Communications Strategic Plan
St. Jerome Catholic Church of the Diocese of Richmond, VA

GOAL: Establish a multi-layer communications strategy and tools to simplify accessibility, identify opportunities, and distribute information.

❖ *Communication, not just from priest to parish, but parishioner to parishioner, is one of the keys to a healthy, vibrant, and involved parish.*

❖ *Communication can, and should, take many forms as different segments of the parish population receive information in different ways. No single approach will suffice for increased communication.*

Objectives
1. Establish Communications Committee.
2. Develop a Communication Implementation Plan.
3. Increase Intra-Parish Communication.
4. Improve information accessibility and delivery to the parishioners.
5. Identify and Investigate new approaches to Communication
6. Recruiting

Objective 1: Establish Communications Committee

❖ The Communications Committee should be a reflection of the parish in its composition as communication varies from group to group and age to age. The involvement of a broad spectrum of parishioners is vital to the success of the committee.

❖ The Pastor shall review and approve the recommendations made by the Communications Strategic Planning Committee relating to the total number on the Communications Committee, what powers and responsibilities the committee will have, and where the committee will be placed within the framework of other parish ministries.

Strategies
• Identify/recruit staff and lay members who have a desire to increase communication in the parish. A combination of "customers" and providers" are necessary to identify requirements and provide capability.
• Determine the role the Communication Committee will play in the parish and how it will function with other ministries.

Actionable Tasks
1. Within two months of Parish Council approval, the Communications Strategic Planning Committee will develop recommendations pertaining to the size of the committee, its powers and responsibilities, and its position in regards to other ministries.

2. Within one month after the Communications Strategic Planning Committee has accomplished Objective 1, the Pastor will approve or modify recommendations. Within one month of approval, announcements for Communication Committee recruitment will be placed in the Bulletin and added to the announcements at the end of Mass on Saturday and Sunday. The Pastor, with the assistance of the Parish Council if he chooses, may also recommend individuals to be contacted to gauge their interest.

Objective 2: Develop a Communications Implementation Plan

❖ The development of the Implementation plan builds the framework for the Communications Committee to follow when it begins its work.
❖ The Implementation Plan should encompass a wide variation of ideas for the Communications Committee to explore.

Strategies
- Present the completed Implementation Plan to the Pastor for review and approval.
- Revise the Implementation Plan based on feedback from the Communications Committee and Pastor.

Actionable Tasks
1. Within three (3) months of convening the first meeting, the Communications committee will present an Implementation Plan to the Pastor for review and approval.

Objective 3: Increase Intra-parish Communication

❖ A community that is not in communication with itself finds it difficult to be in communication with God. It is difficult for parishioners to give of time, talent, and treasure when they are not aware of the opportunities afforded them through the parish.
❖ Many people in the parish do not know who the lay leaders of the parish are or what committees the lay leaders serve on. This lack of communication may inhibit some parishioners who are interested in being involved from participating more fully in the parish.
❖ At the lay leadership level of the parish, lack of communication between the various committees provides for a disjointed and incomplete picture of the parish. Better communication between the lay leadership committees can inspire additional communication with the parish community, as we all work towards a common goal.

Strategies
- Investigate ways to improve current means of communication, i.e. the Bulletin, posters, sign boards, announcements, website, e-mail, etc.

- Investigate and discuss with the major lay leadership committees a way to have more open communication between the committees, possibly through quarterly meetings of chairpersons, a joint meeting of all major committees every six months, or other ideas.

Actionable Tasks
1. Within three (3) months of the Pastor approving the Implementation Plan, the Communications Committee will have a meeting with the Pastor to discuss the appropriate uses of the existing parish website, signs in common area, and video display. Also to be discussed are what limits the Communications Committee has regarding acceptable media.

Objective 4: Improve Information Accessibility and Delivery to the Parishioners
❖ With the various things competing for people's attention in the modern world, information needs to be readily available and easy to get to.
❖ Within the church building, information needs to be provided in a way that is unobtrusive yet enhances the delivery to the parishioner. While tables and bulletin boards are one way to communicate, other ideas should be investigated including audio-visual, computer, and other possible avenues of communication.
❖ Outside of the church building, information needs to be easily communicated and received and up to date as possible. This is essential to continued communication with parishioners when they are not in the church.

Strategies
• Develop ideas to improve communication to parishioners while they are at church through the use of announcements, the Bulletin, bulletin boards, and tables.
• Investigate the use of new equipment, such as audio-visual or computers, to determine if such equipment can increase parishioner accessibility to information.
• Communicate with the Pastor and Webmaster to determine if the web site is being used by parishioners to its fullest extent for information communication and receipt. Examine possible ways to improve usage of the website by parishioners.
• Assure that no communication channel (i.e. web page maintenance, bulletin, prayer chain emergency texting, etc) is one person deep, but others have back up roles to assure there is always a continuous flow of communications through all channels.

Objective 5: Identify and Investigate New Approaches to Communication
❖ Implement multiple communication approaches for the various demographics, staff and lay ministries to improve information availability and interaction, as necessary.
❖ Incorporate reasonable safeguards to protect parishioners, volunteers, and staff.

Strategies
• Investigate new technologies, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Kik, Vine, texting and others for their applicability for use by the parish.
• Consult with parishioners, and other parishes with vibrant engagement of all generations, with experience with these technologies to gather additional information.
• Advise each ministry of the research and variety of media that the committee has found would be most effective to reach and engage multiple populations.
• Integrate critical and integral technologies with appropriate protections and information assurances to minimize risk.