

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

So that the mission of the Church may be fulfilled, the Archdiocese has identified certain initiatives to improve administration and ministry in parishes, at schools, and throughout this local Church. The following summary of strategic initiatives, while not intended to be comprehensive, sets forth a direction for administrative and operational changes to be implemented in the near future at the service of mission. In order to achieve the vision for the future of this local Church, three key pillars must be strengthened: inspired pastoral leadership; exceptional Catholic education; and infrastructure for the Church of today and tomorrow.

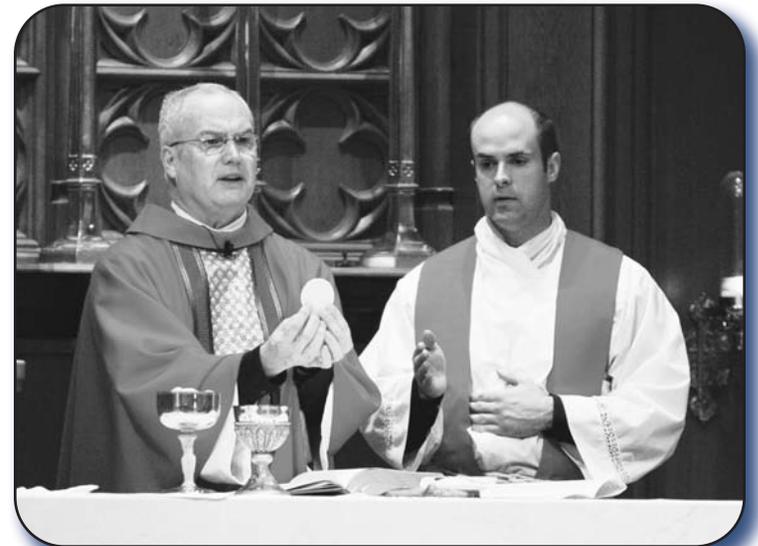
INSPIRED PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

Both lay and ordained leaders play key roles in the Church. Many excellent ordained and lay pastoral leaders currently serve the faithful of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. While there remains an essential difference among ordained and lay pastoral leaders and the roles they may perform, the Second Vatican Council reminds the Church of the fundamental importance of the baptismal vocation and the universal call to holiness to which all are called and, in service of which, all pastoral leadership is ordered.

PRIESTS AND DEACONS

In order to ensure continued competent **ordained pastoral leaders**, priests and deacons will be expected to engage in 16 hours of ongoing formation each year. Recognizing the diverse needs of the presbyterate and the diaconate, the newly formed Center for Clergy Formation will be responsible for realizing this goal. The Center for Clergy Formation will be housed at the St. Paul Seminary and will bring together the Office of Vocations, the Institute of Ongoing Formation for Clergy, and the Institute of Diaconal Formation.

- **Office of Vocations** - the Office of Vocations will remain unchanged. For the last several years, this Archdiocese has had 60 or more seminarians in formation. Mindful of the good work already being done, effort should be given to review best practices around the country especially as it pertains to vocational discernment opportunities or summer camps for diverse audiences, as well as opportunities to foster vocations to consecrated life.
- **Institute for Ongoing Clergy Formation** - A part-time director will guide the work of the Institute of Ongoing Clergy Formation. This work will involve an integrated approach to both priestly and diaconal ongoing formation. While collaboration with the Director of the Institute of Diaconal Formation (see below) will be necessary for deacons, the director will coordinate ongoing formation opportunities for the three unique groups within the presbyterate: newly ordained (ordained one to four years), new pastors (ordained five to seven years), and experienced priests.
 - *Newly Ordained Priests* - The Director would gather the newly ordained men by class for prayer and reflection around issues regarding the transition into the presbyterate.
 - *New Pastors* - New pastors will be gathered for focused formation opportunities pertaining to challenges and opportunities to be found in taking on a pastorate. Particular attention will be given to canonical and organizational expectations.
 - *Ongoing Formation for the Presbyterate/Diaconate* - In addition to the educational opportunities mentioned above, a series of ongoing formation opportunities for priests and deacons in the Archdiocese will be offered. This could be a combination of the Clergy Study Day format (twice a year on coordinated themes) and other formation opportunities as decided. It may also be important to designate some priest-specific or deacon-specific opportunities.
- **Institute for Diaconal Formation** - A full-time director will guide the work of the recently revised diaconal formation program. In collaboration with the St. Paul Seminary and under the direction of its Rector, the director will be responsible for the integration of the revised diaconal program. In addition, the director will serve as an advisor to the Director of Ongoing Formation in determining offerings for ongoing formation appropriate to permanent deacons.



In addition, clear expectations for assignments, support, and assessment for priests and deacons will be formalized under initiatives set in motion by the Strategic Plan. Also in development as a part of the Strategic Plan are more clearly defined criteria for a priest to be eligible for appointment as pastor and enhanced support for international priests who serve generously in the Archdiocese.

VIBRANT LAY INVOLVEMENT

In order to ensure the continued commitment of inspired **lay pastoral leaders**, parish, school, and archdiocesan employees should complete six hours of ongoing formation sponsored by the Archdiocese annually. Like the ordained, lay pastoral leaders are also encouraged to live lives of faith informed by daily personal prayer and a regular, if not daily, participation in the liturgical life of the Church. Apart from opportunities already provided for by various ministerial groups, the Archdiocese will organize at least two annual opportunities for ongoing formation for lay pastoral leaders. Under the purview of the archdiocesan Office of Parish Services, and offered on a regional basis, such educational offerings will aspire to be interdisciplinary and highlight best practices in the Archdiocese, as well as the Church as a whole. Parishes are encouraged to provide staff opportunities for periodic days of recollection and professional development. All pastoral leaders who have not had the opportunity to engage in an in-depth study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are encouraged to enroll in the Archbishop Harry J. Flynn Catechetical Institute at the St. Paul Seminary to assist them in the ongoing need to base all pastoral service on the shared faith of the Church. In addition, pastoral leaders are encouraged to consider enrolling in the graduate programs of Theology or Pastoral Studies at the St. Paul Seminary. These programs are offered at a discounted rate to the men and women who work in parishes within the Archdiocese. Lay leaders and staff should also participate in an annual assessment with a corresponding review of a comprehensive job description for each parish staff position. Basic standards and required competencies for initial appointment should be in place in all parishes and schools.

EXCEPTIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Catholic education and opportunities for catechesis and growth in faith come in a variety of forms including Catholic schools, faith formation, youth ministry, and evangelization and outreach. As baptized Christians, all the faithful are called to grow in the knowledge of their faith and to witness to the faith to all they meet.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic schools are an essential part of promoting and proclaiming a communion of faith, hope, and love. We are blessed with the presence of many fine Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Catholic schools develop strong partnerships between home and classroom that foster academic excellence and infuse fully Catholic teaching and values into every element of a student's educational experience. Catholic school students are given an opportunity to live out their faith in service to the larger community, providing a foundation for students to become faith-filled ethical leaders in the local and global community. Catholic schools face the challenge of remaining viable while also being affordable to all families who desire a Catholic school education for their children. Catholic school viability is measured against criteria in four areas: Catholic identity, academic quality, financial management, and community outreach (please see section entitled STRATEGIC DECISIONS AFFECTING SCHOOLS).

Forthcoming initiatives related to schools include, but are not limited to, changes in the following areas:

- **Catholic Identity** - In order to ensure a faith-filled identity, each Catholic School will complete an annual Catholic identity report to be filed with the archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools at the end of each school year. Every other year, Office of Catholic Schools staff will conduct an onsite review of Catholic identity.
- **Academic Quality** - In order to ensure robust academic quality, each Catholic school will be accredited by an agency approved by the State of Minnesota. Schools must also incorporate standards developed by the Office of Catholic Schools that would include, but would not be limited to, affordability, transportation, staffing, technology, development, and curriculum.
- **Financial Management** - The Office of Catholic Schools will coordinate an effort to ensure the responsible financial management of every school in the Archdiocese.



- **Community Outreach** - To ensure effective community outreach every school will be expected to have development, marketing, and student recruitment plans in place.

To serve these ends, the Office of Catholic Schools is authorized to evaluate the educational program of all Catholic schools within the Archdiocese to assure adherence to the standards set by the Archdiocese in response to the Archbishop's direction. The Office of Catholic Schools will also lead an effort to develop a structured response to consistent enrollment declines at a school and the need for managing to current budget realities.



To assure the future of Catholic schools that enrich lives and shape our community, the Archbishop will establish an **Archdiocesan Schools Advisory Board**. The mission of this Board will be to foster and promote the ministry of Catholic elementary and high schools as part of the educational mission of this local Church, the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The Board would advise on areas including Catholic identity, finance, institutional advancement, and planning. This Board would also have the responsibility to review the designation of certain Catholic schools receiving special support as evidence of the commitment of the Archdiocese to the poor, the marginalized, and the immigrant.

A national consulting firm has been retained by the Archdiocese to bring a broad national perspective to view the quality, affordability, and vitality of the Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. They will identify strategies, structures, and models that have proven to be effective in Catholic schools nationally, and recommend models and practices that could be effective in this Archdiocese. The consultants are addressing the areas of Catholic identity, operations and finance, governance, leadership, and educational effectiveness.

FAITH FORMATION

Under the strategic plan, all the faithful are called to renew their commitment to lifelong faith formation. The plan also recognizes the need for ongoing formation for faith formation leaders and catechists. Toward this end the Strategic Plan calls on parishes to collaborate with one another in order to provide the best faith formation programming possible. While some parishes might retain a standalone faith formation program for elementary students, others might consider a shared program. Not only are leaders asked to review program content and form regularly to ensure compliance with the Archdiocesan Religion Standards, they are also asked to follow the guidelines noted in the National Directory for Catechesis and the General Directory for Catechesis. Parishes are encouraged to work together to meet the needs of adult faith formation and to make better use of existing faith formation resources. Two important initiatives that should be utilized more fully in parishes are *Early Catholic Family Life* and *All in God's Plan*, two age-appropriate programs offered by the archdiocesan Office of Marriage, Family, and Life.



YOUTH MINISTRY

Special consideration will also need to be given to youth in the years ahead. The Archdiocese is developing several initiatives to help young people continue to grow in their faith after Confirmation. Recognizing the good work already being done in a number of parishes, these initiatives will take a regional approach with the aim to bring young people together with their peers across the Archdiocese for formation and worship. Fortunately, several nationally recognized Catholic youth organizations reside within the Archdiocese and efforts are already underway to engage these entities to consider partnerships to meet the faith formation needs of this important age group. Youth and young adults are the future of our Church and more intentional outreach to them is necessary to realize the mission of the Church. To realize this needed outreach, the Archdiocese will establish an Archdiocesan Youth Ministry Advisory Committee and finalize its regional programmatic opportunities by June 1, 2011.

EVANGELIZATION AND OUTREACH

Ultimately, the purpose of the Strategic Plan is to further knowledge of and love for the name of Jesus Christ in His body, the Church. In addition to full sacramental ministry, each parish must recommit itself to reach out to the unchurched as well as to inactive Catholics. A regional vicariate structure will assist parishes in coordinated efforts to re-engage members of the Church who no longer actively practice their faith. This assistance will involve both the training of parish personnel as well as programmatic opportunities to engage inactive Catholics. Finally, each parish must, as an essential aspect of its mission, aspire to sow the fullness of Christ's witness. Accordingly, each parish is called to foster the Gospel of Life and the right of justice, as well as to take practical steps to ensure that material needs of parishioners are met.

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE CHURCH OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for more cohesive operation of parishes, schools, and other institutions within the Archdiocese that will result in stronger ministry and administration. The plan will help parishes, schools, and archdiocesan central offices to utilize more fully 21st century technology and best practices in service of the Church. The plan also sets out guidelines for best practices in the area of administration and finance and establishes an infrastructure for sharing what works administratively and programmatically between parishes and schools.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The life of every parish is intimately local and yet the decentralization of parish life in the local Church of the Archdiocese sometimes creates a challenge for effective and efficient ministry. Standardizing certain operations and programming across the parishes of the Archdiocese, while maintaining our fundamentally decentralized structure, will increase the level of service and value throughout this local Church. One of the financial goals of the strategic planning effort is to ensure that all parishes and Catholic schools in the Archdiocese are on a sound financial footing. In some cases, that may require the resolution of long standing debts owed to outside parties and to the Archdiocese. In order for this goal to be achievable, it is necessary that each parish and school develops and adheres to a balanced budget, that each parish finance council monitors the implementation of the approved budget and assists the pastor in making adjustments as needed to align actual operations with a balanced budget, and that the Archdiocese provides assistance and consistent procedures to increase the quality of financial practices across all the parishes and schools in the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocese will establish a **Regional Vicariate** structure (please see map, APPENDIX D). In place most recently from 1986-2000, regional vicariates offer the local Church a way to organize itself in three important areas: governance, programming, and financial administration. A regional vicar appointed by the Archbishop will exercise several canonical and administrative responsibilities, as well as interact in a mediating fashion with the deans of each deanery. The deans will continue to serve the Archbishop through their office and collectively in the Presbyteral Council as a consultative body, while the regional vicars will serve as an extension of the Archbishop's governance and administrative responsibility. Among their responsibilities, regional vicars will: make regular parish visitations (to review liturgy, sacramental records, etc); facilitate regional programmatic offerings of the Archdiocese and among deaneries; advocate for financial transparency; and serve on the Archbishop's Council.

In addition, **Regional Shared Service Centers** will provide financial, accounting, and administrative support to parishes which are in debt or which simply seek assistance. The regional centers will also present opportunity for economies of scale in combining 'backroom' functions. Finally, the regional centers will assist parishes and the archdiocesan central offices in implementing a **Standardized Accounting System for Parish Financial Reporting** to increase efficiency and accuracy and to promote required electronic submission of parish annual reports beginning in the autumn of 2011. Parish budgets demonstrate responsible fiscal stewardship when they account for meeting:

- normal operating expenses
- sufficient reserve funds
- contributions to a capital improvement fund for the long-term maintenance of facilities
- payments for insurance premiums
- payments to employee benefit and retirement plans
- assessments to the Archdiocese
- appropriate accruals for the servicing of existing debt

Mandatory, immediate consultation with appropriate archdiocesan staff or regional vicars will be necessary to develop a workout plan if the parish budget is not balanced or the parish is not current on its debt obligations.

In response to requests from pastors, a process is in place to consider revisions to the **Parish Assessment Formula**. Among the topics being considered are: revision for assessment credit for the support of a parish school based on a more realistic estimate of the per child cost of supporting a parish school; exemption of tuition receipts from assessment; and increasing the assessment at all parishes to provide for support of certain schools and to increase the availability of Catholic education across the Archdiocese. An initiative is already under way to review the annual **Catholic Services Appeal** and determine how parishes might be able to participate under a renewed stewardship model. To further assist parishes, the Archdiocese will offer training opportunities to pastors and parish staff to help parishes implement more fruitful parish stewardship efforts.

CHAPLAINCIES

Chaplaincies are non-parish communities of the faithful entrusted to a parish priest. However, these communities have not been formally established as parishes, either because they are still in the process of developing into a parish or because the community itself is better served by another ecclesial model. For instance, communities of the faithful that are spread across broad areas, such as members of immigrant groups, or are affiliated with institutions such as high schools, universities, hospitals, or the military are often better served by the chaplaincy model. As of January 1, 2011, the Archdiocese will clarify the status of all chaplaincies in the Archdiocese.

One chaplaincy will be dedicated to Latino Ministry. Under the coordination of an appointed chaplain, a **Latino Ministry Advisory Board** will be established to coordinate outreach to Spanish-speaking Catholics. While Mass will continue to be offered in Spanish throughout the Archdiocese (currently, Mass is offered in Spanish at 23 parishes) under the Strategic Plan, resources will be focused at certain parishes so that Spanish-speaking Catholics will have access to full sacramental ministry, as well as faith formation programming, and pastoral care at those locations. The Archdiocese will strengthen its current commitment to Latino Ministry program development and by June 2011 an institute to provide leadership training in the Latino Community will be formalized.



FURTHER NOTES ON IMPLEMENTATION

In order to facilitate properly the implementation of strategic initiatives and decisions, certain policies and procedures must be established to provide for structural changes under the Strategic Plan. Forthcoming initiatives related to implementation of strategic initiatives and decisions include, but are not limited to, changes in the following areas:

Realignment of Deaneries/Reclassification of parishes:

- Realign deaneries to support inter-parish relationships within the local Church
- Reclassify national parishes that no longer have a compelling pastoral reason to serve a particular national community
- Reestablish parish boundaries for canonical purposes and to help pastors coordinate the pastoral care within a given geographic area

Administer the Assets and Liabilities of Merging Parishes: Assets and liabilities of a parish merging with another parish will go to the new merged parish corporation; communication regarding assets and liabilities of merging parishes should be transparent to parish members.

- Evaluation of existing assets and liabilities of both parishes, including debt to the Archdiocese, third parties, general accounts payable, wages payable, workers' compensation contributions, benefit plan contributions, taxes payable, etc.

- Development of a budget and projection of operations for the proposed merged organization, to ensure that fiscal viability will exist post-merger
- Analysis and establishment of the priority of all claims
- Negotiations to resolve unsecured third-party debt vs. archdiocesan debt, giving recognition to the value of combined assets, including real estate to be sold and other property to be liquidated
- Development of a system to prioritize building projects and advise parishes on how to proceed

Monitoring of Plan Implementation:

- Establishment of a monitoring board consisting of clergy and lay members to advise on the effectiveness of plan implementation
- Development of a structure for regular, ongoing review of parish sustainability using established criteria for long-term viability of parishes (please see APPENDIX B).
- Monitoring of preservation of sacred items and articles of architectural or artistic significance
- Development of a plan to provide for ongoing care of cemeteries
- Examination of potential uses of buildings which are eventually identified for closure by parish communities

Ongoing Evaluation:

This Strategic Plan is intended to be dynamic. In the years to come, there will be a need for ongoing evaluation and adjustment to meet future challenges and opportunities as we work to promote and proclaim a communion of faith, hope, and love in this Archdiocese.

“My dear brothers and sisters, our own version of being Church must be rooted in the communion of faith, hope, and love that we share as the universal Body of Christ in this Archdiocese. Of course, that communion will always be supported in our parish communities, but going forward, this may happen in ways that we have not previously experienced. More than likely this will require new ways of thinking on the part of pastors and parishioners alike. It will require that weekly routines be altered and yes, even lives be adjusted. But our response to the mission of Christ must remain ever the same, one full of hope that we are united in our witness to the presence of Christ, who is the way, the life, and the truth.”

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
March 23, 2010