

Pastoral Plan
Diocese of Great Falls-Billings
2012-2017

Mission: *We the people of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, guided by the Holy Spirit and rooted in Word and sacrament, are living witnesses who make known Christ's presence in our world.*

Vision: *Live the gospel. Bring light to the world.*



“Teacher,” he said, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”
He...[Jesus] said to him, “What is written in the law?
What do you read there?”

He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

He said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this and you will live” (Luke 10:25-27).

Consultation with the laity should lead to an **ongoing Pastoral Plan**

- to recognize the reality in front of us
- to anticipate the future
- to help create the future in the image of our values

Pastoral planning is a hope-filled tool that can be used in good times, and challenging ones, to identify new needs in the parish, modify ministries, create or reform committees and work groups, enhance the clarity of communication and involve everyone.

The cycle of planning:

- Step 1: Goals-Where do we want to be in 3-5 years?
- Step 2: Objectives: What should we do in the next year?
- Step 3: Consult: Does this make sense?
- Step 4: Prioritize: What goes first?
- Step 5: Implement action plans: Let's Do It!
- Step 6: Evaluate planning each year for progress: Did we reach the objectives? Re-imagine those we didn't reach and plan again

Change is Everywhere

According to the Official Catholic Directory, over the last forty years as this chart shows, the situation has changed dramatically on the national level.

	1970	2010¹
U.S. Catholic Population	47,872,089	68,503,456
Number of priests in Diocese (diocesan + religious)	99 dio+31r = 130	64 + 14= 78
Number of women religious in this diocese	265	56
Number of parishes/mission churches in diocese	71p+73 mc	55p+ 52mc
Catholics in eastern Montana	69,989	47,773

The structure of the diocese of Great Falls-Billings groups these parishes and missions in territories called vicariates. The Vicariates are Billings, Great Falls, Havre, Miles City and Wolf Point.

¹ Most recent statistics from Official Catholic Directory

CHANGE IS HAPPENING

At the center of our life as Catholics is the value of Eucharist and the Community gathered in prayer. So it is important to understand that the number of priests in active ministry is shrinking faster than the number of priests being ordained to serve in parishes. Here is our story for the recent diocesan history:

Ordinations to the priesthood	Number of priests retired	Number of priests deceased
2010 – Rev. Barton Stevens	1	3
2009 - Rev. Ryan Erlenbush	3	1
2008 – Rev. Cory Sticha	0	3
2007 – None	1	0
2006 – Rev. Dan Wathen	3	3
2005 – Rev. Domenico Pizzonia	1	4

One seminarian is preparing for ordination in 2012, two in 2014.

Four Parish Life Coordinators have been appointed by the bishop to lead parishes-Canon 517§2, due to a shortage of priests.

Many laity are presently serving our parishes in various capacities and approximately 14 are in the permanent diaconate first year of candidacy.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE:

- decline in the number of priests and religious serving our diocese
- shifts in parishioner demographics
- the gap between parish income and the cost of pastoral services
- the cost associated with our many aging facilities
- education and formation of parish administrators & parish life coordinators
- just compensation for lay leaders in the parish
- impact of the secular culture
- declining church attendance, church retrenchment, anger and frustration of people

The bishops and priests alone are not the Church. We are the Church—all of us. Claiming our discipleship will make the difference in the next five years and beyond.

2012 – 2017 Diocesan Pastoral Priorities Goals & Strategies

I. Spirituality and Worship – To invite all Catholics to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through formation focused on Sacred Scripture and the sacraments, especially the Sunday Eucharist

1. Proclaim the Gospel, in a manner that inspires hearts through symbol and ritual, enhanced by music, song, environment
2. Preaching excellence which connects with daily life
3. Offer Annual Parish Mission or Retreat and spiritual growth opportunities
4. RCIA and inviting Catholics home opportunities
5. Sacraments readily available and well celebrated
6. Marriage –focus on young adults and marriage preparation and nurturing marriages

II. Evangelization and Stewardship – to intensify missionary action to correspond fully to the changed situation for believers by being disciples able to testify to one’s faith in situations that are different from the past

1. Invite people into the Church through RCIA and hospitality
2. Foster hospitality and belonging
3. Call parishioners to discipleship & stewardship
4. Embrace stewardship as a way of life, fully funding our pastoral life
5. Form Development Councils at Diocese and Parish (see the sample Diocesan Development Council action steps on page 6)
6. Discern gifts received from God and put them at the service of the kingdom of God
7. Provide Religious Education and Formation at every stage of life
8. Implement family centered faith formation

III. Christian Service and Social Justice – become a faith community where people can find God, care for and support one another, inspired by the Gospel and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy

1. Be inclusive and responsive to persons who are poor, vulnerable, marginalized
2. Shape an active Christian Service Commission of the Pastoral Council to meet needs of persons who are poor, homebound, marginalized etc.
3. Affirm a culture of life
4. Foster a responsive Catholic presence in the community
5. Develop an awareness & participation in the National Appeals to respond to domestic and world assistance needs

6. Provide opportunities to participate in the mission of the universal Church through participation in Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities USA humanitarian relief efforts.

IV. Prepare for the Next Generation of Parish Life through Leadership and Transformation – serving God’s people through understanding them and the geography of faith emerging on the horizon of Catholicism

1. Call upon the parish, family and individuals to offer discernment and education on the call to Religious Life, Priesthood, Permanent Diaconate and Lay Ecclesial Ministry
2. Fund adequately our young in Catholic Schools, Religious Formation and Campus Ministry
3. Offer diocesan certification opportunities for catechists, interns and lay ecclesial ministers (national certification)
4. Provide Education and Formation for Parish Life Coordinators, lay ecclesial ministers and parish administrators
5. Seek to understand the Catholics we are becoming-understanding the way today’s Catholics take up their roles in the faith, and the way they apportion authority within the community
6. Respond to need for appropriate grounding institutions that help this fast-paced generation of young adults negotiate family and work in the conditions of the new global community
7. Understand the connection between the felt sense of well-being and practice of Catholic faith
8. Preserve cultural identity within faith communities which welcome the stranger and unify the faith community in its diversity

V. Strengthen our Catholic Presence, Accountability and Transparency now and in the Future

1. Implement in Diocese and Parishes a standard financial reporting system i.e. ParishSoft to provide greatest transparency and accountability in stewarding the Temporal Goods of the Church while providing adequate reporting to parishioners on a regular, recurring basis
2. Continuing Education of leadership on the Temporal Goods of the Church for Pastors, Parish Life Coordinators, Business Managers and Diocesan Staff to conform with canonical and best practices
3. Inventory Stable Patrimony of the Church at each parish & mission church (Canon. 1283, 2°-3°).

In gratitude to the Diocesan Pastoral Council, diocesan Outreach Staff, Planning Office and all those who assisted in the process of articulating a new Pastoral Plan.

Lynn Casey, SCL

Appendix 1:

Stewardship and Development Action Steps – Development Councils are new and emerging in the diocese and parishes. This is provided to give insight into the formation of members, organization of the diocesan office and selection of a Director to lead the Development process.

Formation, Formation, Formation	Immediate Action steps	2012	2013+
1. Small faith communities, school faculties, parishes etc. dialogue on "Christian Stewardship in Eastern MT	1. Place ad for experienced and qualified Dev. Director. Include 3 mbrs of DDC on interview team + dev. professionals	1. Cultivate, train and recognize gifts of time & talent. Contact prospects regularly with updates and progress.	1. Engage DDC members in identifying prospects affiliated directly or indirectly with DGFB with capacity and affiliation
2. Host groups & Dev. Council at Bob Voboril's inspirational talks on Stewardship 10/19-20/2011	2. Select and have Dev. Director in place by Nov. 2011.	2. Establish measures for growth in financial and service capacity.	2. Training sessions with DDC to meet with prospective donors. Maintain card by individual visit, response, next step
3. DDC lead a program of stewardship formation for all age groups	3. In-depth orientation to diocesan services for DDC (for Dev. Director within first month of employment)	3. Fill out committee membership: special Gifts, PR/Donor relations, Bishop's Dev. Dinner, Scholarship & Tuition Assistance, Wills, Bequests & Planned Giving.	3. Update shelf ready case statements i.e. education/formation; Religious Vocation (Priest's) ; Campus Ministry; Catholic Schools, Retirement etc. for DDC to use.
4. Draft and pilot case statements with DDC	4. Review and further test case statements of diocesan priorities. Match with key DDC members.	4. Set up a quarterly calendar and key objectives balancing formation, new membership, refinement of case stmt. (minimum of 5 DDC contacts/wk	4. Preparedness for diocesan capital campaign. Prepare documentation summarizing the history, achievements & direction & clearly state the organization's needs & plans for service.

Formation, Formation, Formation	Immediate Action steps	2012	2013+
	5. Director Meet with each DDC member in first 4 months & invite each one to seek a peer member to serve on DDC (emeritus, active, associate)???	5. Expand DDC membership to 60 people.	5. Have in place 3 pillars of successful campaigns: case, leadership, prospects.
	6. Director and one council member attend formal stewardship training e.g. the Garrigan-Phoenix training	6. Begin to assist parishes in Dev. Council formation	6. Create a written narrative for donors regarding the proposed campaign
		7. Dev. Director attend Faith & Fundraising School IUPUI	Determine depth of support that exists for a campaign & which doors might be opened should a campaign begin.
		8. data base of members & friends & research prospects	Engage a feasibility firm for research, case testing.

Appendix II:

Christian Stewardship in Eastern Montana: Our Response to the Call of God

A Joint Statement issued by Bishop Michael Warfel, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Finance Council, Development Council and Priest's Council

As Bishop of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings along with the members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Diocesan Finance Council, Diocesan Development Council and Priest's Council, I greet you in the name of the Lord. We write to you who comprise the Catholic Church in Eastern Montana. We believe that the power of our future lies in the hands of those who trust God's abundance. Each of us has received a call from God to live as daughters and sons of God. Created by God for life in a communion of saints, we have the potential to attain great holiness. In this trust, we know that God provides each of us with the gifts, talents and abilities needed to live and embrace the Christian life. These God given gifts are not for the sole use of those who receive them. They are entrusted to us by God so that we may help others discover the universal call of God to life within a communion of saints.

Blessed Pope John Paul II affirmed that the Church in the Third Millennium must "...put out into the deep for a catch." It was a reference to the call of the first disciples from Luke's Gospel (Luke 5:4). Like those early disciples, we too have been called by the Lord to be his disciples. And like those first Twelve, we too are sent forth as apostles. A disciple is a person who patterns his or her life on the life of the Lord. An apostle is one who is sent by the Lord on mission. These are two essential elements to living our life in Christ faithfully. We too are sent forth as apostles to carry on the mission of the Church in Eastern Montana. By accepting this responsibility, we share in taking Christ "to the ends of the earth." We ask you seriously to consider how you will answer the call to participate more fully in the mission of the Church. How we participate comes through the use of our time and energy, our abilities and capabilities and our finances and material resources.

At a gathering on development in October 2010, I, as bishop, presented a vision of what I hoped would be a consistent experience encountered in every Catholic parish and mission in Eastern Montana. In this vision I expressed my hope:

- that people experience welcome and hospitality;
- that comfort be offered to the afflicted and challenge to the complacent;
- that liturgy be celebrated in a manner that informs the mind and inspires the heart with the fullness of the Gospel
- that sacraments be readily available to Catholics throughout the Diocese;
- that the poor, vulnerable and marginalized of society be sought out;
- that social justice be embodied in all members of the Diocese;

- that religious and spiritual formation be offered to parishioners of all ages;
- that stewardship be a way of life;
- that evangelization be understood as a responsibility of all the baptized;
- that the Rite of Christian Initiation be fully celebrated;
- that young adults accept calls to priesthood and religious life;
- that Catholic schools flourish.

I now join with the members of the aforementioned councils to present this vision to you, the Catholic Church of Eastern Montana. We call on you to embrace this vision. We believe that you will readily recognize it as reflective of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Everything we have and all that we are in some way is intended for the building up of the Kingdom of God. We realize that such an affirmation may challenge many lifestyles but if the way of the cross is the demand set forth by Jesus for every disciple (cf. Luke 9:23), it can be no other way. It demands great faith on our part. To pick up the cross does not mean looking for suffering and struggle. It means striving to be faithful to God at all times, in all circumstances and in all ways even though suffering and hardship may come as a result of our fidelity.

To live truly as stewards of God's gifts expects a degree of prayerful and discerning intentionality about the way we:

- utilize the gifts God has entrusted to us;
- determine how to apportion our God given gifts;
- settle on how our gifts will be sacrificial and given from the first fruits of what we have received from God.

As Catholics, let us embrace a spirituality of stewardship! It is vital for the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings. Doing so provides the means effectively to carry out our mission as members of the Church in Eastern Montana. The most effective way to proclaim Christ is through the use of our energies and abilities and our material and financial resources. When each of us does our part, the programs and ministries of the Diocese, our parishes, missions and schools flourish. It is true that a small group of individuals (or even one individual) can have a tremendous impact in bringing others to Christ. It is also true that a cooperative effort leads to greater results. When a significant number of the members of the Diocese are involved, our mission becomes far more effective than when it is left to a relatively small percentage of the Church. This was true during the era in which St. Paul founded churches and it remains true for us today.

There are a number of parishes in Eastern Montana who strive to model stewardship. In order to nurture and celebrate their faith in Christ, parishioners in these communities work together utilizing their energies and talents as well as

material resources. They do so because they understand what they have in life is a gift from God. They realize that only through the use of the gifts God has provided can they exercise their discipleship. For the wellbeing of the Catholic Church in Eastern Montana, let each of our parishes as well as each of us as individual Catholics embrace this level of stewardship.

In essence, stewardship is nothing more, but nothing less, than the embodiment of the virtues of faith, hope and love of which St. Paul speaks so eloquently in his exhortation to the Church of Corinth (1 Corinthians 13:1-13). They are what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* refers to as theological virtues because they relate directly to God and are interrelated features of Christian living, the primary of these being love. While supernatural gifts from God, they yet require human cooperation. By embracing these virtues simultaneously, the Lord is revealed in and through us. It is then that we become vibrant stewards of the Kingdom of God.

Michael W. Warfel
Bishop of Great Falls-Billings