“Good, better, best. Never let it rest. ‘Til your good is better and your better is best”. St. Jerome wrote this way back in the 4th century. He is telling us that we must not become complacent. We must continually change and strive to improve. His Vulgate, the translation of the Bible from Greek to Latin was a big change at the time.

This attitude of “positive change” can be applied to certain aspects of our Church today. Naturally, the “Good News” itself cannot be improved upon because it is the revealed Word of God and is already perfect. The “Church Militant” (the Church on Earth) is the vehicle that delivers this message. Being comprised of humans, the Church is not perfect. It can, and should, strive to become better.

Each of the Commissions of the Holy Spirit parish can contribute to the continual Improvement of the Church. This does not need to be a complicated process. The steps are straightforward and simple:

- Pray to have the Holy Spirit open our hearts and minds to the will of God and give us the courage of conviction to answer His call. Prayer is our most powerful tool.

- Reviews the Archbishop’s seven “Pastoral Priorities” and ask the question “what can we do through our Commission to have a positive impact on one of these priorities?” Choose one to focus upon.

- Set a goal which will positively impact the parish in relation to the chosen priority. This goal should be discrete, focused and measurable. Goals which are too broad such as “strive for world peace” are noble, but are beyond the actions which the commissions can effect. The goal should be a small step which has a specific, demonstrable outcome.

- Put together a plan of actions which will accomplish the stated goal. This should not be overly complicated. Simplicity will allow the plan to be understood and accomplished.

- Establish ways to measure the results of the action. The measurement should be made against something tangible. It is through these measurements that the action can be evaluated for success. If something works, great! If it does not work it should be discarded and a different approach tried.

- Document the goal, action and measurements in a uniform manner on the “Action Plan” form. Consistency and improved communication can be improved if all commissions use a common process.

Some people find “measurements” to be intrusive and ask “What is so important about having measurements? Isn’t that counter to the idea of having faith?” In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus describes a master who entrusted three servants with a portion of his wealth while he was away. The
two who made prudent investments and increased their master’s wealth were rewarded. The servant who hid his portion and did nothing with it was punished. The servant’s successes were measured on the results of their actions. Measuring the results of our plans allows us to be good stewards of the gift’s God had given us ... and one of the most precious of these gifts is our time. We do not want to squander this on the wrong things.

The Church today is under assault. In many parts of the world Catholics are being actively persecuted. Here in the United States we are currently battling for the souls of our families and friends against the forces of secular humanism and its destructive promotion of moral relativism. It is our mission as Catholics, and specifically as members of Holy Spirit’s commissions, to counter this offensive and spread the Good News. We must have faith that our actions, led by the Holy Spirit, will have a positive effect on our parish, our archdiocese and the whole Church!