



Faith, Hope & Courage

ANNOUNCEMENT WEEKEND GUIDE

What is Announcement Weekend?

Announcement Weekend is the weekend immediately following the direct mail from Bishop Parkes, August 15 and 16, 2020. It serves as the official “announcement” of the program start.

What is covered in this presentation?

The purpose of the presentation is to continue the message Bishop Parkes established and provide insight into how your parish was able to function and respond to needs during the closures as well as an accountability report through the Financial Snapshot. This sets the stage for the witness presentation and in-pew request for commitments which takes place the following weekend (Commitment Weekend).

When should it be given?

It is recommended the presentation be given after a short Homily. And, understanding many parishioners may not be able to physically attend Mass, this homily should also be recorded for viewing on your website and/or live streamed in some way. Another option is to adapt these points into a separate video message. A sample script and video from Bishop Parkes will be provided in Training Session #2 on July 15, 2020 and is available on our resource page at www.dosp.org/fhc-resources.

Presentation Outline

Appreciation

- The Feast of the Assumption is the perfect time to enter into this effort as it is both a beginning and an end. Mary rejoiced in the many graces we have received from our Savior despite difficulties. What an amazing example for us.
- Thank parishioners for their continued sacrifice and prayers. They are a blessing to your parish and together you are building God's Kingdom in your community.
- Celebrate the good
 - Worshipping together in Mass even in a distanced and limited capacity
 - Dedication of so many volunteers and staff
 - Generosity of many supporting and maintaining ministries and expanded outreach

Share a story or experience of what has been happening during this timeframe

- What ministry and outreach activities continued/were started during the COVID-19 shutdown period
- Weave these stories in with the theme of *Faith, Hope & Courage*
- Have you witnessed lives being changed most especially in these hectic times?
- How does this make you feel?

*Introduction of program/Tell them why **Faith, Hope & Courage** is important*

- Many are experiencing changes, and as a parish family we must acknowledge that individual changes can and will affect parish life
- This week Bishop Parkes sent a mailing to parishioners to introduce **Faith, Hope & Courage** – a way for us to share information about the changes we have been experiencing and how we can move forward together
- This effort is named well as it will take *Faith, Hope & Courage* from all of us to plan together for effective ministry and outreach and the overall health of the parish, and also make adjustments if needed to ensure we are continuing in our mission to bring others to Christ

Accountability

- Let the parishioners know they will be receiving a special parish update as they leave Mass this weekend that reviews important aspects of prayer and commitment for *Faith, Hope & Courage* and provides a year over year look at how the parish has fared (hold up copy of flyer)
- For those attending virtually, the update has been added to the website as well, along with a video message from the pastor
- It includes both expenses and income in simple categories, but overall shows your parish is currently (down/up/holding steady)
- We don't know what additional changes may be coming, but it is important for everyone to know this information, and that parish leadership wishes to make sure ministry and outreach can continue to be addressed in responsible manner.

Next steps

- In order to do this, we need parishioners to commit or recommit, taking into account the many changes we are all experiencing

- Bishop Parkes' mailing included a commitment card (hold one up)
- The commitment card shows the participation steps (hold up card) and also includes an area for them to let their parish know how they can be assisted – a call from a priest or member of the parish and prayer intentions (turn card over)
- Encourage everyone to complete this information and let them know every request will be answered
- Emphasize that this effort is an important event in the parishes' life and everyone's prayers and commitment are needed to advance your mission.
- Remind everyone that our collective Commitment Weekend will be at all Masses August 21 & 22.
 - There will be special talk shared by _____.
 - Encourage as many as possible to attend online or in person at Mass next weekend for this celebration of *Faith, Hope & Courage*.
- Also let parishioners know there is an electronic version of the commitment card available online by visiting the parish website.
- Encourage parishioners to utilize your electronic giving system.

Thank them, and let them know you will be in the back of the church/outside the main entry/specific location if they would like to speak with you after Mass.

Sample Presentation

This weekend is the Feast of the Assumption, a time of endings and new beginnings. Mary rejoiced in the many graces provided by our Savior despite the difficulties she experienced. She courageously answered “yes” every time the Lord asked something of her, full of faith, full of hope in the promise of salvation. What an amazing example for us and where we are as a parish and a Church today.

Thank you to everyone who has said “yes” over the past few months. Your continued sacrifice and prayer have been a blessing as we have come up with new and hopefully innovative ways to keep our mission alive by bringing others in our community to Christ.

We should celebrate what has gone well despite the challenges and trials:

- We are here, worshipping together both in person and at home.
- We have an amazing group of dedicated staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to keep our food banks open, our prayer chains going and adjusting to a new virtual system for Masses and celebrations. I finally learned how to navigate YouTube, which is something I never thought would happen!

When all of this started, I really had no idea how things were going to turn out. I was, quite frankly, scared. It was right before Easter, how would our people respond to a digital Mass, how could we connect with each other? But I placed all of that fear in the Lord's hands and prayed for the courage to move forward. And an incredible thing happened:

- Our Parish Council president approached me and asked if the council could start calling all of our senior parishioners to find out if they were OK, if they needed anything.
- Our Youth Minister started Zoom meetings, and we did drive in formation time right here in our parking lot.
- Our Knights took over mowing our lawn so we could cut that expense.

And those are only a few of the ways God answered my prayers. By taking that step in faith and having courage to do what I could when I could, I found that our parish family was doing the same thing – together we created opportunities for ministry to not just continue but to grow.

Right now, many are experiencing changes, and as a parish family we have to take a big step in faith and have the courage to acknowledge individual changes will affect our parish life. That is why Bishop Parkes sent out a mailing this week to parishioners introducing *Faith, Hope & Courage* - a way for us to share information about the changes we have been experiencing and how we can move forward together. This effort is named well as it will take *Faith, Hope & Courage* from all of us to plan together for effective ministry and outreach the overall health of the parish, and also make adjustments if needed.

We have prepared a special parish update as they leave Mass this weekend that reviews important aspects of prayer and commitment for *Faith, Hope & Courage* and provides a year over year look at how the parish has fared. For those attending virtually, the update has been added to the website as well, along with a video message from me.

This special update includes both expenses and income in simple categories, but overall shows our parish is currently holding steady. We did this by cutting some expenses and accessing the PPP funds made available. In order to keep serving in some key areas, we also accessed our savings account and Bishop Parkes reduced our assessment last year by 14%.

This is the part that will really take courage. We don't know what additional changes may be coming – the virus is still out there and we are projected to have an active hurricane season. But it is important for everyone to know this information, and that your parish leadership wishes to make sure ministry and outreach can continue to be addressed in responsible manner.

In order to do this, we need parishioners to commit or recommit, taking into account the many changes we are all experiencing. Bishop Parkes' mailing included a commitment card with his mailing.

The commitment card shows the participation steps we are asking all to consider: prayer, a one-time gift now if you can, and a commitment or recommitment to a monthly contribution. And don't forget to turn the card over, because we need to know how we can help you.

This card also includes an area for you to let your parish leadership know how you can be served by a call from a priest or member of the parish and prayer intentions. And we also have online a simple way to request other assistance through our errand angels and more.

- I encourage everyone to complete this information and know I am committed to answering every request in the next two weeks.
- This effort is an important event in the parishes' life and everyone's prayers and commitment are needed to advance our mission.
- Our Commitment Weekend will be at all Masses August 21 & 22.
 - There will be special talk shared by _____.
 - We need as many as possible to attend online or in person at Mass next weekend for this celebration of *Faith, Hope & Courage*.
- For those at home, there is an electronic version of the commitment card available on our parish website. If you need help completing it, please call (name) in our parish office.

Thank you all once again for making this challenging time one of many blessings for me. I will be in the Narthex after Mass if you have any questions.