

Holy Family Church
All Are Welcome Task Force

Proposal

Mission Statement

The Holy Family All Are Welcome Task Force seeks to help Holy Family Church live out its mission of being "a welcoming Eucharistic community of disciples of Jesus Christ"¹ and its ecclesiology of "All Are Welcome" in three main ways:

- 1) by leading efforts to evaluate the current parish climate regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion,
- 2) by establishing a permanent entity at Holy Family to encourage and implement the mission of "All Are Welcome"
- 3) by providing support and educational programming grounded in faith for parishioners, school community members, and staff while structures are developed.

Background

Following the example of our Lord and teacher Jesus Christ, the Holy Family community is called to embrace and bring healing to those in our midst who have been or feel as if they have been excluded, ridiculed, oppressed, imprisoned, or unloved. The task force specifically seeks to assess potential populations who may have felt excluded. Areas of exclusion may include but are not limited to: race, socio-economic status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, culture, country of origin, primary language, ability, school status (Holy Family school and non-Holy Family school), housing status, family make-up, and other categories of exclusion. We are invited to help carry on the work of Christ to build the reign of God that is unfolding among us (Lk 17:20-21). We are called to be a community of love that brings all people together and leaves no one aside.

In the Fall of 2020 and Spring of 2021, we—the authors and editors listed below—participated in racial justice programming from ["JustFaith Ministries"](https://justfaithministries.org) as a way to better understand and respond as people of faith to the cries for racial justice during the summer of 2020. We were deeply moved and transformed by the program sessions that required us to sit with the history and current realities of racism in the United States and in our own lives through readings, videos,

¹ "Theological Reflection on our Mission Statement," <https://holyfamily.org/about-us/theological-reflection-on-our-mission-statement>: "*Holy Family is welcoming...Jesus' love was all encompassing...he never excluded anyone from the circle of his compassion, forgiveness and love...Because Jesus calls each one of us, without regard to who we are or what we have done, one of the most important elements of our mission statement is that of welcome.*"

discussions, and prayer. As a result, we recognized the need to share what we have learned with Holy Family leadership and the wider Holy Family community.

In doing so, we desire to help all Holy Family parish and school members become even more dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ. As the United States bishops have stated, "When we begin to separate people in our thoughts for unjust reasons, when we start to see some people as 'them' and others as 'us,' we fail to love. Yet love is at the heart of the Christian life."² Following the invitation of Christ and the bishops then, we must "endeavor to be missionary disciples carrying forth the message of fraternal (sic) charity and human dignity...by educating [ourselves], reflecting on [our] personal thoughts and actions, listening to the experience of those who have been affected by racism, and by developing and supporting programs that help repair the damages caused by racial discrimination"³ and other forms of prejudice, oppression, and exclusion. Holy Family is continually called to assess how it is being faithful to its call and how it might still need to grow as a community of beloved disciples who help heal divisions and hurt, foster dialogue, and spread the Gospel message of God's love for all.

We prayed for discernment and we believe the Holy Spirit has been guiding this work. We pray that the Holy Family All Are Welcome Task Force will be an avenue for the Spirit to heal those who have been harmed in our parish and local community, as well as bring others into the community. We hope that young people, those who have left the Catholic Church, and those curious about the faith will more clearly see that we answer our call to discipleship in authentic, concrete ways and that they might desire to join us in growing in their relationships with Christ as a result. Forming the Task Force and working towards its goals is a way to live out Catholic Social Teaching, as well as broadcast the loving and welcoming teachings of Christ to those who are not already involved in the Church. Parishes who embrace diversity and actively work on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion are widely known and loved in the archdiocese and bring in parishioners from all over to experience Christ's teachings in a refreshing and just way. In this way, we see the DEI Task Force as an essential piece of the evangelizing and catechizing mission of Holy Family.

Recommended Personnel

Task Force Members: These individuals are committed to regular meetings and the intentional work required of the Task Force, based on related knowledge and training. We recommend a group of eight to ten people, including the Pastor, the Director of Faith Formation, a few

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love* (Washington, D.C., 2018), 17.

³ *Open Wide Our Hearts*, 27.

committed JustFaith alumni, and a few Holy Family community members with the expertise and skills for this work and/or the identities affected.

Key Stakeholders: These individuals are not members of the Task Force but would be important to consult and collaborate with in order to achieve the Task Force's goals. They include but are not limited to: Associate Pastor and other clergy, Pastoral Council, the parish Commissions (Administration, Community Life, Education Formation, Outreach, and Worship), Principal, Vice Principal, key school staff, the school board, etc.

Community Consultants/Board: This group comprises any Holy Family parish and school members who feel they are affected by DEI efforts and can offer suggestions or areas to look into for the Task Force.

Scope & Timeframe

The Holy Family DEI Task Force is a temporary body that will form in order to determine and conduct assessments, analyze and share assessment results, oversee the establishment of more permanent structures and entities, and advise Holy Family community members in offering educational programming and other opportunities for the parish and school. Ideally, the assessment process will be completed within one year of the Task Force launch (i.e. September of 2022), at which point the Task Force will transition to being a more permanent entity or choose to continue in its original form based on the needs of the community. Below is a suggested timeline for the beginning of the Task Force's work.

Aug 2021	Task Force is approved by the Pastor. Pastor determines Task Force communication preferences (who he would like to have convene Task Force members if not himself, etc.).
Oct 2021	Members are contacted and commit to participating. Task Force meets to establish itself, decide on assessment approach, and earliest possible timeline of the assessment.
Jan - May 2022	Task force launches spring/Lent assessment and gathers data.
Jun - Aug 2022	Spring/Lent data compilation and analysis.
Sept - Nov 2022	Task force launches fall assessment and gathers data.
Nov '22 - early Feb '23	Data compilation, analysis, report writing and recommendations.

Assessing the Needs of Our Parish Community

To focus on our goal to “lead efforts to evaluate the current parish climate regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion” we have enumerated the primary means by which we plan to evaluate the current climate at the parish below.

- A. *Historical Study*: The task force will gather data from the last 20 years of the types of efforts, topics, events, speakers, and resources that have been offered or made available to the community. This will be a quantitative assessment. [Historical Study Appendix](#)
- B. *Parishioner Small Group Conversation*: The task force will engage with the community through small group sharing/conversation to gain the community’s perspective on what has been offered by the church, what they feel is missing, what their desires are, and what their fears or hesitations are. [Parishioner Small Group Conversation Appendix](#)
- C. *Leader Small Group Conversations*: The task force will engage with our leaders through small group sharing/conversation to gain their perspective on the items listed above under “Parishioners” as well as insight into how prepared, educated, and trained they feel with respect to DEI. This will be a qualitative and quantitative assessment. [Leaders Appendix](#)
- D. *Listening Sessions or “Town Hall”*: These larger sessions will be focused on open sharing of stories from the entire community. In particular, sharing stories of struggle, personal growth, disappointment or encouragement, and how the church has or has not been a part of someone’s journey with respect to DEI will be encouraged. These sessions will be focused on listening and not debating. They may be accompanied by other offerings such as a movie, a reading, or a prayer to center the sharing (TBD). This will be a qualitative and quantitative assessment. [Town Hall Appendix](#)
- E. *Pulse of the Community Survey*: The task force will work to generate and deploy a survey made available to all in the community to gather input on how the Parish is meeting the needs of the community and incorporating DEI as part of its DNA. This will be a quantitative assessment. [Survey Appendix](#)

We believe that the approaches listed above will enable the task force to do the following:

- Listen to the spirit of the community similar to the recent synod approaches.
- Assess what programming is already offered by Holy Family and what gaps exist if any.
- Assess what kind of support is offered on an individual and group basis for those struggling with being excluded or those struggling to be inclusive.
- Assess where Holy Family can evangelize and welcome members to the community.
- Assess if Holy Family is meeting the needs and desires of the community with regards to addressing current issues, offering education on the historical role of our nation and church, offering tools and approaches for personal growth, and other community desires not articulated here.

- Assess how Holy Family is acknowledging and incorporating DEI as a motivator in our service to the community, how we worship, the formation of our ministries, and the formation of our leaders and ministers.

Authors and editors (in alphabetical order):

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