



ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE  
Office of the Vicar for Planning

June 13, 2008

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan  
Archbishop of Milwaukee

Dear Archbishop Dolan,

I am pleased to present to you the fruit of the archdiocesan planning initiative that has been going on over the past ten months. When you asked me to take on the responsibility for this initiative by serving as the Vicar for Planning, you told me that you want to prepare a pastoral plan for the people of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, and that you wanted me to help by developing recommendations that would assist you. This report presents those recommendations.

Many persons throughout the Archdiocese have participated in this effort. These people have seen their involvement in the planning initiative as an investment of themselves in one of the important challenges that faces the Church in this archdiocese today: preserving the faith while also preparing to pass on the faith to future generations. Indeed, the participation of these people demonstrates the depth of their faith and the strength of their commitment to the Church.

While the report contains many proposals for your consideration, I see the following eleven items as the cornerstone recommendations upon which the other proposals find stability. Hence, the utilization of these eleven items would provide your archdiocesan pastoral plan with solid vibrancy and lively hope.

1. Require all parishes to foster all vocations, especially those to the ordained ministry and to religious life.
2. Encourage and embrace creative evangelization programs that seek out the people who are seeking God.
3. Given that the Mission of the Church is entrusted not only to the Catholic community but to our ecumenical sisters and brothers as well, promote ecumenical collaboration.
4. Provide for ongoing pastoral planning at the archdiocesan, district and cluster levels. Such planning should integrate the wisdom of priests, deacons, women and men religious, lay ecclesial ministers and other parish personnel (e.g., parish directors, pastoral associates, directors of religious education, Catholic school principals, youth ministers, liturgical ministers, parish nurses, parish business managers), and parish lay leadership (e.g., parish council members, and committee heads). The district deans, the

members of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, and central offices personnel can facilitate this effort. This planning process should provide opportunities for all of these persons to participate in inter-discipline discussions that lead to establishing short-term goals that, once accomplished, will enrich the faith of the people, especially in light of the declining number of priests in active ministry. Moreover, this planning process should provide worthwhile input to the archdiocesan working ministerial commissions, thus providing necessary linkage to the recently restructured archdiocesan central offices.

5. Establish a program / process for the training of all pastoral ministers in the value and workings of team ministry. It is one thing to say that we want to work together, but it is a very different thing to be able to do so. The mission of the Church in our culture today demands solid collaboration coming from many people working together. But we need help in doing so.
6. Solidify the roles of lay ecclesial ministers by promoting their significance as part of the newly established Office for Ordained and Lay Ecclesial Ministers. This formalization of roles should be within the context of the 2005 USCCB document "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord."
7. Strengthen the opportunity to keep parishes in operation as the number of priests continues to decline by providing for qualified persons to serve as parish directors.
8. Given that our young people are growing up in a global village technologically and humanly, broaden our capacity to prepare for, to welcome and to serve the immigrants in our midst. Thus, help us to appreciate that the cultural broadening of our membership enriches the whole community of faith.
9. Support Catholic education and faith formation initiatives that are innovative and responsive to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
10. Arrange for archdiocesan-wide processes to address these critical moral threats to the common good: human life issues from conception until natural death, as well as issues of poverty and discrimination, especially in the forms of racism and sexism.
11. Require all parishes to maintain an ongoing stewardship program that expresses discipleship in practical terms that range from local issues to worldwide concerns.

No doubt other persons could articulate these eleven points differently or even choose other points as the key cornerstone recommendations. But these are the ones that I find coming forth



from my ten-month work and that I hope you will place in a central position in your pastoral plan.

While the responsibility for the planning initiative now shifts from me to you, be assured of the prayers of many persons throughout the archdiocese.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Very Reverend James E. Connell  
Vicar for Planning