



Diocese of Sioux Falls

How do we plan for the future knowing our current reality?





In Summary : Demographics Sacraments Pastoral Resources

- Level of decline (liturgies, Mass counts, sacramental activity) is likely observable at the parish level.
- How does this impact engagement and identity?
- The fulfillment of liturgies, level of engagement, and evangelization need to be part of pastoral planning.
- There is not as significant of a decline in the amount of priest resourcing available to serve parishes as some feared. However, numbers do not tell the whole story.
 - What ratio of pastors to parishes is sustainable and provides for high quality of life for priests?
- Nonetheless, pastoral planning will likely need to address recommendations for change of status of parishes.
- While Sioux Falls has seen approximately 30% of parish activities in the diocese historically, birth rates and migration trends project this will increase.
- Regional centers of ministry and administration, as implemented in other dioceses, seem to be important resources to explore when modeling for the future.



Guiding Change Document

A Guiding Change Document describes:

- The current reality and why change is needed
- The desired future and results of change implemented
- The undesired acts or design in achieving the results

A Guiding Change Document influences:

- The design of pastorates and ministries
- The process of consultation on design

For our purposes in the Diocese of Sioux Falls the document informs:

- The Missionary Discipleship implementation
- The local pastoral/operational implementation



Guiding Change:

The Why / Current Reality & Trends

The End of Christendom

- Our country has transitioned from Christendom to an era of Apostolic Mission. As a diocese, we have been invited to enter a life of missionary discipleship by the Holy Father, Pope Francis, his predecessors, and by Bishop DeGrood.
- As missionary disciples, we seek to amplify the positive trend of developing “fires,” pockets of devout faith being practiced by the faithful within our parishes.
- Planning and change is needed to invigorate the spiritual, pastoral, and sacramental life of parishes and parishioners across the diocese.
- As Church, we seek to disrupt the downward trends of Mass attendance, reception of the sacraments, and Catholic school enrollment.
- Many parishes tend to see the “Church” only through the lens of their local community faithful. Behaviors suggest that they may fail to see their parish’s part in the diocesan and universal church (parochial), and some faithful are strongly aligned to the local church buildings and things of the temporal world.



Guiding Change:

The Why / Current Reality & Trends

Our Legacy

- There is a strong financial/debt position in most of our parishes with a culture of good stewardship.
- We tend to operate from a “crisis management” mentality or approach, responding to urgent concerns rather than taking a planned approach for healthy pastoral succession, facility maintenance, and formation of employed ministers to assist pastors.
- Parochial preference to access to the sacraments and a fragmented approach to ministries and service that limits collaboration.
- Preference to being with those we know, and limited examples of welcoming, integration, and evangelization of “new” people and cultures.
- Too much of priests’ time and energy is centered around daily governance and administration tasks. This is amplified by limited practices of delegation and empowerment of the lay faithful and effective use of parish staff and resources.
- As a diocese, we recognize our need to further develop an embodied sense of Catholic discipleship and to enlist its efforts in the works of the Church through healthy partnerships with the local pastor.
- As numbers of priests have declined, sufficient practical experience gained during time as an associate has been limited due to priests being asked to take on roles as pastors sooner to fill assignments that would otherwise have been left open.



Guiding Change:

The Why / Current Reality & Trends

Changing Demographics

- There exists a wide difference between parishes in numbers of Catholics registered, frequency of the sacraments, and amounts of time spent in communal devotions.
- Gen Z (born 1999-2016) has become the largest (by total numbers) generational cohort in eastern South Dakota to serve. That 23.6% of the population has become or soon will become young adults and should be our primary focus as we seek to fulfill the obligations for evangelization that we received with our baptism.
- There is a significant and growing need for care and support of elderly faithful, those who have passed on to us the Catholic faith that was handed down by the apostles.
- Population decline shown in parishes parallels the diminishment of many school districts, thus confirming that the broader community is in decline in some locations.
- Geographic distances vary between our parish churches where liturgies are regularly offered. Winter uncertainties can make these more extreme.



Guiding Change:

The Why / Current Reality & Trends

Changing Influences of Culture

- Secularism in our world today appears intent on disguising God's presence in our lives and dissuading man from relying on the aid God alone can provide. This is seen in partisanship and political ideology. It is also seen in government's efforts to supplant the role of the family and limit the presence of faith in our society.
- Technology is having both positive and negative impacts on life/ministry of the Church. It can bring us together as well as lead to separation and isolation.
- There is a presence and loudness of social and national media that limits our access to a fully informed knowledge and viewpoints of events, politics, and shared values.
- A reticence to change by the laity and clergy to new ministry concepts or priorities. While a comfort with the familiar can be good, it can also cloud one's ability to see changes around us and the value of what is needed and new.



Guiding Change: The Why / Current Reality & Trends

Care for Our Clergy and Consecrated

- The diocese has operated under a preference and structure of our priests serving alone for some time, with a focus on administration over pastoral ministry and little support. Experience shows this has led to some priests functioning in a survival mode on a personal level, while still attempting to fulfill their priestly responsibilities.
- There is insufficient ongoing formation of the clergy with minimal accountability measures and/or direction provided on programming/pastoral priorities. Little or no feedback is provided to clergy for their growth and development.
- The diocesan presbyterate exhibits a supportive, unified fraternity; it does not show signs of pronounced ideological conflict. This reality cannot be taken for granted, nor should we be complacent with it. Ongoing formation and intentional time spent together in prayer, fraternity, and recreation are essential for building upon what we inherit.
- The diminishment in numbers of religious orders in our diocese has negatively affected the faith life of the Church. Catholics are better served by the witness of all vocations ministering within their midst, and the recent arrival of a new religious order confirms their impact.
- Our diocese has a wide spectrum of awareness/knowledge of parishioners' needs and spiritual journeys within our pastors. Per their own feedback, this is, in part, due to pastors having to spend an inordinate amount of time on parish administration.
- Over 2/3 of priests have changed assignment in the last two years. While the goal of these changes has been to align the needs of assignment locations with particular gifts of priests, the changes disrupt a priest's efforts to form authentic relationships with those he serves.



Guiding Change:

The Results / What We Desire to Develop

The Church

- We want laity who are aware, informed, and engaged in the missionary discipleship and practices we are committing to do together as Catholics.
- We want a Church renewed by a livened people living in relationship with the Lord through the Eucharist.
- We want priests functioning as missionary disciples, orientating their life toward authentic joy; thus, serving as a witness for the consecrated and laity.
- We want an awakening to a sense of adventure to the mission of the Church.
- We want a comprehensive approach to welcoming and serving immigrant communities.
- We want an increase in vocations to priesthood, the diaconate, the consecrated life, and holy marriage.



Guiding Change:

The Results / What We Desire to Develop

Parish Life

- We want healthy, happy, holy, and hard-working faithful of all vocations; an expression meant to reflect the reality that physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health leads to a joy-filled disposition, and an awareness of God's presence and active involvement in our lives, along with an active resolve to grow in relationship with our Lord.
- We want priests, deacons, religious, and laity engaged in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as missionary disciples.
- We want engaging, welcoming, and impactful Masses in nearly full churches with a weekend Mass design of one Saturday vigil and two Sunday Masses for each priest.
- We want parish and parorate ministry and evangelization that resets the Catholic parish as a center of life for the faithful and the community.
- We want parish culture, identity, and mission that transcends the priests assigned to serve them.
- We want to Maximize the sacramental and teaching ministry priests are called to while minimizing daily administrative tasks.
- We want effective parish and finance councils that promote visioning, good stewardship, and transparent accountability.



Guiding Change:

The Results / What We Desire to Develop

Priestly Health & Continued Formation

- We want healthy, happy, holy, and hardworking priests; an expression reflecting the reality that physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health leads to a joy-filled disposition, an awareness of God's presence and active involvement in our lives, and an active resolve to grow in relationship with our Lord.
- We want to embrace priestly brotherhood as a means of continuing the 4 levels of formation – human/spiritual/intellectual/pastoral – while acknowledging the reality that grace builds upon nature. Thus, priestly brotherhood shall be a means of prioritizing these levels of formation in their proper order.
- We want on-going human, theological, and pastoral formation of the clergy in order to make them more effective in the work of evangelization in our changing culture and in light of our changing resources.
- We want intentional development of newly-ordained priests and the cultivation of assignments that are well-suited for their ongoing formation, which is uniquely received in a priest's first assignments.
- We want to provide meaningful and impactful assistance to all clergy and laity as they fulfill their roles in the implementation of a common vision for the diocese.
- We want to use priestly resources with flexibility and openness to new models and practices.



Guiding Change: The Results / What We Desire to Develop

Church Administration

- We want to align the diocesan budget and pastoral resources to our vision and the results we seek.
- We want to reduce duplication of ministry, services, staffing, and resources where reasonable and use the efficiencies gained to re-channel efforts toward other ends within church ministry.
- Under the direction of the pastor, we want to see the delegation of daily administration of facilities, finance, and personnel so priests can focus on pastoral ministry.
- We want the perpetual care of parish cemeteries, temporal, fiscal, and pastoral, assigned on a geographic basis and communicated clearly. Input from the lay faithful is to be taken prior to making any assignments.



Guiding Change:

The Results / What We Desire to Develop

Process of Change Readiness and Change Management

- Missionary discipleship is the compelling vision for life of the Church across the diocese, and that development needs to be clear, nurtured, supported, and guided.
- Communicate in ways that make the planning process's intent clearly known to all and leads to common, realistic expectations in the minds of all Catholics.
- Embrace the reality that this planning process is not merely a response to a noted diminishment of pastoral life identified in varying levels across the diocese (a proverbial "management of decline").
- Exert a sincere effort to foster greater pastoral activity and, relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it will do so with the expectation that the effort will be successful.
- Extend a sincere invitation of all Catholic faithful to engage in an authentic consultation process in the development of a model.
- Rely on the active participation of the lay faithful who will be most directly impacted when conducting the pastoral planning.



Guiding Change:

The Results / What We Desire to Develop

Process of Change Readiness and Change Management

- The assignment of priests are aligned more clearly with their abilities to extend pastoral care to the faithful more impactful across the diocese.
- Within pastorates, recommended change of the canonical status of parishes to the Bishop emanates from the local pastoral and operational planning with consultation from the faithful.
- If changes to canonical status of parishes become approved:
 - True mergers of parishioners (of hearts and minds) over time into a new parish family occurs, not the quick experience of one parish swallowing another
 - Transparent accounting for the temporal goods of a parish when the physical church is no longer the place of regular liturgical worship
- Pastoral initiatives should be encouraged and supported to renew the life of local parishes.



Guiding Change: The Not How / Unacceptable Means

We will NOT

- Knowingly or willingly violate canon or civil laws or diocesan policy.
- Leave clergy, staff, and lay faithful feeling unsupported or without development or resources.
- Use technology to replace full, active participation of the faithful in the celebration of the Mass.
- Protect the status quo in one area while ignoring clear facts and trends, or use influence or reputation to protect another area from making necessary changes that are asked of all.
- Exceed three weekend Masses per priest, not including funerals and weddings.



Modeling and Feedback to Follow in October, 2022

