

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings Principles for Planning

Over many years, using surveys and research as well as consultation and numerous meetings, our diocese has been attempting to formulate a pastoral plan for the future. Much has been accomplished, but many challenges remain.

Reflecting on past experience and looking to the future, it is imperative to identify guiding principles for continued planning.

1. Local planning is essential. It is important that faith communities have pastoral councils and finance councils as mandated by the Bishop so to provide structure, consultation, and forums for planning.
2. Planning must be regional. Faith communities must consult and collaborate with other faith communities in their area.
3. When the need arises and the Bishop requires, all faith communities in the designated area must participate in pastoral planning.
4. Planning is done under the direction of the Committee on Planning for Parish Ministries and in collaboration with the diocesan staff and consultative bodies.
5. Creativity, flexibility, and innovation are essential as decisions are made to provide for leadership and pastoral ministry. A priest pastoring one parish is no longer the reality in our diocese for ministry and leadership.
6. The Priests' Personnel Board and the Bishop will strive for an equitable distribution of priests in the diocese.
7. Sunday Eucharist must be a central focus of all planning. Every faith community must have the opportunity for Eucharist on Sunday as far as possible. When it is not possible, the community should still gather.