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The ideal parish. Many people dream of the ideal job or home or family. Teachers dream of the ideal class and coaches dream of the ideal team; and of course teenagers dream of the perfect date. I guess it is only natural that pastors might dream of the ideal parish. What would it look like? Some may wish for a grand building with plenty of space for worship, classes, meetings, and parish get-togethers. Some may see that parish as one with a staff that ministers to the young and the old and everyone in between. That may be some people's idea of a dream parish, but it is not mine.

My dream parish begins with the people—people who want to live their lives for a greater purpose than themselves. Putting God first would be more than talk. They would be able to see the world for what it is but also, for what God intended it to be. In my dream, people would be eager to hear about God and His son, Jesus. They would gather faithfully on the weekend not looking for excuses to miss. They would notice one another and greet each other warmly. Visitors would always feel welcomed. If someone was sick, others would respond and if someone was in need, the parish would kick in and see what they could do. All would pray for each other, as well as themselves, asking God to make them open to His spirit. The education of the children would be important, especially religious education, and parents would do all they could to reinforce by word and example these teachings. Sign up lists for volunteers would not be necessary. Everyone would want to help. Cliques, gossip, and bickering would be unheard of. Judging others on their faults would cease. No one would vent on another. Instead there would be generosity, enthusiasm, and forgiveness. Ah! What a wonderful dream. Yet, we do not live in a dream. The dream parish is no more a reality than the dream date. But there are many good parishes and with a little effort and a clear vision of what might be, they can become wonderful places to worship. Our parish has many people with the qualities of this ideal parish. I wonder if they share the same vision. I wonder if our faithfulness, compassion, hospitality, devotion, and efforts to share the Good News of Christ with others can make the difference.

Every parish begins with a dream. What is your dream for Blessed Sacrament Parish? What can you do to make that dream a reality?

Father Jeff