responsibility, young adults are active and programs are well attended.
8. **Parish Mission and Vision** – the parish listens to parishioners and has a clear sense of its mission and purpose.
9. **Collaboration** – staff work together and closely with lay leadership.
10. **Pastoral Leadership** – parish recruits quality staff members, they are enthusiastic and energized, they participate in on-going formation and training.
11. **Prayer and Spirituality** – the prayer of the parish is heartfelt and sincere, parishioners are prepared to live the gospel and are nurtured by a variety of opportunities for prayer.
12. **Fiscal Health** – the parish not only meets expenses, it gives generously to needs beyond the parish through special collections and other means.
13. **Education** – the parish supports a Catholic school, a faith formation program, and a youth ministry.
14. **Stewardship** – gift awareness, prayer, service and generous material sharing.