

A Good Investment of our Time, Talent and Treasure

Why St. Francis Parish should be a member of VOICE

1. Increasing collaboration with the Catholic pastors/parishes within the Diocese of Arlington. When we were invited by a handful of Catholic pastors of the Diocese to join them in efforts to organize with other religious communities of Northern Virginia on behalf of the voiceless, we began a closer relationship than had previously existed and continues to this time.
2. Real and effective collaboration with religious leaders and congregations across the ecumenical and interreligious spectrum. Due to the organizing efforts of VOICE, more people of diverse religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds have united in common efforts and developing relationships within the County than ever before.
3. We have seen a renewed and energized engagement with some of the lower income neighborhoods of Prince William County. Since our involvement with VOICE, neighborhoods have engaged in local community organizing and leadership training with enthusiasm and effectiveness (e.g., Georgetown South, Williamstown and Mt. Olivet area).
4. We have seen an emergence of lay leadership within our own Parish. Leaders (within the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking congregations) have a heightened awareness of the need for transparency, accountability and coordination among parish organizations, boards and committees. This has brought with it a new willingness to take on leadership roles, engage in leadership training and participate in community meetings (e.g., parish council, finance council, Right to Life committee, VOICE leadership team).
5. We have witnessed a more animated discussion and greater awareness of Catholic Social Teachings. Since our involvement with VOICE there have been multiple education programs and forums highlighting the various dimensions of Catholic Social Teachings. There have also been many opportunities to participate in lobbying, organizing and public actions as outgrowths of Catholic Social Teaching (e.g., March for Life, SALT, Virginia Catholic Conference and VOICE).
6. A parish community increasingly able to engage in prophetic public action as competently as it engages in social service and sacramental celebration. Since VOICE we have seen an increase in the number of parishioners who have appeared before the PWBOCS, State Representatives Offices, Board of Directors and in public canvassing of communities.

Fr. Bob Menard, O.F.M., Assoc. Pastor

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