



January 29, 2021

Hello and greetings to all members of Saint Joseph's Parish here in Alexandria:

I pray this letter finds each of you well. I pray for you, your families, and your loved ones every day and my prayer is that you are healthy and happy and that we can have a return to normalcy very soon!

As you may recall, I wrote to you in September about the launch of the "Embracing the Future" effort. Our advisory committee has been hard at work collecting important information and designing a fun and engaging exercise for our parishioners. After months of hard work, I am excited to announce that we are ready to begin parish-wide consultations!

Since it has been a while, let me remind you about the goal of this initiative. My hope is that these "Embracing the Future" workshops bring us back into meaningful contact with one another – as best we can – while sharing our thoughts on how to prioritize our actions and initiatives going forward. I am confident that these workshops will give us a chance to come together, grow in understanding of our fellow parishioners, and chart an exciting path for the parish while having fun together! I hope you will join us for one of these workshops.

To get started, please sign up for a workshop on our parish website. We will add more sessions as needed! If you'd like to prepare beforehand, I have attached instructions to this letter to help you understand how we'll spend our time and to help you make the most of your workshop. Given the state of the pandemic, we will only conduct these engaging workshops online via Zoom.

Should you have any questions after reviewing these instructions, you may reach out to our committee advisor, Rashad Badr, anytime at rashad.badr@impactbeta.co or at (703) 328-0952 or you can reach out to me. I look forward to your participation in these workshops! I am excited for all of you to have an opportunity to come together to discuss the future of our parish and I cannot wait to hear your thoughts on how these sessions went!

With prayers as we continue confident in our gracious and generous Father as we pray for the success of this endeavor, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Donald Fest, S.S.J.
Pastor



“Embracing the Future”

Engaging in this Parish Initiative

Parishioner Guide to Your Workshop

Hello! Fr. Fest is excited to invite you to participate in St. Joseph’s upcoming “Embracing the Future” initiative. These parish workshops are organized around interactive and collaborative exercises that will encourage parishioners to work together to prioritize what you think are the most important features to bring St. Joseph parish’s mission to life. They are also designed to encourage collaboration and understanding among participants. These exercises were designed to be fun and to help you grow closer to your fellow parishioners! Enjoy!

To help you get started, please see your guide below.

1. **Sign up for a workshop:** You can sign up at this [link](#) or by checking for a sign-up link on the St. Joseph website. We will have three workshop slots available at a time. Once a workshop is full, we will open another one! Each workshop will be scheduled for (at most) an hour and a half. For safety’s sake, all workshops will be held via Zoom.

The first three sessions will take place on the following dates:

- Saturday, February 20, 2021 at 11am
- Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 7pm
- Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 7pm

Please note that if you sign up for a workshop, it is very important that you attend.

2. **Read the exercise descriptions:** To help you get a sense of these interactive exercises, please read the “Workshop Exercises Description” document posted on the sign-up portal or listed on the parish website. This document will give you more detailed understanding of the workshop exercises along with a list and description of the features you will be discussing. Take time to read this document before attending a small group workshop. It will help you to make the most of your time with your fellow parishioners.
3. **Read the information packet:** The “Embracing the Future” Committee created an information packet to prepare parishioners for these workshops. This information packet is posted on the sign-up portal and listed on the St. Joseph website. The information packet includes information on the Church’s mission, the mission of a Catholic parish, St. Joseph’s territory and demographics, larger trends within the Church and society, information on the St. Joseph parish site and facilities, a summary of recent parish financials, as well as a catalogue of the parish’s various prophetic, priestly, and shepherding efforts. It will be helpful to take time to review this material before attending a small group.



4. **Attend:** The last step is to attend your scheduled workshop! Be prepared for fun and engaging conversations with your fellow parishioners.

We have rehearsed these exercises and have found them fruitful, fun, and collaborative. If you have any questions, you can reach the Embracing the Future Committee Advisor, Rashad Badr, at rashad.badr@impactbeta.co or at (703) 328-0952 or you can reach out to Fr. Fest! We look forward to your participation and we are grateful for all that you do to make St. Joseph parish such a special place!