

“Promote and proclaim a communion of faith, hope, and love.”

INTRODUCTION

For more than 160 years, the faithful, priests, and religious of what is now the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis have endeavored to make the name of Jesus Christ known and loved. Ever since Father Lucien Galtier established the area’s first Catholic church near the Mississippi River, generations of Catholics have sought to meet the needs of their age, promoting and proclaiming a Gospel message that is at once ever ancient and ever new. The Roman Catholic Church in these 12 counties of east central Minnesota, formed by Sacred Scripture and Tradition, has tried through worship and service to make present here the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. Now, like those who have gone before us in faith, the local Church which is the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis must order the household of faith anew.

The Strategic Plan for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis was developed with the objective of making our local Church more agile and able to fulfill its mission. It establishes a framework for archdiocesan-wide strategic initiatives and calls for changes to parish and Catholic school operation and infrastructure. As such, this Strategic Plan is the most comprehensive plan initiated in the history of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The changes called for under the plan will be made as a part of a coordinated strategy taking into account all aspects of parish and school life with an emphasis on continual evaluation and improvement.

Because we are all members of one local Church, these changes are important for all of the 800,000 Catholics who live within the Archdiocese. The changes are, in fact, important to everyone in our community: whether one participates in weekly Mass at a parish or attends one of the Catholic universities located within the Archdiocese; whether one is served by a Catholic Charities program or is cared for in a Catholic hospital; whether one is young or old, Catholic or not, this Strategic Plan is structured to serve all our brothers and sisters in response to the call of the Lord Jesus.

Changes outlined in the Strategic Plan will be implemented over a period of years. No changes to parish structures are slated to begin before January 2011. No changes to schools will begin before June 2011, although some schools will be asked to review their sustainability. The structural changes outlined in the plan were made following careful analysis of changing population patterns, outreach potential, changes in the number of clergy and religious as well as the growth in ecclesial lay ministry, location and condition of buildings, and financial stress on parishes and schools. Beyond good stewardship of limited resources, the primary goal of the Strategic Plan is fulfilling the mission of the Church in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis: making the name of Jesus Christ known and loved by promoting and proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed through vibrant parish communities, quality Catholic education, and ready outreach to the poor and marginalized.

CONTEXT FOR THE ARCHDIOCESAN STRATEGIC PLAN

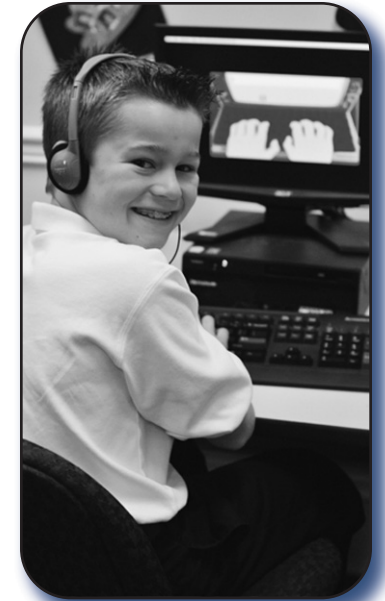
Although the mission of the Church and the message of the Gospel are timeless, the ways we live out the mission of the Church evolve in response to the signs of the times. For more than 2,000 years the Church has done just this while remaining true to her core teachings. Right now, a disproportionate number of church and school buildings are in areas where population growth has slowed or changed dramatically. Many of the church and school buildings were built in earlier eras when population patterns and other demographic factors were considerably different than they are now. During the European immigration booms in the late 19th and early 20th century, the various immigrant groups settling in the core cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis needed parishes where their native language was spoken and their national customs were observed. Large, ethnic church buildings were built as a point of pride, sometimes within a few blocks of another Catholic church building which was home to another ethnic parish community. This model no longer serves the current reality. The dramatic demographic shifts of the past half century: the movement out of core cities to the suburbs; the decrease in household size; and the aging population (please see APPENDIX E for detailed demographic data) have resulted in a fundamental need for change.

Catholic schools have also undergone dramatic change in the past half century due to these same factors. When many of the current Catholic schools were built, families were

able to send their children to Catholic schools at relatively nominal cost thanks, in large part, to the great gift of religious communities providing sisters and brothers to administer and teach in those schools. The decline in religious vocations and the increase in gifted lay school staff, as well as the need to pay competitive wages, have changed the dynamic of Catholic education in this country over the past 50 years. The need for more specialization, more technology in the classroom, greater accountability regarding educational quality, and the dramatic shift in demographics have changed fundamentally the landscape for all schools: public, private, and parochial. The challenge facing Catholic schools is to make them affordable to all families who wish to send their children to Catholic school.

In summary, the current infrastructure grew to serve a different population. As a result, a disproportionate number of parish and school buildings are located in areas where the population is no longer able to sustain more than one parish or one school. In fact, in parishes across the Archdiocese, 32% of weekend Masses are less than one-third full and Catholic schools have, on the whole, 20% more seats than they have students. Now we are faced with a challenge: maintain too many aging buildings at often great expense or refocus those resources on creating revitalized communities responsive to the mission of the Church today and as we move into the future. While part of the answer is greater outreach and evangelization, there is also the need for intentional decisions which will foster sustainability and growth.

Another factor is the number of priests available for ministry. Despite a significant number of seminarians in formation for the Archdiocese, it is projected that we will have 19 fewer priests eligible to be pastor in 2020 than are eligible now. Even with a growth in priestly vocations the need exists to foster a more vibrant local Church which brings to full recognition the gifts of the lay faithful.



An additional dynamic is the arrival during recent decades of immigrants from different countries of origin than those of previous eras. The immigrants of today continue to be an important factor of growth for this local Church. It is therefore necessary to ensure that these brothers and sisters receive the same benefit that immigrants of old had to the sacraments, to pastoral care, and to educational opportunities, in the language and cultural custom with which they are familiar. Welcoming our brothers and sisters arriving in the Archdiocese today is an essential sign of the universality of the Church and an acknowledgement of the gifts immigrants bring to this local Church.

Finally, the Archdiocese must bring itself into the 21st century in the area of administrative practices. While most parts of the business world have been reporting electronically for decades, much of the reporting done by parishes is still on paper. This antiquated system of data-tracking prevents us from accessing real time data. It also creates more work at both the parish and archdiocesan level. For example, right now some information for required reports is gathered and data-entered at the parish level only to be mailed to the Archdiocese and then data-entered again at the archdiocesan level. This plan pushes us all forward, requiring electronic reporting of parish annual reports beginning in the autumn of 2011.

The Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis is not unique in the challenges facing it. Many other dioceses across the United States, as well as public institutions locally and nationally, have gone through reorganization in the past several decades. Even during the past quarter century in this Archdiocese, for example, there have been changes to parish and school structures. Currently, there are 213 parishes within the Archdiocese, seven less than 25 years ago and there are 98 schools within the Archdiocese, 24 less than in 1985. Clustered parishes are also an existing reality. Currently, 25% of parishes within the Archdiocese are in a cluster relationship with one pastor serving two or more parishes. Nationally, the percentage of clustered parishes is higher. Just as our parents and grandparents sacrificed for the future of the faith, the sacrifices asked today of our

local Church are meant to ensure that our faith is as vital for our children and our grandchildren as it has been for us. United, we can move forward with changes that are based in a shared understanding of the realities we face, as well as rooted in the mission given to us by Christ to spread his Gospel of love and life.

The changes outlined in the Strategic Plan are needed for us to strengthen our local Church in this new millennium. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are all called into *communio*, communion as Church, so as to be sent forth in *missio*, mission into the world. We are called into a communion of faith, hope, and love as one body in Christ, a body for the glorified Christ to continue his saving mission in the world.

THE LOCAL CHURCH: A VISION TO GUIDE US INTO THE FUTURE

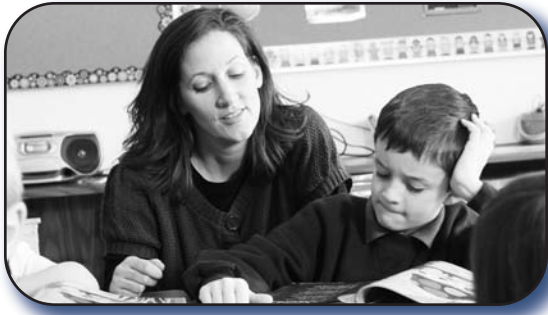
The core truths of our Catholic faith and the essential mission of the Church do not change. The seven guiding principles of the planning process as envisioned by the Archbishop ensure that the strategic decisions and initiatives outlined in the plan are aligned with that mission. However, the ways in which we fulfill the mission of the Church do evolve over time. The Strategic Plan provides a roadmap to realize the vision of this local Church in the coming years and decades.

The faithful in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis are called to be a vibrant communion of faith, hope, and love. **Faith** illuminates our reasoning by helping us appreciate that the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus is the highest value which orients our lives and informs our decisions. By **Hope** we entrust ourselves to the promise of eternal life, sure that if we live in faith, God will provide a way in each and every circumstance of life. In **Love** we live our faith and hope through the power of the Holy Spirit, testifying to the union which God both initiates and perfects by giving of ourselves to God and neighbor. As the faithful of the local Church of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, we are called to offer these gifts to one another so that the name of Jesus Christ might be known and loved anew.

For all **lay faithful** who are invited to share their gifts in service of the Church, this Strategic Plan is founded upon the truth that it is the baptismal vocation which is fundamental in the Church. This insight, reclaimed for the Church by the Second Vatican Council, calls men and women of faith to holiness of life and to a shared responsibility. Although lay men and women have a principal responsibility to ensure that our economic and public life is informed by Gospel values, the Church is in need of their gifts of faith and professional excellence. Strategic initiatives under the plan call on parishes to encourage lay leaders with gifts in administration to help address the operational needs of a parish, so that pastors may focus on preaching, teaching, and sanctifying. Other lay faithful may be invited to offer their gifts of ministry for the Church, as many men and women already do. In recognition of the great importance of laity in the Church, parishes are being asked to establish appropriate qualifications for positions, adhere to best practices, and provide opportunities for ongoing formation and training for lay staff and volunteers.

Seven Guiding Principles of the Strategic Plan

- 1. Full sacramental ministry:** Changes are aimed at providing a stronger sacramental presence for all Catholics, while fostering the ministry of priests, deacons, and, where appropriate, lay ecclesial ministers.
- 2. Competent pastoral leadership:** Coordinated and ongoing formation and training for clergy and lay leaders, as well as established best practices in administration will help ensure inspired ministry. Emphasis will be placed on collaboration of the ordained and laity in leadership and service in the Church.
- 3. Special concern for the needs of the poor, marginalized, and immigrant:** Throughout our history the poor, marginalized, and immigrant have been acknowledged as a gift to the Church. The Strategic Plan calls for all parishes within the Archdiocese to help support certain parishes and schools in locations most critical to advancing this mission yet are not likely to be financially sustainable for the foreseeable future because of the economic circumstances of those they serve.
- 4. Catholic school support and inclusion in the planning process:** Under the Strategic Plan, all Catholic school communities are expected to review sustainability based upon the established criteria for long term viability with the goal of making a high quality Catholic education available to every family who seeks it.
- 5. Every parish is involved in the discussion:** Greater collaboration is required of us all under the Strategic Plan. The establishment of regional administrative centers and regional school discussions, as well as other structures for inter-parish and inter-school communication and cooperation will provide the framework for this increased collaboration.
- 6. Every parish is expected to evaluate their own resources and adjust accordingly:** The Strategic Plan provides a structure for ongoing evaluation of resources, the establishment of sustainable financial models, as well as more transparent communication regarding resources. While the truths of our faith remain constant, we must be willing to adapt our physical structure and policies to address the signs of the times.
- 7. Respect, patience and honesty in all discussions to build on strengths:** The spirit of consultation and communication which has been a key feature of the planning process will continue during the coming months and years. The Archdiocese will continue to welcome comments from pastors, parish and Catholic school leaders and staff, parishioners, Catholic school families, and others.



For those who serve the local Church as **priests**, this Strategic Plan re-emphasizes what is central to their call: to imitate the mystery of the Eucharist which they celebrate with and for the faithful. Increasingly priests have been asked to take on administrative tasks to a point that can frustrate their pastoral responsibilities. The Strategic Plan outlines changes aimed at helping priests focus on their essential ministry. For those who serve as **permanent deacons**, the plan fosters a more structured and focused approach to their ministry. In order to ensure inspired ministry by all clergy, a more formalized structure of ongoing formation is being initiated under the Strategic Plan. More equitably assigning clergy, including retired priests, those in academia, and those assigned as chaplains, will improve access to full sacramental ministry for everyone, including the growing senior population and those who speak a language other than English.

For **those who sacrifice for Catholic Education**, whether parent or student, teacher or administrator, pastor or benefactor, this Strategic Plan is the beginning of a more coordinated vision for Catholic education in the Archdiocese. We are blessed with an abundance of schools with very dedicated supporters. We also face challenges which have emerged over the past decades and have yet to be addressed systematically. This Strategic Plan begins an effort to answer the fundamental questions which must be answered: how will we sustain Catholic education for generations to come?; how will Catholic education remain true to its core values while realizing quality academic outcomes?; how are students' lives enhanced by a Catholic education? Under the Strategic Plan, Catholic Schools are called to meet consistent standards of excellence and financial transparency. This means that when parents choose a Catholic school they will know that their school meets defined standards in the areas of Catholic identity, academic quality, financial management, and community outreach. Schools will undergo regular review of these viability factors to ensure that they are sustainable going forward. The plan outlines structured responses if school leaders identify challenges to viability in any of these four areas.

For **our neighbors in this 12 county area**, this Strategic Plan reinvests the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis in the work of faith, hope, and love which it has been about since the first permanent Catholic presence was established here more than 160 years ago. We are refocusing so as to renew our efforts to build a community that fosters authentic human values and that is always ready to serve those in need. Whether a person serves with us or is served by us, we are mindful of the words of Christ: it is in giving that we receive. This Strategic Plan will assist the local Church in sharing the gifts we have received with all who call this area home.

No matter what your role, you play an important part in the future of this local Church. If you have a gift for teaching young people about our faith, think about how you can become more engaged in catechesis; if you are blessed with a pastoral heart, contemplate how you may provide comfort to those in need; if you have a talent for administration, reflect upon how you could help your parish or school respond to the initiatives outlined in the Strategic Plan; if you are gifted with temporal resources, consider how your generosity could further the mission of the Church in this Archdiocese. Please prayerfully contemplate how you might assist the parishes, schools, and institutions of this Archdiocese to promote and proclaim a communion of faith, hope, and love in your local Church, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CHANGES UNDER THE STRATEGIC PLAN:

- **Strategic initiatives** which will encourage cooperation, improve stewardship of resources, and increase transparency in the areas of: qualified pastoral leadership; Catholic schools; and finance and administration to improve ministry, evangelization, and outreach in the Archdiocese.
- **21 parishes will merge with 14 receiving parishes** during the next several years, bringing the Archdiocese from **213** parishes in October 2010 to **192** following the implementation of the announced decisions. Masses will continue to be celebrated at the church building of the merging parish until a decision which contradicts such use is made by the parish pastoral and finance councils of the receiving parish community, in consultation with the Archbishop and the Presbyteral Council.
- **33 parishes will enter into new cluster arrangements** during the next several years with one pastor leading two or more parishes, following implementation of the announced decisions.
- **25 parishes are identified for structured collaboration** with neighboring parishes; many of these sites may eventually move toward a cluster; all parishes and schools are called into greater collaboration under the Strategic Plan.
- **Certain schools are under urgent review** to determine sustainability; it is likely that local leadership at these schools will decide that some of these schools should close at the end of the 2010-2011 school year.