



Pastoral Plan 2016-2021



"To evangelize is to make the kingdom of God present in our world, Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence" (Pope Francis in [The Joy of the Gospel](#)).

Formed as Disciples: Sent as Apostles

A Pastoral Letter

Bishop Michael W. Warfel

December 8, 2015
The Jubilee Year of Mercy

The Process

In the year 304, the Roman Emperor Diocletian prohibited Christians, under pain of death, to possess the Scriptures, to meet on Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist and to build places for their assemblies. In Abitene, a small village in what is now Tunisia, 49 Christians met in the home of Octavius Felix. They were taken by surprise on a Sunday while celebrating the Eucharist, defying the imperial prohibitions. Arrested, they were taken to Carthage to be interrogated by the Proconsul. After being asked why they had violated the Emperor's order, the Proconsul was given the response: "Sine dominico non possumus," i.e., "We cannot live without Sunday," the response being understood as celebration of their faith in Christ through the Liturgy of the Eucharist. After suffering appalling tortures, the 49 martyrs of Abitene were executed. They confirmed their faith with the shedding of blood.

The vision set forth in this pastoral plan is rooted in the same conviction of faith held by the Christian martyrs of Abitene. This conviction is that Christ suffered and died but then rose from the dead to overcome sin and death once and for all. Now, we who share this same conviction as disciples of the Lord, commit ourselves to the mission of the Church, by supporting one another in how we live our faith in Christ while reaching out to those who have yet to appreciate the gift God has offered to all people.

Formed as disciples, we are also sent forth as apostles to announce the Good News of salvation in Christ as we say in our Diocesan Vision Statement: ***Live the Gospel – Bring Light to the World!*** Responding to this invitation it is essential to recall that each member has a very unique role in the mission of the Church. Pope Francis wrote in his Apostolic Exhortation, ***The Joy of the Gospel***, "In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients" (EG #120).

As for any local Church, the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles establish a pattern for Christian life. As portrayed by the Evangelist, this two-part work describes an orderly account of the life of Christ and the spread of the Gospel “to the ends of the earth.” The Gospel of Luke provides the account of Jesus’ birth and public ministry and concludes with his passion, death and resurrection and a brief account of his ascension. During his time on earth, he calls forth a group of followers and forms them into the nucleus that would then spread the message of salvation in Christ throughout their known world. The Acts of the Apostles, continuing where the Gospel of Luke ends, offers a portrait of the early Church as it develops and spreads from Jerusalem to the center of the Roman Empire, the city of Rome. Filled with the Spirit of the risen Christ, his followers began to take the Good News of salvation far and wide; even suffering martyrdom, so profound was their experience of life in Christ.

This pattern, depicted through the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, is for all believers to embrace. Not only does God call us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus by appropriating his Gospel into our daily lives, but Christ also sends us forth to proclaim his Gospel to the ends of the earth. We are to be both disciples who pattern our day-to-day living on the life of Christ and apostles who announce and share our faith in the risen Lord.

The image that many people have of the early Church is one of perfection, as ideal and harmonious communities of faith. There was also discord among the nascent faith communities founded by the earliest missionaries. In the First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul addressed a community that is beset with difficulties. Some considered themselves as more important than others. Others were living in ways that were totally inconsistent with the Gospel of Christ. They had much to learn about their new life in Christ and how to live as a Christian community.

St. Paul used the form of a human body to demonstrate that no one can be a body by themselves. As with a human body, each person is but a part of the whole yet with a specific role and purpose. When each part of a human body functions according to its purpose, such as an eye that sees and an ear that hears, the body functions as intended. When each member of the Body of Christ uses his or her talents to serve the whole, the Church not only remains strong, it grows and develops.

The three major priorities that surfaced at the *Leadership Summit* are:

Parish Life and Liturgy

Evangelization and Discipleship

Vocations to the Priesthood

I truly appreciate the many parishioners who offered their perspective on the needs of the Church in Eastern Montana through parish listening sessions and those who participated at the Leadership Summit. It has demonstrated commitment and concern for the wellbeing of the Diocese. This fills me with great hope as we, the Catholic Church of Eastern Montana, strive to implement the planning required to address these needs. The direction expressed in this pastoral plan is designed with the expectation that we, who make up the Catholic Church of Eastern Montana, will respond to the call of the Spirit as did the early apostles. The mission of the Church is one which all the baptized share. As Pope Francis affirmed in his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*: “I invite all Christians, everywhere, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since ‘no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord’” (EG #3). Filled with the Spirit of the risen Lord, we will have the energy and inspiration to accomplish this plan.

The Priority Needs

Parish Life and Liturgy was the first priority identified. There are two parts of this first priority that are intimately connected. A parish’s worship is the heart and soul of a parish, but a parish is also intended to be a community in which parishioners may support and nurture each other’s faith. In the latter sense, parish life is best experienced and most fruitful when there is a true sense of hospitality and community. It is a hospitable and welcoming environment that attracts people. If people do not feel sufficiently welcome or wanted, they likely will look for a community that does welcome them. Without a sense of welcome, there is little to draw in new members, invite alienated members or hold on to old members. A sense of belonging to a faith community provides a fundamental reason for people to be a part of that faith community. Belonging, as opposed to merely attending, is an incredibly important element for retaining members and inviting new members to the Church. It is through the engagement of people that the Church grows strong, loving and wise.



Being hospitable involves being aware of people and recognizing their presence. It is to take everyone seriously as the gift of God they are and to invite people to utilize their gifts and their strengths. People need to have a sense of being wanted, of being included, of being involved. They need to know that their presence is desired and that they are an integral part of the family of God. Parishes that extend a genuine spirit of welcome and hospitality to all, are powerful instruments of God’s merciful love. This does not mean that the invitation to life within the Church, and as a disciple, is not without challenge or expectation. The invitation expects conversion to the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. It is through fidelity to the Gospel that the offer of salvation from sin and death becomes fruitful. Parishes need to be places where, whoever darkens the door or whoever is at the periphery of the church building, can hear the Gospel proclaimed in its fullness and know they are invited to share the journey of faith.

The second element to this first priority is the Liturgy of the Eucharist (the Mass). It is through the Mass that Catholics most experience and express their faith in Christ. As the Vatican II document on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* affirmed, “[T]he liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows” (SC #10). As such, in addition to the importance of knowing welcome and being invited to be an integral member of a parish faith community, the liturgical experience of Catholic worship needs to be fruitful and life-giving.

All Liturgies of the Eucharist should strive to inform the mind, touch the heart and inspire the soul of those who have gathered to worship in spirit and in truth. Liturgies, especially Sundays and Holy Days, when most parishioners gather, should be well prepared and well celebrated. When put together haphazardly and at the last moment, it communicates that worship of God is not all that important. Planning and preparation are essential because it gives the best to God’s people and enables people to give their best to God.

Connections ought to be made between what occurs at the Liturgy and parishioner’s day to day experience. Worship must create a bridge between the Gospel and the day to day activity in people’s lives. It needs concretely to help them deal with their struggles and challenges throughout the week. Good preaching, in particular, is indispensable. Music and song should be a part of the Liturgy since it clearly demonstrates the Church in celebration. Music is a medium that touches the heart in a way that words alone cannot do.

Those with particular responsibilities in the Liturgy, such as Presider, Deacon, Readers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Cantors, etc., should have the necessary ability and skills to perform their appointed tasks well. In addition, they should be provided the training they need to accomplish their specific liturgical roles in a manner that assists the assembly. The role of a liturgical minister is never to draw attention to self, but to enhance the experience of worship of parishioners who have gathered to worship in spirit and in truth.

The second priority identified was **Evangelization and Discipleship**. Like the first priority, there are two parts. To evangelize, according to the U.S. Bishop’s pastoral plan for evangelization, ***Go and Make Disciples***, means “...bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself”(GMD #10). In broad terms, evangelization looks first to the Church’s active membership and the importance of supporting and nurturing the faith of these members. Secondly, it seeks to reach out to an array of inactive members of the Catholic Church, always inviting alienated and disaffected Catholics to return home. Third, it invites those who are unaffiliated with any faith community and have not demonstrated a level of faith activity in their lives to consider life in Christ.

Pope Francis in *The Joy of the Gospel* writes on Evangelization and Discipleship which is inspired by Jesus' poverty and concern for the dispossessed during his earthly ministry, Pope Francis calls for a "church which is poor and for the poor." The poor "have much to teach us," he writes. "We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voices to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them." Charity is more than mere handouts writes Pope Francis, "it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor." He then adds that the "worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. ... They need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith." We, the Catholics of Eastern Montana, need to remember that we evangelize the poor, yet they also evangelize us!

We, as Catholics, evangelize through participating in the political process, yet we, ourselves are evangelized through the formation of our own well-formed consciences. "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act..." (CCC #1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church. We have a deep tradition in our Catholic Social Teaching (cf. Faithful Citizenship for the Common Good, #40-62):

- Human life is sacred. Direct attacks on innocent human beings are never morally acceptable. Within our society, life is under direct attack from abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, and destruction of human embryos for research. These intrinsic evils must always be opposed. This teaching also compels us as Catholics to oppose genocide, torture, unjust war, and the use of the death penalty, as well as to pursue peace and help overcome poverty, racism, and other conditions that demean human life.
- The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected.
- While the common good embraces all, those who are in greatest need deserve preferential concern. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor and marginalized.
- The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, opportunities for legal status for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity.
- We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.
- Care for the earth is a duty of our Catholic faith. We all are called to be careful stewards of God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future.

A second integral part of this second priority is **discipleship**. Discipleship essentially is grounded in being a good steward of the gifts of God. A disciple is one who patterns his or her life on the life of Jesus. What he taught, how he lived, the things he valued are the measure for what we believe, how we live and what we know to be truly of value. A disciple, who truly appreciates that all is gift from God, especially salvation in Christ, knows that the hours of the day, the abilities with which they have been blessed and the material resources they have received, have been provided for them to build up the kingdom of God in some way.

There are four principles to this Spirituality of Stewardship.

- First, how a disciple uses the gifts provided by God must flow from a life of prayer and discernment. This means that he or she uses the gifts provided by God intentionally.
- Secondly, good stewardship is always a planned response to the promptings of the Spirit.
- Thirdly, how a good steward uses gifts from God is in proportion to how he or she has received them from God. The spiritual need is to give knowing that it is in giving that a person receives.
- Fourthly, a good steward of the gifts of God knows that the use of their time, abilities and resources must include a sense of sacrifice, sacrifice that goes beyond what is merely superficial. Stewardship asks a disciple to share from his or her substance rather than their surplus. The symbol for a good steward is the cross of Christ who gave himself totally for others.



The third priority identified was **Vocations to the Priesthood**, an essential gift from God and call to the Church for fully living life in Christ. As distinct from an occupation, a vocation is filled with divine mystery and is specifically concerned with life in Christ. For some, the call of God is clearly heard and comes early in life. For others, it is perceived gradually and may come late in life. Once heard, it requires even more attention lest an individual become dull to the call. A call is never just a one-time event, but an ongoing reality. Also, the hearing of a call from God is generally facilitated by someone other than the one being called. In every case, a call from God must be sustained through prayer and worship.

The primary vocation to which all people are called is baptism, but this must be lived out in a specific way. There are many ways by which Christians do live out their baptismal calling: matrimony, consecrated life as religious women and men, a dedicated lay single state, ordained clerics. There are various ways by which the people of God are served: by priests and deacons, women and men religious and lay ecclesial ministers. However, the essential element for fully and authentically celebrating Christian faith requires an ordained priest for the celebration of the Eucharist. Central to Catholic faith is the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Eucharist. Through this central act of the Church's worship, the work of Christ's saving action on the cross is made present.

Having a shortage of priests in Eastern Montana presents a particular challenge in this regard to many areas of the Diocese. While no one can truly create a vocation (only God can do this), all members of the faithful have roles in providing a nurturing environment in their parishes and families in which individuals (particularly youth and young adults) may more readily hear the call of God in their lives. First of all, an invitation to a vocation to priesthood begins with clergy and vowed religious. Happy and fulfilled priests and religious provide a powerful invitation. Happy priests and vowed religious are contagious and attractive to youth and young adults who are discerning the path in life they should take. Secondly, parents retain a vital role in the formation of their children. In the rearing of their children, parents have a key role in helping their children envision what God may be calling them to do in life. When parents demonstrate their own commitment to the Church and strive deeply to embrace the fullness of the Church's teachings out of love for God, they make a deep impact on their children. When parents demonstrate love for each other and a commitment to their sacrament, they witness to the value of permanency in a society that often doubts permanent commitments. Thirdly, parishioners in general have a role in encouraging young men to consider a vocation to the priesthood. Parishioners who directly encourage young men to consider priesthood have an influence in the discernment process. Finally, the experience of parish life in general, when vibrant and faith filled, can make a major impression on youth and young adults. It provides inspiration and motivation to respond in some way to the experience of God's presence. It instills a desire to serve God and God's people in some way. A parish community who embodies the Gospel and lives as intentional disciples provides great witness.

Well planned parish based vocation programs are important for inviting youth and young adult men to consider a vocation to the priesthood. Such programs should include several elements. First, there needs to be strong emphasis on service. Young people are generally quite open to helping others. Providing structured opportunities helps to instill the value of service as a lifestyle. Secondly, focused retreat opportunities provide a time to reflect and pray and consider how God might want them to live their lives. Thirdly, support groups for youth and young adults whereby participants can hear the vocation stories of others, facilitate reflections of those hearing the stories. Finally, a parish based vocation's program should aim at fostering strong marriage and family life beyond what is experienced in parish church. The goal should be developing a vocational consciousness and a culture of vocation in the parish.

Development and Evaluation

While these priorities represent my Pastoral Plan for our diocese over the next five years, it is not the work of the Bishop or the Chancery alone. Each of the offices in the Chancery has worked on writing goals and action items which will work to support the priority and the work of our parishes. Each of our parishes (and missions), our priests, parish life coordinators, deacons, lay ministers, pastoral councils, finance councils, and other consultative bodies are asked to work on these priorities in their parishes, working with the Chancery, and cooperating with the goals to be accomplished which will provide a way of measuring progress over the next five years.

In order to be most effective, this pastoral plan uses the process referred to as **S.M.A.R.T.** The goals and action items are to be ***specific***, simply written and clearly defined. The goals should be ***measurable*** so that Diocesan offices and parishes will be able to concretely evaluate performance. The goals should be ***achievable*** and not out of the reach of the Diocesan ministries or those of its parishes. The goals should be ***results-focused*** which allows Diocese offices and the parishes to confidently measure effectiveness. Finally, the goals need to be ***time-bound*** which expects the accomplishment of a goal by a certain date or at least good progress toward that end.

SMART Goals Worksheet

Draft Goal:

	Answers at time of development	6 Month Update
Specific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the desired result? (who, what, when, why, how) 		
Measurable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can you quantify (numerically or descriptively) completion? How can you measure progress? 		
Achievable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What skills are needed? What resources are necessary? How does the environment impact goal achievement? Does the goal require the right amount of effort? 		
Relevant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the goal in alignment with the overall mission or strategy? 		
Time-bound <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the deadline? Is the deadline realistic? 		

Final Goal:

We have a diocese which covers 94,158 square miles, which makes it the second largest diocese in the contiguous United States. We have 101 churches serving 38,654 Catholics, of which about 14,000 attend Mass on any given weekend. Most of our faith communities (92) are in small towns or rural areas with many having 25 people or fewer attending Sunday Mass. These churches are often some of the most vibrant communities in the diocese but have unique *Catholic Rural Life* Issues which are a particular concern for them. Some (9) parishes are in our two urban areas and have their own concerns. We have the somewhat unique privilege of serving on 5 Native Reservations with 17 churches located on or bordering the Reservation. We are served by 48 dedicated and holy priests, many from Montana but some from as far away as Nigeria or India. We now are served by 17 permanent deacons including 9 ordained last year in our first group of deacons in nearly 30 years. We are served by 31 Religious Sisters, 3 lay people leading parishes (Parish Life Coordinators) and many lay ecclesial ministers working with our priests and families to form the next generation of Catholics and to announce the good news to all.

All of these priorities and goals at the diocesan, parish, and family level must be done within the larger framework of Pope Francis and ***The Joy of the Gospel***. The teachings of Pope Francis on “a church for the poor” not only speaks to the centrality of addressing poverty in all its forms as an imperative for Catholics in the Diocese, but also call us to look anew at the nature of the common good in Eastern Montana and how we seek to achieve it. We are called to see the issues of abortion and poverty, marriage and immigrant rights, euthanasia and war, religious liberty and restorative justice, and a care for the environment not as competing alternatives, but as a complementary continuum of life and dignity. We are called to create a Catholic Pastoral Plan and conversation that proclaims the greatest problems of our day can only be solved with a vision rooted in the dignity of the human person. For in the end, the very purpose of Pastoral Plan is to help our diocese, parishes, and Catholics as our Diocesan Vision Statement proclaims - ***Live the Gospel and Bring Light to the World!***

Bishop and Chancery Overarching Goals for the Diocesan Priorities

The Bishop will issue his pastoral letter “***Formed as Disciples; Sent as Apostles***” in a special issue of ***The Harvest*** early in 2016 which will include an outline of the pastoral plan to be discussed by parishes.

The Bishop, Chancellor, and Finance Officer will meet with parish leadership early in 2016 in all five Vicariates to present and discuss the pastoral plan and its funding.

The Bishop will work with the Priest Council to suggest topics for the Priest Assembly which would support and cooperate with the priorities in the Pastoral Plan.

The Finance Officer will work toward all our parishes being on the same church management, database, and financial software by 2019.

With the Chancellor, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and Priest Council will assume a lead role in the implementation and evaluation of the progress of diocesan and parish efforts to implement the pastoral plan at parish levels.

The Chancellor will send out working papers to our parishes (pastors, pastoral, and finance councils) to complete and submit with SMART goals and strategies to track how they are cooperating with the Bishop’s plan over the next year by July 1, 2016, and each year after. We will send out additional short reports to be filled out by the parish **tracking their progress** and **measuring their goals** in the fall of each year, and will assist parishes as requested.

The Chancery Offices will keep the Pastoral Plan current by publishing regular articles in *The Harvest*, e-bulletin, bishop’s memo, and Facebook page with updates from our parishes and chancery on ideas and events.

The Chancellor will work with the USCCB and the councils of the Diocese to coordinate the diocesan delegation to the ***USCCB “Joy of the Gospel in America: A National Convocation of Catholic Leaders”*** in July of 2017.

Overarching Parish Leadership

Pastors, Parish Life Coordinators, Pastoral and Finance Councils will read the Bishop's Pastoral Letter and Plan and begin work on developing parish *SMART* goals and strategies for parish needs by May 2016.

Parishes (or Clusters) will cooperate with the diocesan pastoral plan and submit and write at least one parish *SMART* goal and the strategies to achieve it **for each diocesan priority** and return it to the Bishop by July 1, 2016.

Parishes (or Clusters) will commit to implementing the diocesan plan and address the set of parish goals and priorities for each given year by scheduling time on the agenda at parish pastoral council and finance council meetings to discuss the plan, articles in The Harvest, e-bulletin, and bishop's memo.

Priority One – Parish Life and Liturgy

The Bishop and Chancery Offices

The Bishop will issue a Pastoral Letter on the Liturgy by July 2017.

The Bishop will convene a Diocesan Worship Commission at least four times annually to plan for (with the Formation Office) and carry out liturgical training in parishes throughout the diocese.

The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office will provide resources to parishes to make Mass a more engaging experience for our young people by December 2016.

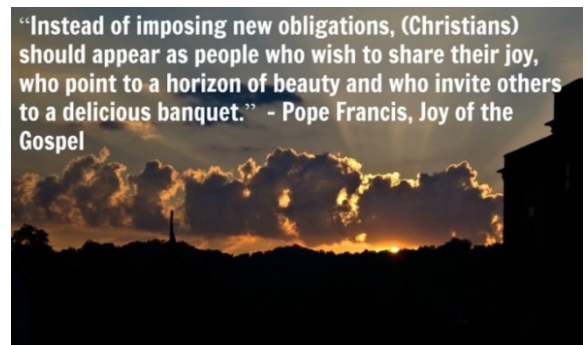
The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office will provide training on up to date methods of reaching today's youth to our parish youth ministers by December 2016.

The Marriage Tribunal will promote and provide information for Engaged Encounter, Marriage Encounter and the Retrouvaille programs to strengthen sacramental marriages and families in the life of the Church.

The Office of Ministry Formation (with the Worship Commission) will provide summer Vicariate liturgical trainings for our Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion, Greeters, Music Ministers by the summer of 2017.

The Office of Ministry Formation will provide and promote distance learning opportunities for Continuing Education of Lay Leaders, Catechists, and Clergy via Dayton University's Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation by December 2016.

The Office of Ministry Formation will provide and promote Annual Vicariate Liturgical Workshops featuring regional and national facilitators in liturgy, music, the RCIA rites beginning in 2017.



The Catholic Schools Office will see that every parish connected to a school will offer a child-centered Mass once per month.

The Office for Safe Environment will coordinate the full parish and school implementation of the *Safe and Sacred* Child Protection Program and *L.I.F.E.* family life program and be in full compliance for our next in person USCCB audit in 2018.

The Office of Stewardship will begin providing welcoming and hospitality training sessions and/or resources for any parish which requests them by June 1, 2016.

Parish Life and Liturgy - Parishes will consider

Establishing a youth group, if none exists; encourage and support parish youth to attend and participate in Mass, attend diocesan youth events and rallies.

Creating a parish photo album/directory and publish a parish history.

Scheduling a parish mission dedicated to the theme of liturgy, different types of prayer and meditation, inculturation, or family life.

Formation of small group communities for faith sharing and study of Scripture/Catechism.

Committing to Social gatherings to celebrate parish events, e.g., confirmation, first communion, wedding anniversaries, graduations, etc.

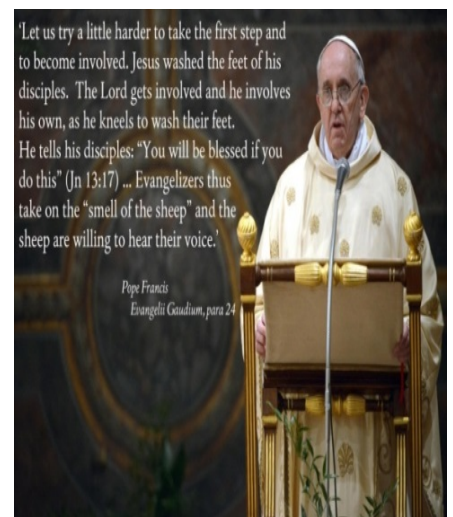
Fully developed ministry of hospitality and welcome for Sunday and Holy Day liturgies.

Review of accessibility and availability of institution (e.g., times, lighting, signs and posters, sound systems, signing for the hearing impaired, etc.)

Establishing teams for welcoming new parishioners to the area

Train parishioners for Pastoral Visitations to home bound and elderly.

Group study and faith sharing on the Sunday readings.



Parish Life and Liturgy - Families will consider

Read the Bishop's Pastoral Letter and Pastoral Plan by the end of April 2016

Pray the Scripture readings of the day or a passage of the Bible daily as a family.

Read the Bishop's articles and ***The Harvest*** throughout the year.

Give time and prayerful consideration to taking a liturgical ministry position in the parish, volunteering to be a Lector, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, Greeter, music minister, etc.

Priority Two – Evangelization and Discipleship

The Bishop and Chancery Offices

The Bishop will engage in Catholic/Lutheran dialogue in light of 500th commemoration of Reformation in 2017 using "From Conflict to Communion" and encourage our parishes to participate locally.

The Bishop and Chancellor will coordinate efforts with Montana Catholic Conference, pastors and parishes to promote and teach "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" focusing on the themes of Catholic Social Teaching and Conscience Formation.



The Chancery staff will design a 5-year plan for St. Thomas Camp to improve and develop the Catholic Camp experience by December 2016.

The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office will provide youth ministry trainings and host a diocesan youth event by December 2016 to awaken the faithful and reach the lost.

The Marriage Tribunal will promote and provide information for "Beginning Experience" to support those families who have experienced divorce or suffered the death of a spouse.

The Catholic Schools Office will see that every Catholic school develops a service-learning component as well as an annual retreat program.

The Office of Ministry Formation will facilitate and promote Retreat Opportunities focusing on the Ministry of Discipleship with the aim to equip parishioners and the leadership of the diocese for the work of Evangelization in parishes beginning in 2017.

The Office of Stewardship will offer learning sessions regarding discipleship, stewardship and growing an engaged church to any parish which requests them beginning January 1, 2016.

The Office of Stewardship and the Diocesan Stewardship Council will present Mini-Conferences regarding growing an engaged church (discipleship, stewardship) in each Vicariate, at least once per year, beginning in 2016. This will include the opportunity to help parishioners understand more clearly their God-given gifts and strengths.

Beginning in 2016, the Office of Stewardship will present resources and assistance to parishes, upon request, for measuring parish engagement amongst their active membership. With the Diocesan Stewardship Council, it will offer training and resources for helping parishioners grow closer to Christ and to build engagement, versus involvement.



Evangelization and Discipleship - Parish's will consider

Work with the Youth Ministry Office to promote Youth events and St. Thomas Camp.

Work with the Office of Stewardship to establish a parish Stewardship Committee and attend Vicariate Stewardship trainings.

Scheduling periodic witness talks by parishioners testifying to how stewardship is a way of life.

Scheduling a parish mission dedicated to the themes stewardship.

Providing funding to help families send their children to St. Thomas Camp and Youth Ministry conferences.

Beginning a Theology on Tap or similar program for Young Adults

Full implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Creating a home visitation training for 2 x 2 door to door visitation to parishioners.

Full use of social media for outreach and good communication within the parish

Adult religious education sessions with a discipleship and stewardship focus.

Vacation Bible School for youth.

Promoting small groups and associations which assist the members in growing closer to Christ and His Church.

Make full use of the USCCB's "Faithful Citizenship" resource for conscience formation and Catholic Social Teaching available in the parish.



Evangelization and Discipleship - Families will consider

Give time and prayer to considering serving the parish in some form of ministry, volunteering to assist with the parish stewardship program, Pastoral Council, or Finance Council.

Set aside time for daily prayer both personally and as a family in the home.

Investigate parish resources for evangelization in the workplace, prayer groups for specific groups (mothers, business people, etc) or prayer days or retreat opportunities for families.

Work toward looking at our everyday lives from the viewpoint of evangelization, taking note of the opportunities to share our faith in our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and with friends.

Priority Three – Vocations to the Priesthood

The Bishop and Chancery Offices

The Bishop, Chancellor, and Finance Officer will work to appoint and fund a half time position of “Vocations Director” to recruit, encourage, and support a sense of vocations in our parishes and families to be in place by July 1, 2017.

The Vocations Office will engage each parish intentionally in prayer for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life and ask the youth and young adults to consider the call.

The Vocations Office will support parents and families of young people considering or already answering the call to service in the church.



The Youth Ministry Office will provide vocational discernment times in all diocesan youth events, St. Thomas Camp, and will host a Quo Vadis camp by June 2017

The Office of Ministry Formation will facilitate and promote the growth of “Vocation Parishes”, providing tools to vicariates responsible

Vocations to the Priesthood Parishes and Families will consider

To encourage parishioners to pray for, learn about, support and recruit vocations to the priesthood and religious life during the 5-year Pastoral Plan

To sponsor programs such as “Called by Name”

To hold regular Eucharistic Adoration or pray the rosary for vocations

To provide opportunities to develop vocation awareness through parish events and youth retreats.

To sponsor parent nights to discuss vocations and invite the Diocesan Vocation Director

To **personally** invite individual men and women to consider the priesthood and religious life and encourage all parishioners to do likewise

To encourage and remind the parish priest(s) to preach on vocations

To celebrate World Day of Prayer for Vocations and Vocations Awareness

To work with parish Youth Ministers, DRE’s and teachers to have special programs on vocations

To collaborate with diocesan groups (Knights of Columbus, Councils of Catholic Women, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Cum Christo, etc.) on vocation outreach.

Parish Goals for each year due to the Chancery by July 1 beginning in 2016
Evaluation of each year's goals due to the Chancery by May 31 beginning in 2017

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