

LIVING OUR FAITH in the 21ST CENTURY

2008 General Observations and Recommendations

GROWTH IN HOLINESS ⇨ STRENGTHEN PARISHES ⇨ FOSTER VOCATIONS ⇨ STRENGTHEN EDUCATION ⇨ JUSTICE & CHARITY ⇨ STEWARDSHIP



June 13, 2008

To: Archbishop Dolan

Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

MT 28:18-20

After wide consultation, it is with great joy that the Vision 21 Committee presents these remarks, insights, hopes and recommendations regarding the Catholic Church of southeastern Wisconsin during the first decade of the 21st century.

This commentary on the experience of the faithful is organized around the priorities you set for the People of God in this archdiocese, namely:

- Seek ye first the kingdom of God
- Strengthen our parishes
- Foster a sense of vocation in the Church
- Strengthen Catholic education and faith formation
- Emphasize our mission of justice and charity, and
- Cultivate good stewardship.

Reflecting on our collective experience, with Sacred Scripture and theological background from Vatican II documents, papal letters and documents of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, our particular recommendations are presented.

The Church in southeastern Wisconsin relies on the full participation of each member so that Christ's Mission may flourish in the third millennium. Based on the work of the many who participated in this planning process, we have reason to believe we are on the Way!

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Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. MT 6:33



About Membership in the Catholic Church

1. In the sacrament of Baptism Catholics become one with Christ and are united with all the baptized as the Body of Christ on earth. Inspired by Jesus and his disciples and strengthened by God's grace the Catholic community of southeastern Wisconsin dares to continue Christ's Mission in our time, *Living Our Faith* in ordinary and extraordinary ways in the daily activities of our lives.
2. Catholics cherish membership in our parishes. People become members of a parish to:
 - Grow in holiness as they meet, know and live Christ;
 - Deal with personal and societal issues in a context of faith;
 - Put their faith into action, sharing time and talent participating in the Mission work of the parishes, giving service and working for justice;
 - Share their treasure for the common good of the parishes and the archdiocese;
 - Work for the transformation of the larger community and world.

About the Importance of the Celebration of Mass and Sacraments

3. From baptism until our death in the Lord, receiving and celebrating the sacraments is essential if we are to be truly transformed into Christ.
4. For Catholics, the Eucharistic celebration stands at the center of our practice of the faith. In the Eucharist, Christ is present in multiple ways: in the sacred ministers, in the assembly gathered, in the Word proclaimed and in the bread and wine which become the very Body and Blood of Christ. In community, Word and sacrament we are renewed for Mission in Christ. For us, Mass is not a luxury, it is a necessity.

About the Reality of Church Ministry with Fewer Priests

5. Providing the opportunity for weekly or daily Mass at every parish is becoming more challenging because of the shortage of priests. While projecting the quantity of diocesan priests available for active ministry is difficult primarily because of the range of ages at which priests tend to retire (68-75 years of age), current data indicate that by the year 2020 the number of diocesan priests serving in active ministry in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee will have decreased by approximately 50% of the number we have today. In other words, even though forecasting specific future reductions in priest personnel is difficult, the obvious current trend calls for all Catholics in the Archdiocese to prepare for church ministry with fewer priests.
6. Some see the solution to the priest shortage to lie within reach, if the Church would ordain properly prepared men and women, regardless of marital status. Others suggest that the Church should invite priests who departed from active ministry to return to sacramental

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work. An additional solution that some suggest concerning the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick would be for deacons to be established as ministers of this sacrament. While we appreciate the deep and sincere conviction these people have for these solutions, such resolutions are not seen as something that can be decided locally nor are they seen to be in the offering for the universal Church. Hence, Vision 21st Century does not rely on these remedies.

7. The Church in the United States is engaged in a nation-wide conversation about its responsibility to meet the sacramental and communal needs of God's people in the age. We support this dialogue. [www.emergingmodels.org]

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Alternate Pastoral Leadership Models

We encourage you to ask the Priests' Placement Board to:

- a) Design a plan and to implement options allowed by c.517.2 of the Code of Canon Law, utilizing the charisms of our ordained ministers and lay ecclesial ministers to strengthen ministry and faith communities throughout the archdiocese.
- b) Educate priests and the faithful about the role of a parish director.

From the Code of Canon Law, c. 517§2

If, because of a lack of priests, the diocesan bishop has decided that participation in the pastoral care of a parish is to be entrusted to a deacon, or to another person who is not a priest, or to a community of persons, he is to appoint some priest who, provided with the powers and faculties of a pastor, is to direct the pastoral care.

About Evangelization and the Church's Mission

8. The Mission of the Church drives its organization, not the reverse. This mission is entrusted not only to the Catholic community but to our ecumenical Christian sisters and brothers as well. Together we endeavor to proclaim the Good News of Christ in our words and actions to one another and to persons who are not associated with any faith or religion.
9. Parish and archdiocesan leadership must constantly evaluate how well our presence and ministries serve the spiritual needs not only of our members but all persons. Indeed, the presence of the Church community must be where the people who seek God actually are, rather than expecting that these people necessarily will go where the Church community gathers.
10. Parish ministry holds a primary position in the ministries of the Church. Extra-parochial ministry must also be given high importance in our evangelization efforts. By extra-parochial ministry we mean Catholic presence and ministry beyond the parish campus, in high schools and colleges, in hospitals and nursing facilities, in prisons, military service, community agencies, media communications, etc.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Catholic Presence

Continue to establish Catholic Centers, e.g., physical buildings or internet websites, where people can feel welcome to converse, study, pray and share God's love.

RE: Mission-driven Initiatives

Encourage mission-driven initiatives that cross district lines e.g., retreat programs, youth ministry, adult religious education, and social ministry. In short, encourage parishes and clusters to provide needed services that might welcome people to the Catholic community, e.g., childcare, neighborhood projects, or sports activities. We also recommend that an accent be placed on attracting youth and young adults.

STRENGTHEN OUR PARISHES

¹The parish is for most Catholics the single most important part of the church. This is where for them the mission of Christ continues. This is where they publicly express their faith, joining with others to give proof of their communion with God and with one another.

⁹... Simply stated, it [the parish] is a people, a people called together by God. It is a people empowered by the Spirit to make increasingly true and obvious their response to God through Christ. The parish tries to take shape in this context of faith and prayer, always with openness to the Spirit. [The Parish: A People, A Mission, A Structure](#): a statement of the USCCB, 1980



About Parishes

11. Strong, vital mission-oriented parishes help people meet, know and live Christ because they:
- Welcome one another and strangers with genuine hospitality so that people sense they belong and their presence makes a difference.
 - Celebrate worship and sacramental life of the Church fully and joyfully.
 - Proclaim God's Word and through meaningful homilies demonstrate the relevance of faith to the lives of people; educate all disciples through programs regarding lifelong faith formation.
 - Awaken people to their baptismal call and gifts:
 - i. Empowering the faithful to put their faith into action through opportunities for participation in the work of the parish, giving service and working for justice locally, nationally and internationally;
 - ii. Living lives of grateful stewardship of God's abundant gifts.
 - Help people deal with personal and with local and global societal issues in a context of faith.
 - Foster healing of the human person, spiritually and corporeally.
 - Welcome senior (retired) priests who would like a formal affiliation with a parish where their presence and service would be seen as part of the parish's structure and vigor.

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12. To be a viable parish means that the community is able and willing to provide the essentials of teaching, service, healing and sanctification to the people of the parish and the wider world community. For a parish to be viable it needs to know its members, meet the financial obligations that enable those essentials to flourish, namely, the payment of just salaries that provide a dignified livelihood on the material, social, cultural and spiritual levels, the maintenance of the parish property, the payment of debts, and sustenance of exceptional catechetical, liturgical and apostolic programs.

A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful, stably constituted in a particular church whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor as its own proper shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop.

Code of Canon Law c. 515§1

13. We recognize that some parish communities may not possess all these characteristics, but in partnership with neighboring parishes each one can contribute to the goals and vitality of the cluster, the district and the archdiocesan church.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Keeping Pace with Changing Demographics

As we consider the demographic shifts and mobility of our members at the beginning of the 21st century, we recommend that you:

1. Direct every parish in the archdiocese to up-date their census data no later than December 31, 2010. To advance this process we further suggest that appropriate archdiocesan staff or commission (e.g. BAAM) examine and recommend a process and common software to help our parishes achieve success in this endeavor.
2. With assistance from the Deans:
 - a. Identify parishes where the worshipping community is not able to carry on the basic mission expectations of a parish (quality ministries of Word, Worship and Service); cannot support a full-or part-time pastor/parish director or meet other expenses apart from grants or rental income.
 - b. Identify parishes that, because of their history or location, hold presence and therefore evangelizing value for the church, in spite of their perceived limitations. Ease these parishioners into a neighboring parish community while reducing the church building status to a chapel or oratory.

RE: Assigning Newly Ordained Priests

Some parishes should be designated to regularly receive a newly ordained priest. These parishes should be in a variety of settings throughout the archdiocese and provide the pastoral experiences and living conditions necessary for the newly ordained priest to make a good transition into his new ministry.



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About the Diversity of the People of Southeastern Wisconsin

14. We recognize the changing, expanding racial and ethnic diversity of peoples throughout the archdiocese. This cultural broadening of our membership enriches the whole community of faith and offers us an opportunity to meet, know and live Christ more deeply. Each of us must endeavor to deepen our knowledge and appreciation of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.
15. Hispanic Ministry has enjoyed significant growth throughout our archdiocese. Certain of our parishes serve the faithful of other dioceses, not only in Hispanic Ministry but all ministries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Hispanic Ministry across Diocesan Boundaries

We recommend that there be a discussion among the bishops of the Milwaukee Archdiocese and neighboring dioceses (Chicago, Rockford, Madison and Green Bay) regarding the opportunities and challenges to collaborative inter-diocesan Hispanic Ministry and other mutually important planning and pastoral issues. Diocesan staff throughout the province of Wisconsin who are members of the Conference for Pastoral Planning and Council Development might be called on to arrange such a meeting.

RE: Priesthood in Our Multi-cultural Diocese

Because ours is a culturally diverse archdiocese, we encourage men preparing for priesthood and the diaconate, to the extent that they are able, be trained to celebrate Mass and the other sacraments in English and other languages (e.g. Spanish, Hmong, Polish, Sign, Vietnamese, Korean, etc.)

RE: Ending Racism through Education, Appreciation and Action

Encourage the Coordinator of Intercultural Ministries and others to work with Catholic Charities staff to:

- o Plan and provide an archdiocesan-wide process to address the issue of segregation and the threats of poverty and racism to the common good. The document from Catholic Charities USA: [Poverty and Racism-Overlapping Threats to the Common Good](#) is a valuable recent resource authored by one of our own priests; and
- o Provide cultural awareness training for parish leadership and all full-time ministry personnel in parishes, schools, archdiocesan offices and agencies.

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FOSTER A SENSE OF VOCATION IN THE CHURCH

As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. Mark 1: 17-18



About Sharing Ministry in the 21st Century

16. Priests, deacons, women and men religious and lay persons all provide unique gifts to the missionary work of the Church locally and globally. The entire Catholic community, not only those in leadership roles, must assist the calling forth and encouraging new ministerial vocations according to the will of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, appropriate preparation and ongoing formation must be provided to those persons who are called by God to serve the Mission of the Church.

All who have faith in Christ and are baptized have an obligation to deepen and broaden the community life of their parishes. Some pastoral roles are specifically defined, filled by priests, deacons, religious or laity. But even these roles exist to enable all parishioners to work toward this building of community. *The Parish: A People, A Mission, A Structure: a statement of the USCCB, 1980 #11*

17. Now and in the future both Archdiocesan and parish leaders need to find a holy balance in positioning the gifts of ordained and non-ordained ministers throughout the ten counties for the sake of the Mission. Working together as ministerial teams, placing the administrative leadership of a parish in the hands of either an ordained or a non-ordained person is a viable option. *[C.517§2]*
18. At this time few priests and deacons have been formed for team ministry, whether as team leaders, coaches or members working as team members with well-trained and formed lay ecclesial ministers. Clergy assignments must take the healthy functioning of teams into account by selecting men with the character, disposition, and ability to work together and with others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Prayer for Vocations

Require every parish to develop programs to foster all vocations, especially to ordained ministry and religious life.

RE: Assigning Clergy within the Context of Teams

Ministerial assignments of clergy and hiring of lay ecclesial ministers should reflect the trend toward more collaborative team ministries.

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RE: Training for Ministerial Teams

We urge you to ask the Director of On-going Priestly Formation to plan for and initiate a program designed for all pastoral ministers on the value of, skills for and best practices in team ministry.



About Senior Priests

19. We need to embrace the wisdom and skill of senior priests in whatever way they can serve the needs of the people throughout the archdiocese. Indeed, they should be encouraged to continue their service to the Church, to the extent they can and with assistance, if necessary.

RECOMMENDATION

RE: Assigning Senior Priests

In an effort to provide assistance where it is most needed, the liturgical help-out provided by senior priests, and other help-out priests too, should be coordinated.



About Newly Ordained Priests

20. Our diocese is being blessed with new priestly vocations. Their youthful zeal renews us.

RECOMMENDATION

RE: Connecting Newly Ordained with Youth Ministry

Include in the appointment of associate pastors a special ministry to our high school youth, not only through parish programs, but as a regular presence in Catholic and public high schools in their assignment area.



About the Ministry of Permanent Deacons

21. We value the gift and ministry of our permanent deacons yet a number of the parishes lack the experience and ministry of a deacon.
22. We recognize a need for frequent prayer and action to invite, encourage, foster and support ministerial vocations to the diaconate.

Permanent deacons are for the Church a sacramental sign connecting the sharing at the Lord's Eucharistic Table to serving the many hungers so keenly felt by all God's children.

[National Directory on the Formation, Life and Mission of the Permanent Deacon No. 33]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Re: Permanent Deacons

We urge you, Archbishop, to promote ministerial planning as it relates to deacons so that a clearer vision and ample resources and stronger program of formation and

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recruitment will ensure that a steady stream of well prepared deacons is available to the Church of southeastern Wisconsin well into the future.

We further recommend that a fund be established to assist potential deacon aspirants in pursuing formal studies toward ministry.

About Lay Ecclesial Ministry

23. In our parishes, schools, Catholic institutions and agencies, lay women and men, responding to a call from God, serve in various ministries and roles that do not require sacramental ordination but rather find their foundation in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.



Sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the church. Their activity within the church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect. #10
Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People

24. In parishes especially, these men and women generously and extensively “cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community.” This is a sign of the Holy Spirit’s movement in the lives of our brothers and sisters. We are very grateful for all who undertake various roles in Church ministry. [Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, USCCB, 2005]

25. We applaud the appropriate status granted to lay ecclesial ministry in the recently restructured organization of the archdiocesan central offices.

26. Since seminarians of St. Francis de Sales Seminary now receive their academic program at Sacred Heart School of Theology, the Seminary no longer awards degrees, including the master of divinity degree. Sacred Heart offers that degree only to its priestly formation students. Lay students can obtain a master of arts in theology from Sacred Heart.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Support for Lay Ecclesial Ministry Training

We ask that research be done by an appropriate person or group to discover financial support available to lay students pursuing advanced degrees in theology, including the master of divinity.

RE: Expanding Lay Ministry to Dying

In preparation for those situations where a dying person has already celebrated the Sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick, thus not requiring the ministry of a priest, and where no permanent deacon is present, we recommend that pastors invite, train and commission lay ministers to celebrate the Commendation of the Dying and Viaticum in nursing homes and hospitals. (Refer to Pastoral Care of the Sick par. #213 from the USCCB Committee on the Liturgy).

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About Parish Directors

27. Parish directors stand in a special and important light regarding the mission of the Church. The universal law of the Church establishes that the bishop of each diocese can entrust the pastoral care of a parish to a person who is not a priest [Canon 517, § 2]. A parish director, once appointed by the Archbishop, provides spiritual leadership and pastoral care to the parishioners, oversees the general operation of the parish, and coordinates the ministries of worship, education-formation, human concerns, and administration.
28. We value the current approach to parish life, whereby we recognize that congregations, whose parish life is faithful, vital and collaborative, regardless of location in a city or the country-side, serve as authentic centers of Catholic life and mission. Such parishes thrive whether shepherded by a priest or parish director.
29. As the number of diocesan priests in parish ministry decreases, the number of parish directors must increase to support our current parochial organization.
30. Because a parish director is responsible for the spiritual leadership and pastoral care of the faith community a particular pastoral concern comes to light. Current Church law provides the bishop with the opportunity to assign a non-ordained parish director. But Church law also prohibits a parish director who is not a deacon from exercising an essential activity for giving such pastoral care: delivering a homily during Mass.
31. After proper preparation a Deacon may be authorized to preach a homily. Some ask: Would the Church assign a priest to a parish and restrict him from preaching homilies? Moreover, they ask: Since a homily is not equal to an instruction or a talk because a homily requires a connection with the people that is rooted in the realities of the people's daily lives, why should parishioners shepherded by a parish director who is not a deacon be treated differently from parishioners whose spiritual leader is a priest? Indeed, the priest and the parish director assigned to parishes are more likely to have the necessary connection with the people than is a visiting priest who is with the people only during the time of the Mass. We recognize that a resolution is not seen as something that can be decided locally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Recruitment and Training of Parish Directors

We recommend that you, Archbishop, direct your staff and all the faithful to renew our efforts to identify, invite, discern with and properly train deacons, men and women religious and lay persons to serve as parish directors.

RE: Preparation of a Parish to Receive a Parish Director

When a parish is assigned a parish director, both parishioners and staff must be formed and adequately prepared for such a change in leadership.

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RE: Preaching by a Lay Parish Director

We join with those who participated in the National Ministry Summit who suggested that the leadership of the Church pursue obtaining an exception or indult from the Holy See to allow those persons who are not deacons and who are authorized to be the spiritual leader of a parish according to c. 517, § 2 of the Code of Canon Law to preach following the Gospel at Eucharist.



About Religious Orders and International Priests

32. We are indebted to the religious orders of men and women who participate in the mission of the church through parish ministry, education and health care ministries, and works of charity in behalf of justice. We are keenly aware that religious orders are also experiencing diminishing number of priests.
33. We are grateful to those missionary priests from other countries who walk with us in our mission and ministerial efforts. They bring their own special gifts and needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Re: Commitment of Religious to Archdiocesan Ministry and Vision 21st Century

The bishops meet with the provincials of the religious orders serving in the archdiocese twice a year. For the sake of communication and shared vision, we ask the bishops to share the Vision 21st Century plans and invite their dialogue and involvement.

We strongly encourage the leadership of parishes served by religious order priests to initiate talks with their neighboring parish leaders to discuss and plan meaningful ways of collaborating if it is not currently underway.

RE: Welcome and Orientation of International Priests

Efforts must be taken to assure that these international priests are welcomed and properly prepared for service within the archdiocese, and that their parishioners and staff are also offered training in their cultural customs.



About Quality Ministry

34. Good preaching feeds our spirits. It deepens our personal and communal relationships with God. We realize that preaching is a God-given charism and not automatically received with ordination. So we are grateful when our priests and deacons who preach take time to reflect on the scriptures and carefully prepare their homilies to bolster us in our efforts to live Christ's message in our lives.

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35. Some parishes and clusters need assistance in defining positions and recruiting lay professionals to take on parish administrative tasks or special ministries as the number of priests decrease. For example, parishes sharing a priest might also want to share a business manager or parish administrator. Parishes focusing on a special ministry to the elderly might need help hiring a parish nurse or parish social worker. We find the archdiocesan office for Human Resources helpful and appreciate their availability to pastors and parish personnel committees.

STRENGTHEN CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND FAITH FORMATION

Then many of his disciples who were listening said "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Jesus said to them: "The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life." As a result of this many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."
(Jn. 6.60-69).



About Lifelong Catholic Faith Formation

36. The teaching role of the church is one of the primary responsibilities of a bishop. He shares that role with priests, deacons, catechists, teachers and parents. The Church has a responsibility to provide religious education and Catholic formation for all our members, as well as for those who are not Catholic but would like to learn about our religion. Actually, all Catholics are to be involved in faith formation.

Disciples young and old are called by name to go into the vineyard. In responding to this call, adults "have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. Their formation in faith is essential for the Church to carry out its mandate to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to the world. Effective adult formation is necessary to "equip the holy ones for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:12). From the 1999 USCCB pastoral plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States, Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us. 538

37. The recently formed John Paul II Evangelization Center addresses this responsibility on an archdiocesan level. Our archdiocese is blessed with numerous Catholic colleges and universities with whom we collaborate in adult faith and ministerial formation.
38. Many of our parishes have initiated a formation and faith enrichment process involving multiple generations. This change occurs best with visionary preparation and strong

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commitment on the part of the pastor/parish director, as well as the catechetical and faith formation staff.

About Catholic Schools

39. Our Catholic schools have been and are a source of pride and a strategic evangelizing resource. At this time in our history a Catholic education is dear and comes at great sacrifice. Parents value and recognize our schools as partners in giving students spiritual, academic and inter-relational grounding for life.

40. Our Catholic schools in the City of Milwaukee are able to offer quality, affordable Catholic education to a wider student population through the CHOICE program. Though many students and their families are not Catholic, we welcome them because *we are Catholic*. Indeed, CHOICE offers an opportunity for outreach and evangelization.

Young people of the third millennium must be a source of energy and leadership in our Church and our nation. Therefore, we must provide young people with an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program of education and faith formation designed to strengthen their union with Christ and his Church. Catholic schools collaborate with parents and guardians in raising and forming their children as families struggle with the changing and challenging cultural and moral contexts in which they find themselves. ...By equipping our young people with a sound education, rooted in the Gospel message, the Person of Jesus Christ, and rich in the cherished traditions and liturgical practices of our faith, we ensure that they have the foundation to live morally and uprightly in our complex modern world. This unique Catholic identity makes our Catholic elementary and secondary schools "schools for the human person" and allows them to fill a critical role in the future life of our Church, our country and our world (Catholic Schools on the Threshold, no.9)

Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools

in the 3rd Millennium, USCCB 2005.

41. The Archdiocesan Schools comprehensive strategic planning calls for a renewal of the quality of our schools by focusing on five "centers of excellence": Catholic identity, high academic standards, parental and community involvement, innovative educational initiatives, expanded and updated facilities integrating modern technology.

About Young Adult Ministry

42. Young adults, singles and married couples express a deep desire to know and practice our faith. Programs such as "Theology on Tap" are but one locus for gathering this peer group for education, formation and communal support.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp stand where it shines for all in the house. In the same way your light must shine, so that, seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven.

(Mt 5:14-16)

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In every age, Jesus Christ is the light of all nations with Christian men and women called to reflect the light of Christ and, in this way, to be "light" for the world. To reflect the light of Christ requires a maturity of faith and a willingness to live this faith daily in society. We join the Holy Father in affirming the essential dignity of young adult men and women—those in their late teens, twenties, and thirties—as "sons and daughters of the light." Yet, many young adults tell us that they face increasingly complex and difficult times and that they need the help of the Catholic Christian community to be this "light." From [Sons and Daughters of Light](#), USCCB Plan for Young Adult Ministry

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Forming Catholic Christians, A Parental and Parish Partnership

Insofar as religious education is provided to children and youth, our parishes have a responsibility to both provide faith formation and to assist and support parents who bear the primary responsibility of raising their children in the faith. Indeed, we want to teach the children and youth while also helping the parents to teach their children. This assistance is to be equally directed toward the well-being of the students and their parents, regardless if the student attends a Catholic school or a public school or is home schooled. Moreover, assistance should go beyond formal instruction to include a variety of support services e.g., activities, equipment, supplies, meals, and events.

RE: Faith in Our Future Campaign

We encourage all our parishes to promote the *Faith in Our Future* Capital Campaign. This campaign promises to help us expand and enhance Catholic education and faith formation in our parishes and throughout the archdiocese.

RE: The Plan for Catholic Schools

We encourage those leading the schools planning initiative to share its goals widely to obtain support from the larger community and business sector.

RE: Parish Support of Local Catholic Schools

We further ask you to direct every parish that does not operate a Catholic parish school to enter into planning with your district or cluster to ensure their fuller support of this vital Catholic ministry. Although most parishes without schools offer tuition assistance to their members who attend other Catholic schools, or make voluntary donations to nearby Catholic schools, it is important to quantify that support in dollars, determine what percentage of the parish budget and the recipient school's budget that parish support actually is/will be, and discern whether that level of support is just or needs to be increased.

RE: Building Young Adult Ministry

Pastoral ministers must take time to assess the resources within and needs of this group and help them find meaningful ways to connect with one another and put

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their faith to work for the good of their parishes. This is a ministry best served collaboratively for the benefit of young adults: single and married couples.

EMPHASIZE OUR MISSION OF JUSTICE AND CHARITY

"As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." Mt 25:40



At the center of all Catholic social teaching are the transcendence of God and the dignity of the human person. The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God, but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry. The Challenge of Peace, #15.



The center of the Church's social teaching is the life, dignity, and rights of the human person. We are called in a special way to serve the poor and vulnerable; to build bridges of solidarity among peoples of differing races and nations, language and ability, gender and culture. Communities of Salt and Light, 3.



Catholic teaching calls us to serve those in need and to change the structures that deny people their dignity and rights as children of God. Service and action, charity and justice are complementary components of parish social ministry. Neither alone is sufficient; both are *essential signs of the gospel at work*. *A parish serious about social ministry will offer opportunities to serve those in need and to advocate for justice and peace. These are not competing priorities, but two dimensions of the same fundamental mission to protect the life and dignity of the human person.* Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish; USCCB1993



About Works of Justice

43. *What do we mean when we speak of works for justice?* Works of justice address social problems to change what is unjust in the structures and systems of society that impact our most vulnerable sisters and brothers. Some examples of works for justice include: voter registration drives, support of party platforms which are pro-life, pro-human dignity; support of and participation in initiatives of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference; Catholic Relief Services.
44. We applaud parish and cluster study groups who have participated in JUST-faith, a multifaceted small group process of studying the Church's commitment to the poor and vulnerable in a lively, challenging and committed way.
45. Justice, then, the presence of right and proper relationships that provide for the common good and furnish the key to peace, is to be a way of life, not a hope that is sometimes thought about.

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About Works of Charity

46. *What do we mean by works of charity?* Works of charity offer direct service to meet immediate needs of people. Such acts usually are local. They might include providing transportation for seniors, food to food pantries or working in a meal program; offering clothing and other necessities to shelters; volunteering at Meals on Wheels, tutoring students, sponsoring a refugee family.

47. There is strength in numbers, especially when working on societal issues such as poverty, racism, fair housing, health care, and neighborhood crime. Indeed, we experience this when parish

" Charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as social charity"

Benedict XVI, (Encyclical letter Deus Caritas Est. #29, 2006)

Human Concerns Committees meet as clusters or districts work together to study, educate the faithful, design and implement an advocacy plan; provide direct service to those in need locally; or support the national efforts of the Campaign for Human Development, of Catholic Charities and of the international efforts of World Mission Ministries and of Catholic Relief Services. Moreover, all of these efforts should encourage each parishioner to foster justice and charity in society as a worker, consumer, neighbor, member of organizations, donor and citizen.

48. Our work for justice is enhanced through collaboration. We are called to work with various ecumenical and interreligious groups and with other people of faith, especially the Jewish and Muslim communities, for the common good.

About Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Services

49. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee is committed to protecting children and to helping victims/survivors of sexual abuse by clergy. All parish, school, archdiocesan offices and agencies personnel are required to participate in training and are committed to on-going participation in the effort to provide a safe environment for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Collaborative Ministry of Justice and Charity

We encourage all our Church leaders to continue or even expand their willingness to provide powerful examples of lived justice and charity.

RE: Renewing our Archdiocesan Commitment to Protect All God's Children

We must never waiver in our commitment to protect children and ensure a safe environment in our parishes, schools, central offices and agencies; and to help victim/survivors of sexual abuse by clergy.



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CULTIVATE GOOD STEWARDSHIP

So do not worry and say, "What are we to eat?" or "What are we to drink?" or "What are we to wear?" Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.

MT 6:31-33

Who is a Christian steward? One who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord.

Parish Stewardship-Discipleship, Gratitude, Generosity, p. 6



About Stewardship and Discipleship

50. As we have received so we should give. Stewardship is an expression of discipleship with power to change how we understand and live our lives as part of a world community. Catholics who practice the virtue of stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have, are and will be. They know that they are caretakers of God's many gifts. They are grateful for what they have and are eager to grow and share their gifts out of love for God and concern for the common good. [us Bishops Pastoral Letter: Stewardship: A Disciple's Response]
51. Parishes in the 21st Century with active, involved parishioners usually thrive. Parishioners see the connection between their rights and responsibilities as members. Catholics who offer their time and talent contribute to the health and welfare of parish ministries that rely on parishioners' participation. In addition, each Catholic should clearly articulate what his/her personal financial gift to the parish and other pastoral work of the Church is.
52. Some of our parishes must be counted among the "poorer" parishes of the archdiocese, though obviously many parishes actually struggle to meet their budget needs. Still there are other parishes that could be counted among the "richer" or resource-full parishes in the archdiocese. Typically these parishes are very generous in their outreach or charitable giving. We invite all parishes to discern how they might assist one or more of our needy parishes. Indeed, parishes that do so recognize all they have to gain spiritually and humanly. This is truly an exchange of gifts.
53. Twinning relationships between parishes and clusters of parishes in which the parties share a mutual sense of purpose and a reciprocal sense of activity fosters good stewardship. Global solidarity develops in those parishes that have a partnership with people in another part of the world. The archdiocesan relationship with *La Sagrada Familia* in the Dominican Republic offers all Catholics in southeastern Wisconsin opportunities to experience the mutual sharing of gifts and resources.
54. Sharing our financial resources and funding responsibilities for the good of pastoral ministry, especially when members of more than one parish are involved in the ministry, grows in importance. Examples of where shared funding would be appropriate are: all

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forms of education and faith formation programs, human concerns projects, ethnic and cultural ministries, and the deaf ministry.

55. Where there is no doctrinal or other obstacle, Christian faith, stewardship and community life can be enhanced by the ecumenical sharing of resources. Youth programs, adult formation, marriage support (especially for ecumenical couples), and economic outreach are among the areas that could be enhanced by ecumenical collaboration.
56. The use of appropriate technology can enhance many ministries and reduce some operating costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Stewardship as a Way of Life

- Encourage the faithful to embrace and build on the practices of stewardship fostered by *the Faith in Our Future* campaign, where parishioners:
- Reflect on the gifts God has given them.
 - Consider prayerfully the return they will make of time, talent and treasure.
 - Stand motivated by a love for God and a generosity of heart to serve the common good.
- Each parish must:
 - Keep their membership census current.
 - Maintain a comprehensive inventory and evaluation of all church buildings and property to facilitate the careful administration of the temporal goods of the Church.
 - Hold an annual parish meeting for the purpose of reporting the financial status of the congregation, and to remain transparent in our use of resources.
 - Maintain strong and effective parish councils that foster the Mission of Christ and His Church.
 - The archdiocese must continue to provide an annual financial report to the membership of the archdiocese.

RE: Sharing Resources

It would be wise for archdiocesan staff to bring together those parishes in the “top 20%” and those in the “bottom 20%” as soon as feasible, to talk with one another about how to best direct their combined efforts to meet the most urgent needs, and how they would most benefit from both assistance and mutual sharing.

RE: Twinning Partnerships

With our archdiocesan twinning relationship with *Sagrada La Familia* as an example, encourage parishes and clusters of parishes to discover the joy of building twinning partnerships.



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About Ongoing Strategic Pastoral Planning

"Failing to plan is planning to fail." Alan Lakein



The Parish Council...engages in a continuous process of pastoral planning that takes into consideration the needs of its parishioners, the archdiocese, the community and the world. Parish Council Norm 4

57. More and more the clergy and lay leaders in parishes and clusters recognize the value of ongoing pastoral planning. Indeed, constructive planning should never stop.
58. Yet, pastoral planning and successful implementation are jeopardized when:
 - Pastors/parish directors and their staffs enter into planning without the inclusion of parish lay leaders;
 - Parish lay leaders enter into planning without the inclusion of the pastoral staff;
 - A change in priest personnel halts or slows implementation; or
 - A pastor refuses to either participate in the process or to implement the plan.
59. So, successful pastoral planning requires the dedication and involvement of clergy, staffs, key parishioners and archdiocesan resource staff.
60. In addition, successful pastoral planning also requires attentiveness to demographic, economic, technological, and social change taking place; open discussions marked by charity and courtesy; common sense and a consistent commitment to best practices for the sake of the Mission. The regular up-date and study of demographic and sacramental statistics is a necessary element of all pastoral planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RE: Commitment to On-going Planning

Committed to on-going planning, we ask you to direct the District Dean and District APC member to plan and carry out at least two annual gatherings of the presbyterate and parish director(s) with APC district assembly members, permanent deacons, parish council officers, and pastoral staff members of your district. The purpose of this meeting is to review these directives and future goals together, to assess the state of the Mission of the Church in your area, support one another by setting district-wide goals, sharing best practices in ministry, to promote archdiocesan initiatives and improve communication.

RE: Reduction in the Number of Districts

In the last twenty years, the number of parishes in District 11 has been reduced from fifteen parishes to eight. The District Dean and parish priests and lay leaders find this a hardship and have offered a Solution: Incorporating the parishes east of I-43 into District 13 and the parishes west of I-43 into District 12. We support this

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change and encourage the receiving districts to welcome the addition of these parishes to their ranks, and the expansion of membership in district priests meetings and APC assemblies.



About Accountability for On-going Planning

61. Accountability concerns the spiritual well being of the parishioners by helping to assure that they are able to participate in the pastoral planning process.
62. The recent restructuring of the operations of the archdiocesan central offices provides for increased participation of the laity in the ministerial life of the Church. As a result, ongoing local planning and collaboration have grown in importance. Yet, in the past, not all efforts for planning and collaboration have been successful, primarily because of a few priests and/or lay persons refused to participate in or cooperate with the process. The dynamics of planning certainly acknowledge that people can strongly, respectfully disagree with and challenge one another, and this is good. But, when disagreement and challenge become disruptive, personal or interfere with positive forward movement, it is harmful to those involved and the common good.
63. It is hoped that corrective action would never be required thanks to the power of persuasion by means of sincere and open conversation at the local level. But, if the power of persuasion fails and someone persistently disrupts or interferes with the ongoing planning process or related pastoral work, or refuses to participate when necessary, then corrective action must be addressed. Bishop William Callahan, after consultation with the district dean, the pastors and the parish directors, will decide when corrective action is appropriate and he will bring the situation to the attention of Archbishop Timothy Dolan, who will determine what consequences should result.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Re: **Accountability for Implementation of this Plan**

Accountability for the implementation of pastoral plans ultimately rests with the people of each parish, cluster and district working in a collegial fashion. We recommend that each district make a semiannual report to you, Archbishop, about their progress, needs and recommend solutions to ensure best practices at every level of the archdiocese in terms of Mission.

RE: **Facilitation of the Accountability Process**

To facilitate this reporting consider calling for a semiannual Archdiocesan Leadership Assembly to include the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Archdiocesan Council of Priests, Archdiocesan Council of Deacons, and the Archdiocesan Lay Ecclesial Ministers Council. The purpose of that Assembly would be to receive district and cluster reports and to discern God's work in and through us, recommending appropriate "next steps" to grow the Mission of Christ in southeastern Wisconsin.

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CONCLUSION

About the District Directives

64. Specific directives have been established for each of the sixteen districts. These 2008 archdiocesan planning directives accent:
- o Mission, ministry and evangelization so as to grow the faith, a complex and arduous challenge, rather than accenting parish closures because of shortages, a defensive solution that causes pain and breeds separation.
 - o Preserving and sustaining our Catholic presence throughout the archdiocese by keeping parish communities intact, unless a parish community itself seeks merger with another parish community.
 - o Active participation of many Catholics in the pastoral life of the Church at archdiocesan, district, cluster and parish levels.
 - o Inter-parish collaboration rooted in ongoing planning that establishes short-term pastoral goals with action plans to attain those goals, and results evaluated before going forward to establish new or revised pastoral goals.

About Hope

65. In the past the Church in the United States was built on the hopes and dreams of immigrants. Our ethnic roots, cultural differences and competitive natures strengthened parishes but also promoted parochialism.
66. In the last half of the 20th century:
- o The second Vatican Council reminded us that every person is called to holiness.
 - o Major population shifts occurred in our archdiocese fueled by economic and social opportunity, desegregation and white flight, economic success and failure, and the arrival of new immigrants and refugees from eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, Mexico, Central and South America. We continue to experience the challenges and opportunities of these demographic shifts in our families, our parishes and in society.
 - o We are a People of God in need of healing. The ministry of healing has always been at the core of our faith. Our Gospels are filled with stories of Jesus' healing work. In our day, we see the need for healing on a continuum that addresses healing needed to work through transitions, loss, grief, the hurt of the sex abuse scandal, and also extend to those individuals in need in our local communities. It is time to reclaim this ancient ministry of healing in its fullness. We speak of this in terms of a faith centered movement that begins with the promotion of health, primarily spiritual but also emotional and physical wellness, and then moves to a wholeness and holiness that is based in God's healing love and saving grace.
67. The paradigm of parish is changing in our lifetime. We believe this is the work of the Holy Spirit renewing the face of the earth and renewing God's people.

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68. In facing the priest shortage with faith and hope, there may also be blessings. By sharing our ordained, human and/or temporal resources, and our time and talent with one another, parish to parish, district to district, we:
- Increase our awareness of our oneness with and in Christ;
 - Review the tasks traditionally allotted to priests in order to reassign the work more wisely and more in keeping with the distinctive tasks of each vocation in the Church;
 - Deepen our partnerships in mission and ministry;
 - Strengthen our identity and presence as a Catholic Community in southeast Wisconsin; and
 - Dare to continue Christ's Mission in our time, *Living Our Faith*, as members of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICES AND SERVICES

Moderator of the Curia

69. The recent restructuring of the operations of the archdiocesan central offices places Auxiliary Bishop William Callahan in a central position within the ministerial life of the archdiocese. Bishop Callahan, as the Moderator of the Curia, supervises the operations of the central offices. In addition, he serves as the key person in coordinating the implementation of archdiocesan plans and objectives at the district, cluster and parish levels. This latter responsibility is carried out working with the district deans, the pastors and the parish directors.

Associate Position

70. An Associate is a new position within the central office structure. These highly skilled individuals will associate themselves with Bishop Callahan and the district deans to assist in monitoring excellence in pastoral work, locating resources, animating ministerial programs, fostering collaboration, and recommending future action.

Coordinator Positions and Commissions

71. Some of the archdiocesan services will continue to be coordinated on a centralized basis but provided on a regional or local level. These centralized support activities include the Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Concerns, the John Paul II Evangelization Center, the Inter-Cultural Ministry, Parish Ministry, Liturgy Ministry, and Social Justice Ministry. To a large extent these ministries will function by means of working ministerial commissions comprised of trained and experienced, parishioner volunteers and parish staff members, and will stand at the center of the archdiocesan coordination of pastoral services. All persons who join a commission will commit to providing the work that is necessary to fulfill the commission's responsibilities. As a result, many persons from throughout the archdiocese (laity, religious women and men, deacons, and priests) will be welcomed to join the yet-to-be-named and formed working ministerial commissions where the specific

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goals and tasks of much of the archdiocesan ministerial work will be determined and put into practice. A limited-in-number central office staff will coordinate and support this effort.

72. The restructured central offices link directly with the call for ongoing pastoral planning and collaboration on the local level that the Vision 21 Committee now presents in these recommendations. Thus, as the coming years unfold, all Catholics of the archdiocese, working together, will participate in formulating the details of future expectations, goals, organization structures, and activities in service to the mission of the Church.

Archdiocesan Councils

73. The Archdiocesan Council of Priests (ACP), the Archdiocesan Council of Deacons (ACD), and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC), will continue to address the pastoral affairs of the archdiocese. The soon-to-be-formed Archdiocesan Lay Ecclesial Ministers Council will join the ACP, the ACD and the APC and archdiocesan "Associates" to work with the dean of each district to study, implement and evaluate pastoral priorities and initiatives on district, cluster and parish levels. In other words, all of these leadership groups, in collaboration with Bishop Callahan and working with the pastors/parish directors and parish councils and staff, will enliven the faith of the Church throughout the ten counties of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

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