



Holy Apostles Catholic Church

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Dear Fr. Pranaitis,

Please find below the information requested by the Bishop for the 25th anniversary of the diocese.

1) What has Holy Apostles as a parish community become?

Holy Apostles has become a faith-centered, mission-oriented parish community. We celebrate the different ethnic heritages which make up our parish by keeping alive traditions from the past and sharing them with one another. Some of these celebrations include the annual Sicilian tradition of the St. Joseph's table, the Portuguese celebration of St. Isabella and the Hispanic celebration of our Lady of Guadalupe. All of these traditions come together in our annual parish festival where we share food and fun with each other and the community. The people of the parish strive to live the mission statement "By our prayer and actions we lovingly invite all to come home to God through Christ". This has manifested itself in many ways over the years resulting in a vibrant parish with over 70 ministries. We are currently moving towards a deeper understanding of our individual calls as Lay people to minister to all of the people of God who we encounter in our daily lives.

2) Who / What have been some significant events and people?

The parish was founded by 13 families with Msgr. John Albert in the winter of 1972. First services were held at Wilson School on April 15th, 1973 with 75 families. Holy Apostles was officially designated as a parish on July 1st, 1973 with 250 registered families. The first church building including a parent cooperative preschool program was dedicated on July 7th, 1974. Fr. Maurice J. McInerney became pastor in October of 1974 and Fr. Bernie Schmitz was his associate pastor. Fr. Paul Wicker arrived in 1981 and was confronted with the need for a new church building. Planning for the new facility began in 1981 and the building was completed and dedicated on August 15th, 1987 (Feast of the Assumption) with roughly 1250 registered families. The building was (and still is) the largest Catholic worship space in the Colorado Springs Diocese. Mary Parsons was hired as Director of the Preschool in 1982. Under Mary's leadership the preschool has

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achieved and maintained full accreditation by the National Catholic Education Association. Holy Apostles hosted a gathering of bishops from Eastern Europe in 1995 and Fr. Paul was invited to visit Ukraine. Fr. Paul visited Ukraine in 1996 and established a sister parish relationship with Annunciation Parish in Sumy, Ukraine. The Parish Religious Education Department was awarded the Mustard Seed award in April of 1997 for Parental Leadership and participation in Religious Education programs. Holy Apostles had its first Life Teen Mass in September of 1999. Fr. Paul celebrated the 40th anniversary of his ordination in December 2003. Under the leadership of Bob Stadjuhar, the business manager of Holy Apostles for 17 years, the parish paid off its mortgage debt in 2005. The parish currently has over 2300 registered families. Since Fr. Paul's arrival he has had 11 associate pastors including Fr. Bill Martinez, Fr. Karl Useldinger, Fr. Tom Kihn, Abbot Warren Heidgen, Fr. Jerry Borer, S.J., Fr. Mike Butler, Fr. Marty Hunckler, Fr. Brad Noonan, Fr. Alfredo Garcia, Fr. Frank Schmitt, S.J. and most recently Fr. Joe Damhorst, S.J.

3) How is Holy Apostles part of the diocesan and universal Church?

As the largest parish in the diocese, Holy Apostles frequently hosts the larger diocesan functions including the Catholic Schools mass and St. Mary's High School Baccalaureate. In addition to his responsibilities as pastor of Holy Apostles, Fr. Paul is canonical pastor of 3 additional parishes, and vicar of the Metro North Deanery. The staff regularly participate in Diocesan and National Church conferences and workshops to ensure fidelity to the larger Church. Information gathered from these conferences are then communicated to the larger parish through workshops, the bulletin and our website. Through the leadership of Fr. Paul Wicker, the Holy Apostles staff has aligned the parish goals with the goals established by the Bishop for Evangelization, Stewardship, Faith Formation, Social Justice and Leadership Development. In addition, the parish strives to fully live out, through its staff and ministries, the call of Vatican II to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to our community. As a parish we have supported mission trips to Mexico, Africa and the Ukraine.

4) How does Holy Apostles express (in words & in deeds) its sense of mission as a parish?

Holy Apostles parish continues to grow in its awareness as a community of disciples. Well over a thousand of our parishioners actively participate in one or more of our 70 active ministries. Holy Apostles has adopted the Apostles of Hope model identifying the need for each parishioner to be personally involved as an agent of Hope in our community. Holy Apostles is a House of Worship and a House of Formation. We continue to emphasize religious education both for children and for adults, and have a very active RCIA ministry. In addition to our religious education programs, the parish has an active charismatic prayer group which hosts regular meetings and seminars. We have incorporated the Catherine of Siena Institutes "Called & Gifted" program as a cornerstone of Lay Ministry. Each member of the parish is continuously challenged to examine their relationship with God and to discern where He is calling them to bring the Good News.

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5) How does Holy Apostles interact with the local community.

Our Outreach programs provide roughly 800 families with a Thanksgiving dinner and 1200 children with Christmas presents each year. The parish hosts a Superbowl party for the homeless at St. Mary's Cathedral each January. Other Outreach ministries include Stephens Ministers for those in crisis, Prayer Shawl ministry for those in need of consolation, Social Ministry for financial and food support, Interfaith Hospitality for sheltering the homeless of our community and many others. In addition to our Outreach ministries, Holy Apostles hosts numerous meetings for organizations within our community such as the Boy Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous and AlAnon. Holy Apostles is part of the ecumenical Northern Churches Care structure and routinely participates in appropriate ecumenical functions. The parish took the lead in raising over \$250,000 for the new Marion House Soup Kitchen to be built downtown.