

## Using the tools for parish pastoral planning

Michael Davis, Office of Lay Ministry

Greetings! I am enjoying visiting with parishes, deaneries, and diocesan offices about visioning for our mutual future as we begin using the tools and language of the Strategic Plan.

I found the following words from the Psalms uplifting and encouraging as we move forward and plan together:

*"Those whose steps are guided by the Lord...will never fall, for the Lord holds their hands." - Ps 37:23*



Each parish is undertaking pastoral planning in a way that is uniquely suited to its people, its leadership structures, and the way it understands and embraces the mission of the Diocese of Grand Island. There are a few things, however, that are common to all pastoral planning efforts.

**First**, pastoral planning engages members of the community to discern how the parish will live out its mission.

**Second**, pastoral planning is accomplished through a process which takes place in a context of prayer.

**Third**, pastoral planning in parishes of the Diocese of Grand Island is being undertaken in reference to the Commitments as stated in the Strategic Plan.

**Finally**, pastoral planning results in specific goals and a clear plan of action that describes what the parish will do during the next 1 to 3 year period and beyond and how it will do it. The first annual report is due July 1, 2010 to the Office of Lay Ministry and Planning.

*"The 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... It is in the parish that the most intimate concerns of individuals and the broadest reaches of the church's mission come together." (from The Parish, A People, A Mission, A Structure – U.S. Catholic Bishops Committee on the Parish)*

**Pastoral planning begins on the parish level** by inviting each pastor to bring together the Parish Pastoral Council and if possible include a group of lay leaders who, with the pastoral staff, gather the consultation of the wider community and create a plan of action based on the essential mission of the Church.

Parish Pastoral Planning involves a large consultation of all parishioners and a deep reflection on the core values of the parish community in light of the Diocesan goals of:

1. Vocation Development
2. Faith Formation
3. Outreach
4. Stewardship

*"The 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... It is in the parish that the most intimate concerns of individuals and the broadest reaches of the church's mission come together."*

Through Parish Pastoral Planning, parishes throughout the Diocese are invited to:

- Look at the parish in light of the Gospel Mission
- Facilitate a broad consultation process with all members of the parish community
- Assess the strengths and resources of the parish
- Assess the limitations and needs of the parish
- Articulate a mission statement for the parish
- Create priorities and goals for the next 3-5 years
- Create Action Steps (Objectives) to achieve the goals
- Call forth leaders from among the community to bring the plan to reality

### Consider the role of lay men and women

In our parish and diocesan visioning, planning and goal setting, consider the current and potential role of lay men and women in providing for the pastoral needs of our parishes. Adult Catholic women and men are already working as co-workers in the vineyard of the Diocese of Grand Island. Consider how further collaboration with Lay Ministers and those qualified and called as Lay Ecclesial Ministers can fulfill the diocesan strategic plan regarding Vocation Development. "The Diocese will promote the vocations of laity and clergy."

We are a grateful people. We strive daily to live a stewardship way of life dedicated to sustain God's creation and calling forth the gifts of all people for the common good.

So thank you for working together to bring the Strategic Plan to life. Please contact me for resources, to visit about the plan, or to schedule a time for me present.

Together we pray, *"Entrust your works to the Lord, and your plans will succeed."* – Proverbs 16:3

Michael Davis, Office of Lay Ministry & Planning  
[mdavis@gidioocese.org](mailto:mdavis@gidioocese.org) 1-800-252-9325

