



Strategic Planning Document

Vision

The People of God (ordained and lay) supporting US Catholic priests as disciples of Jesus Christ, serving the Church.

Mission

In cooperation with bishops, religious superiors, and laity, we strengthen our priestly vocations and share wisdom to meet pastoral needs. We provide opportunities for priests, at all ages and levels of experience, to grow in serving the Church through mutual support, training, education, fellowship, and advocacy.

Through Working Groups and administrative actions, we adopt the following as our plan for the next 3-5 years:

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Anti-Racism

Strategic Vision

Challenge members to recognize that racism is an internal reality ("it is in me") shaped by family, church, and society.

Key Objectives

- **Self-Evaluation:** Implement a "Self Educate, Self-Examine, Self-Activate, Self-Evaluate, and Self-Report" framework.
- **Active Engagement:** Address low participation among the membership in seminars and group discussions on racism.
- **Ministerial Accountability:** Encourage members to reflect on how their thoughts, words, and deeds have wounded others in ministry.

Current Status

The group has not yet completed the first year of its 3-year strategic plan and needs to determine if anti-racism is a true priority for the AUSCP.

Development

Strategic Vision

Secure the funds needed to carry out the association's plans and objectives through semi-annual appeals to members, Friends, and individual donors, as well as to foundations and corporations.

Key Objectives

- Continue fall appeal to members, Friends, and regular donors.
- Hold post-assembly appeal to new donors, corporations, and foundations.
- Increase the individual donor list by at least 25% each year.

Executive Initiative

Strategic Vision

To form priests in unity without uniformity by building skills of communion, trust, and co-labor across diverse theological, generational, and pastoral sensibilities.

Key Objectives

- Reduce polarity by bringing together priests with differing ecclesiologies.
- Use the synodal process to establish dialogue and deep listening.
- Collaborate with other groups and institutions.

Gospel Nonviolence

Strategic Vision

Integrate Gospel Nonviolence as the "grounding matrix" for all AUSCP priorities, committing to live the way of the Nonviolent Christ through a cycle of study, prayer, dialogue, and action.

Key Objectives

- **Spiritual Formation:** Transition to "prayerful study of biblical justice" and provide accountability through the GNV fraternity.
- **Liturgical Integration:** Promote the use of the two custom-written Eucharistic Prayers of Gospel Nonviolence and seek formal acceptance to facilitate parish-level use.
- **Public Witness:** Advocate for a "Culture of Just Peace" over "Just War Theory" and support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).
- **Legislative Advocacy:** Challenge systemic injustices (racism, homophobia, misogyny) and counter the influence of the gun lobby to support assault weapon bans.
- **Implementation & Sustainability:** Maintain monthly virtual "Zoom Fellowship" for diverse actions across dioceses and address leadership "aging out" and financial constraints.

Immigration

Strategic Vision

Provide a collaborative space for members serving immigrant communities across the United States to share experiences and navigate the complexities of immigrant ministry.

Key Objectives

- **Knowledge Sharing:** Discuss large scale issues facing immigrants and stay updated on rapidly changing laws and practices through networking with legal and rights groups.
- **Experiential Learning:** Organize annual assembly field trips and host expert speakers to provide insights into local immigrant realities.
- **Inclusive Dialogue:** Widen the conversation beyond southern border issues to include a broader range of immigrant experiences.
- **Member Engagement:** Invite all AUSCP members and friends to participate in monthly online meetings and annual colloquia on immigration issues.

Current Status

Operates primarily as a mutual support group rather than a policy making body; maintains a consistent monthly meeting schedule with 6–10 active participants from a broader invitation list of 30.

Membership

Strategic Vision

To drive meaningful growth for the association by building on core strengths—alignment with Vatican II, synodality, and a unique pastoral voice—positioning the association as a vital sanctuary for mutual support rather than an added obligation.

Key Objectives

- Leverage the annual assembly by encouraging members to personally invite a non-member priest, utilizing a ready-made digital toolkit and promoting available financial assistance to overcome budget barriers.
- Target recruitment toward specific religious orders aligned with Catholic Social Teaching and launch small, virtual "Pastoral Support Circles" to address isolation and burnout.
- Design dedicated assembly breakout sessions for lay collaborators and encourage priest-members to recruit dynamic local lay leaders as Friends.
- Shorten the online signup form into a mobile-friendly, 5-minute process with upfront pricing, and utilize public digital resources as inbound marketing with clear calls-to-action.

Mutual Support

Strategic Vision

Provide deep spiritual and professional support to combat isolation and spiritual fatigue among clergy.

Key Objectives

- **Spiritual Support:** Develop regional and virtual support groups (in-person or via social media) and promote the practice of Spiritual Accompaniment.
- **Professional Resources:** Provide access to qualified professional counselors, therapists, spiritual directors, and canonical experts for personal and professional development.
- **Aging & Retirement:** Provide resources such as the "Personal Estate Planning" guide to help priests transition from administration to retirement.
- **Advocacy & Rights:** Maintain support for gay priests through the position paper "Being Gay, Ordained, Faithful to the Church and Appreciated by the Church."
- Protect the canonical rights and "good name" of priests facing uninvestigated sexual abuse claims.
- **Communication & Outreach:** Increase social media presence to reach younger generations (Gen Z and Gen Y).

Vatican II

Strategic Vision

Implement synodality as the active expression of Vatican II principles and theology under the leadership of the Pope.

Key Objectives

- **Participation:** Enhance the full, active, and conscious participation of both clergy and laity in the Liturgy.
- **Ministry & Leadership:** Encourage the call to lay ministries and advocate for women's full participation in leadership.
- **Social Teaching:** Emphasize Catholic Social Teaching (from *Gaudium et Spes*) in pastoral and diocesan settings.
- **Ecumenism:** Build models for and encourage ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

Proposed Strategy

Highlight dioceses that practice synodality well and share those methods and resources with all AUSCP members.

Immediate Needs

Reconstitute the membership and select chair(s)/co-chairs for the working group.

Website

Strategic Vision

Streamline and modernize the website to make it easier to navigate for a wide range of users.

Key Objectives

- Update integrations to embed Instagram and TikTok alongside Facebook, and optimize content for prospective member search terms.
- Map clear website journeys for four distinct segments: prospective members, current members, organizations, and general visitors.
- Archive outdated materials while preserving and organizing essential resources like "Wisdom Wednesday" and parish priest materials.

Women's Working Group

Strategic Vision

Create safe spaces for priests and women to become thought-partners in mutual accompaniment, beginning with the reception of one another's stories, their hopes, and laments.

Key Objectives

- Establish and clarify defined leadership and membership terms, and maintain momentum by meeting on a monthly basis.
- **National Expansion & Collaboration:** Expand the core group to ensure robust national diversification of both priests and women. Work with the leadership team to more formally establish collaborative relationships to help refine and distribute pastoral help documents created, maintain a designated representative from partnering organizations, and continue cross functional collaboration with other working groups.
- **Synodal Engagement:** Create spaces for at least two dedicated "Conversations in the Spirit" sessions per year. Send resulting reports to the General Secretariat in Rome and the USCCB synodal office, and broadly promote recorded sessions and reports as practical models for promoting synodality.
- **Implementation Strategy:** Review and develop an implementation strategy for the Study Group 5 report, and produce and distribute practical pastoral help documents.