

Diocesan Pastoral Plan
“Led By the Spirit”



Diocese of Trenton

Mission Statement

***We, the people of the Catholic Church of Trenton,
are called to proclaim and advance the kingdom of God
in the New Jersey Counties of
Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth and Ocean.***

- *Within our rich diversity, we are made one by our baptism in Christ.*
- *We are united with Jesus, the Eternal Shepherd, with our Holy Father, the Universal Shepherd, and with our Bishop, the local Shepherd.*
- *We form a community of faith, called to worship God, celebrate the sacraments and teach the Good News.*
- *As pilgrims, conscious of our sinfulness and need for reconciliation, we seek renewal always in the light of Christ.*
- *Responding to our call to discipleship, we reach out in love and service to all, ever striving to advance the cause of peace and justice in the Name of our Lord Jesus.*

Updated 2007

For more than 125 years, Catholics in the Diocese of Trenton have dedicated themselves to proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and building up the kingdom of God in this part of New Jersey. With God’s grace, we, the people of the Church of Trenton, strive to serve this mission in continuity with those who have come before us.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Pope John Paul II challenged the Church to undertake the process of proclaiming the Gospel with new resolve and in ways particularly adapted to suit the "circumstances of each community."

"It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified – goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for the necessary resources – which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mold communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture."¹

Over the last two years, at the direction of our Bishop, the Most Reverend John M. Smith, the Diocese of Trenton has begun the important work of pastoral planning. The planning process has provided an opportunity to reflect upon the mission of the Church and our shared responsibility for that mission. This Diocesan Pastoral Plan is one of the fruits of this planning work. As you read the document, you will become acquainted with the goals for mission and ministry that we have identified together; and you will be invited to share in the work that lies ahead.

PART I – PLANNING FOR MISSION

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

The initiative for mission belongs to God. The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of mission.² Individually from our baptism, and as a Diocese, we are led by the Holy Spirit and sent to continue Christ's mission in the world. The Spirit prompts us to respond to God's gracious action in our lives and in the world and enables us to identify the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. The Spirit encourages us to explore new ways of working together and new avenues of communication. We plan for mission and ministry in response to the Spirit in our midst. For this reason, all the work of pastoral planning in the Diocese of Trenton has been organized under the theme: *Led By the Spirit*.

The Mission Entrusted to the Church

"I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent." – Luke 4:43

Jesus came announcing the kingdom of God³ and embodied the coming of the kingdom in his person.⁴ The kingdom can be experienced anywhere that the ministry of Jesus is continued – where the Good News is proclaimed, where there is healing and forgiveness, where people show compassion and love and serve one another. The kingdom of God brings salvation, liberation from sin, and the transformation of human relationships.

¹ Pope John Paul II, *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, 29

² Pope John Paul II, *On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate*, 3

³ Ibid, 13

⁴ Ibid, 18

We are aware that the kingdom is both here and not yet. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is still working in and through the Church – the Body of Christ – to complete the work begun in Him. The Church is commissioned to be sign and instrument of the kingdom. The Church is missionary by its very nature.⁵ In the Diocese of Trenton, we take up this missionary effort and carry it forward in this place, in this time, with our particular gifts and in light of the particular needs of our community.

Pastoral Planning – A Mission Activity

As disciples of Jesus, we cannot be content to take a passive approach. Discipleship is about mission! God invites us to be co-workers, and challenges us to grow and to respond in the midst of changing events. If we are to truly enable "the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mold communities, and have a deep and incisive influence"⁶ in our place and time, we must be willing to take action. Pastoral planning is an ongoing process that assists us to decide what action is needed.

In the process of pastoral planning, we recognize what God is doing in our midst and discern what God is calling us to do. We are invited to immerse ourselves in prayer, in reflection on Scripture and the teaching of the Church, in listening to the quiet voice of the Spirit speaking in the lives of the faithful and in respectful dialogue. Participation in the process of pastoral planning cultivates a common understanding of the mission of the Church and brings into focus the Church's shared vision of what God is calling us to be. Through pastoral planning, we are able to celebrate what we are doing well and honestly acknowledge where we might do better. When we can see this new horizon, we are able to move toward it. The vision determines our direction, helps us to set common goals, and prompts us to act decisively to achieve them.

Faithfulness to the mission of Jesus does not happen by accident. Planning is vital. It enables us to prepare for the things we can know about the future, and helps us to take the unforeseen in stride. The grace of God is at work in the world and at work in us. We cooperate with that grace and shape the future by the decisions we make as Christian disciples today. Therefore, pastoral planning is essential to the diocese, to the parish, and to the individual Catholic.

⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church*, 2

⁶ Pope John Paul II, *At the Beginning of the New Millennium*, 29

The Practice of Consultation in the Church

The diocesan pastoral planning process set out in 2007 to name our current realities by posing two questions:

- What are the biggest challenges facing the Church of Trenton?
- To what shall we devote the best of our energy and resources over the next 10 years?

These questions initiated an extensive consultation that involved parishioners, parish ministry leaders, parish staff members, pastors and other clergy, as well as members of the diocesan staff, and spanned thousands of hours of listening and discussion, writing and review.

The practice of consultation reflects the communion that exists among all the baptized members of the Church. At the same time, the Church is a hierarchical communion, so that the process of consultation results in recommendations, not decisions. The recommendations of the planning process are submitted to the diocesan Bishop, who makes decisions as he exercises his office as Chief Shepherd of the diocese.

This Diocesan Pastoral Plan has been approved and promulgated by the Bishop of Trenton after a considered review of all the recommendations that were presented to him.

PART II – OUR TIME TO BE CHURCH

“The People of God believes that it is led by the Spirit of the Lord, who fills the whole world. Moved by this faith it tries to discern authentic signs of God’s presence and purpose in the events, the needs, and the longings which it shares with other people of our time. For faith throws a new light on all things and makes known the full ideal to which God has called each individual, and thus guides the mind toward solutions which are fully human.” – Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 11

As Bishop Smith has consistently reminded us, it is truly *our* time to be Church. We are women and men, young and old, Catholics from infancy and Catholics by adult initiation. We have varied educational backgrounds, and we come from all races and ethnic groups. We are single, married, and widowed. We are laity, vowed religious, and ordained. Among the people of the Church of Trenton, faith in Jesus Christ is manifested in every kind of good work and act of love. God has gathered together, in parishes across our diocesan community, people with all the necessary talents and dedication to proclaim the Gospel faithfully and enthusiastically in a contemporary culture, in this geographical location, at this time.

In this, our time to be Church, there are concrete realities that define our pastoral situation. Acting in freedom, not fear, we must meet the challenges that arise and pursue every opportunity to spread the Good News.

Signs of the Times

“Awareness of the good works of the past and present must not make us slow to read the signs of the times. Our preparations today will make it easier to carry out tomorrow’s task.”—U.S. Bishops, *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment*, 1983.

In daily life, traffic signs point out useful information about the road ahead and the surrounding environment. Similarly, reading the *signs of the times* informs us about the societal challenges, opportunities and dangers that exist. These signs alert us to the possibilities that lie just beyond the limitations of our sight. The signs of the times direct our attention to God’s presence in our world and how humanity is responding to God.

Reading the signs of the times is something we must undertake together. For the purpose of pastoral planning, we must investigate the following internal and external signs that exist in the Church of Trenton at this particular time in history.

It is important to remember that the following list is not all-inclusive. As our planning process continues to unfold, continual assessment of the local pastoral situation is necessary.

Internal Signs of the Times

Internal signs are those that are specific to the Catholic community of the Diocese of Trenton or more broadly to the Catholic Church in this country. The following internal signs are relevant to the pastoral planning process:

- The overall number of registered Catholics in the Diocese continues to increase.
- Population shifts have necessitated restructuring (mergers) in some locations, and expansion in others.
- There has been a surge in the numbers of recent Catholic immigrants to our diocese. This change has resulted in increasingly diverse cultural religious experiences and expressions.
- The number of priests, and religious sisters and brothers continues to decrease. Concurrently, the number of deacons and lay ecclesial ministers is increasing.
- The Catholic community is experiencing what some have called the “graying” of the faithful as parishioners age 65 and older live longer, more active lives.
- The number of Catholics who regularly attend Mass is steadily diminishing.
- Parishes are facing significant financial challenges in the midst of an ailing economy, including rising costs in employment, utilities and maintenance of facilities.
- The real or perceived alienation of specific groups of Catholics, such as divorced and remarried Catholics, has impacted our faith communities.
- Catholics are still healing and have not yet regained full trust in leadership in the wake of the sexual abuse crisis and instances of financial impropriety.

External Signs of the Times

The following external signs reflect certain challenges and opportunities that exist in the current culture, and require our consideration when planning for the future:

- Technology has transformed the way society communicates, how individuals and groups relate to one another, and the way people learn.
- Life expectancy is higher now than at any time in history. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2030 one in five Americans will be age 65 or older.
- The face of today’s family is considerably different from previous generations. The unique circumstances of each family unit present particular challenges for that family, as well as for those seeking to support that family.
- The entire culture of marriage is changing. This is reflected in various ways: the number of marriages is declining; the number of out-of-wedlock births and the rate of divorce continue to rise; people are marrying later in life; ecumenical and interfaith marriages are more common than in the past; and the definition of marriage as a bond between one man and one woman is being challenged.
- Contemporary culture is captivated by spirituality. In fact, both the scientific and medical communities have collected empirical evidence that religious faith and

prayer are beneficial for physical, psychological and emotional health and well-being.

- At the same time, contemporary culture often scorns religious values. Relativism reigns, and many people reject the notion that objective truth exists. This attitude is compounded by a mistrust of institutions in general.
- There is a growing gap between the rich and the poor. Recent economic turmoil and unemployment have multiplied the demand for emergency resources, social services, and other kinds of support typically provided by parishes, diocesan agencies, and non-profit organizations.
- There is an element of individualism in contemporary culture that glorifies individual choice, at the expense of human life, dignity and the common good.

Vision

Since 1997, when Bishop Smith became the ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, he has been sharing with us a vision for our diocesan Church. The following are essential elements of this vision for the future of mission and ministry in our diocese: vibrant parishes, cultivating vocations, and embracing new paradigms of ministry.

Vibrant Parishes United in the Work of Finding, Forming, and Linking

Bishop Smith has made it clear that any vision for our diocese must include vibrant parishes where the Gospel is proclaimed and the kingdom of God is advanced. (Please see Appendix #3 for the Eleven Elements of a Vibrant Parish.)

It is a challenge to envision a way in which all the varied activities and demands of parish life are connected. Bishop Smith has concluded that the various activities and demands are related and are vital to accomplishing the mission. He explains:

“While I was praying one day, the thought struck me that if I analyzed the ministry of Jesus from an organizational perspective, He basically did three things—Jesus found people, He formed people, and He linked them together in a web of living relationships that became a community of people that was later called ‘Church.’ Jesus has called each of us to be fishermen. If, by analogy, we think of a parish as a string and we put several strings together, we may create a mop for wiping up water, but it doesn’t catch very much. If, however, we take individual strings and knot them together properly, we can create a net. Modern communication uses the term ‘network’ to explain how when the word goes out from one place it is carried through the whole system and heard by everyone everywhere. If we really tie parishes into a net of relationships, then when the Word is spoken, it would be heard by all in the great Diocese of Trenton.”⁷

⁷ Address of Bishop John M. Smith to the priest of the Diocese of Trenton, 1999

Cultivating Vocations to the Priesthood and Building Collaborative Pastoral Teams

The life of the parish and of the Church requires a renewed commitment to two things - to cultivating vocations to the priesthood and to working together in pastoral teams. In this present moment, we must do everything in our power to encourage and invite young men to say "yes" to the call to the priesthood. We must also continue to discover what it is to have gifted, vowed religious, lay men and lay women working beside our priests in the Church of the next millennium.

Bishop Smith writes, "My vision is that parishes will probably have one priest as pastor, ministering side-by-side with deacons, religious and professional lay men and women. This is a vision of hope for the future."⁸

Embracing New Paradigms in Ministry

Our vision for the future must also include a willingness to embrace new patterns of working with one another and supporting one another. New paradigms are not easy to embrace, but the benefits of the ordained collaborating with laity and religious, priests seeking the support and help of other priests, parish staffs working with other parish staffs and with diocesan offices – all this, in our Bishop's words, is "very good for the life of the Church."⁹ To embrace this paradigm – and to embrace a pastoral plan that leads us to it – takes grace and some measure of holiness and humility; and it is not without cost.

Living out the call to holiness challenges each one of us to constantly grow in faith, to fully develop the gifts we have been given and to use them properly for the mission. It asks us all – ordained, vowed religious and laity – to commit ourselves to:

- better communication
- real collaboration
- an experience of communion
- ongoing conversion.

These four commitments are integral parts of Bishop Smith's vision for our diocesan Church. They describe the necessary environment in which we can pursue our pastoral goals – an environment which we are all responsible for creating.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

PART III – FOCUSING ON OUR PRIORITIES FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY

“For God is the one who, for his good purpose, works in you both to desire and to work.” – Philippians 2:13

Naming Our Pastoral Priorities

As stated earlier, each historical moment in the life of the Church is unique and presents its own challenges to the faithful of that time. As such, pastoral priorities for the Church must evolve in order to meet the pastoral needs of the people entrusted to her. After extensive consultation,¹⁰ the Diocese of Trenton has established a set of priorities to help carry out the local mission of proclaiming the Gospel and making God’s care and compassion visible to all the people within the diocese.

The seven pastoral priorities for mission and ministry in the Diocese of Trenton are:

- **Sunday Mass**
- **Growing in Faith**
- **Youth and Young Adults**
- **Living as Disciples**
- **Leadership**
- **Ethnic Diversity**
- **Charity and Justice**

The Goals and Objectives for Pastoral Planning in the Diocese of Trenton

These seven pastoral priorities must receive the best of our energy and resources. To that end, the Diocesan Pastoral Plan names goals and objectives to guide our work. These goals and objectives must lead to practical results, and help us to improve ministry. The actions we undertake in response must serve the mission and help us to become more effective stewards of all that God has placed in our care.

Each member of the diocese, from the Bishop to each lay person, has a role and a purpose in carrying out God’s plan and building up the Body of Christ. Similarly, every diocesan office, agency, and every parish or church organization within the diocese has a role and a purpose as well. It is the task of each person and group to identify their gifts and apply them to the diocesan objectives.

No diocesan plan is complete in itself. The diocesan plan sets goals and objectives, but does not identify strategies to be taken by each entity. This plan relies upon pastors and the faithful of the parishes, diocesan offices and agencies to implement the plan at their level and in their areas of responsibility. Each parish, diocesan office and agency will outline the strategies it will pursue in support of our shared goals.

¹⁰ See earlier section entitled “The Practice of Consultation in the Church” for a description of this consultation.

Pastoral Priority: Sunday Mass

“The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church’s power flows.” – *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 10*

“The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of liturgy. Such participation...is their right and duty by reason of their baptism...This aim is to be considered before all else.” – *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14*

Goal – Increase Full, Conscious, and Active Participation in Sunday Mass

Objectives

- To evaluate evangelization efforts across the diocese and in each parish, and to provide training and resources to improve effectiveness
- To enhance teaching about and build the practice of prayer and liturgy in our Catholic schools, religious education programs, adult faith formation efforts, and all forms of sacramental preparation
- To provide resources for the ongoing liturgical formation of the assembly
- To implement a diocesan-wide media strategy for inviting people to gather each week for the celebration of the Eucharist
- To cultivate attitudes and practices of inclusivity and hospitality toward all
- To improve the skills of clergy, parish liturgy committees and liturgical ministers for preparing and celebrating the liturgy in ways which facilitate an encounter with Christ in the Eucharistic elements, in the Word, in the priest-celebrant and in the assembly when it sings and prays
- To strengthen the ability of clergy to preach effectively and in ways that are relevant to their parish communities
- To make explicit the connection between Eucharist and mission



Pastoral Priority: Living As Disciples

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” -- *Matthew 28:19*

“The ways of holiness are many, according to the vocation of each individual....The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction. It is also clear however that the paths to holiness are personal and call for a genuine ‘training in holiness’, adapted to people’s needs.” – Pope John Paul II, *At the Beginning of the New Millennium, Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 31.

Goal – Equip Each Catholic to Live as a Disciple of Jesus Christ in his/her Daily Life

Objectives

- To affirm and challenge disciples to connect their faith with all the aspects of their lives in the home, the marketplace, and the wider community
- To provide resources and ministry which strengthen families as the “domestic church” of the home
- To work to fully include all people with disabilities or special needs as vital members of the parish community
- To stimulate greater participation in the life of the parish community and in the mission of the Church
- To adopt an integrated approach to the stewardship of time, talent and treasure
- To promote spiritual direction, retreat programs, and participation in faith-sharing communities as avenues of spiritual growth
- To undertake specific outreach to inactive Catholics
- To strengthen the willingness and ability of Catholics to evangelize – to share their faith in Jesus Christ



Pastoral Priority: Growing in Faith

The gospel image of the vine and the branches reveals to us another fundamental aspect of the lay faithful's life and mission: the call to growth and a continual process of maturation, of always bearing much fruit." – John Paul II, *On the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, Christifideles Laici*, 57

"Mature persons actively care for future generations. Christian maturity requires that all of us, lay and ordained, provide the best catechesis possible for children and youth....A major challenge for the third millennium is to bring our Catholic tradition to life in the hearts, minds, and spirits of new generations."—U.S. Bishops, *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*

Goal – Nurture Growth in Faith from Childhood through Every Stage of Life

Objectives

- To develop cordial and welcoming patterns of relating to people that reflect the Gospel message we proclaim
- To equip and support parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith
- To implement the current Catechetical Plan of the Diocese of Trenton with its emphasis on:
 - Placing adult faith formation at the center of our catechetical efforts
 - Having professionally formed and competent Parish Catechetical Leaders
 - Working toward a majority of each parish's catechists holding full diocesan Catechist Certification
 - Developing within parishes the resources and qualified personnel to respond to persons with special needs and their families
 - Having systematic and comprehensive adolescent catechesis at the parish level
 - Developing long-range catechetical plans for schools and parishes
 - Evaluating and updating catechetical ministry on a continual basis
 - Having the catechumenal model inspire all catechesis
- To implement the Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Trenton in order that our schools be strong in their Catholic identity, academically competitive and financially viable
- To improve the coordination of efforts among ministries engaged in faith formation
- To develop the proficiency of those who teach and preach to utilize the experiences of life as "teachable moments"
- To ensure that faith formation of adults in the diocese meets the unique needs of adult learners
- To make choices about the life and action of the parish community that give witness to what we believe



Pastoral Priority: Leadership

“Also the function of guiding the community as shepherd, the proper function of the parish priest, stems from his unique relation to Christ the Head and Shepherd. It is a function having a sacramental character. It is not entrusted to the priest by the community, but, through the Bishop, it comes to him from the Lord. To reaffirm this clearly and exercise this function with humble authority is an indispensable service to truth and to ecclesial communion. The collaboration of others, who have not received this sacramental configuration to Christ, is hoped for and often necessary.” – Congregation for the Clergy, *The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community*, 5.

“As sharers in the role of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, the laity have their work cut out for them in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary within the Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness.” – Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 10.

Goal – Ensure Quality Pastoral Leadership for Parishes

Objectives

- To engage all members of the diocese in inviting, praying for, and supporting those who are discerning a call to the priesthood
- To build up the practice of fraternal care and support among priests
- To direct the ongoing formation of parochial vicars in order to prepare them to serve as pastors in the future
- To initiate training and support for priests, deacons and parish staff persons serving in multiple-parish and merged parish situations
- To facilitate a shared approach to the continuing education/formation of priests, deacons, religious, and lay ecclesial ministers
- To explore cooperative arrangements among parishes and among priests in the areas of ministries, staff, and shared use of facilities and other resources
- To assemble and support collaborative pastoral teams in parishes
- To encourage the hiring and training of competent Parish Business Administrators in parishes
 - “The Parish Business Administrator serves as a staff resource in support of the pastor, fulfilling parish administrative needs in finance, buildings and grounds, and personnel. The Parish Business Administrator directs these efforts with technical and legal expertise within a framework of shared ministry in Christian and Catholic values.”¹¹

¹¹ National Association of Church Personnel Administrators, Parish Job Description Manual, p. 14, description contributed by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

- To make Lay Ecclesial Ministry formation more accessible and share the expertise of lay ecclesial ministers throughout the diocese, especially in underserved populations
- To establish and form a Parish Pastoral Council in every parish of the diocese by November 2010 to engage in visioning and pastoral planning



Pastoral Priority: Charity and Justice

"In our message *Everyday Christianity: To Hunger and Thirst for Justice*, we emphasized that social justice and the common good are daily built up or torn down by the decisions and choices that we all make in every facet of our lives." - U.S. Bishops, *In All Things Charity: A Pastoral Challenge for the New Millennium*

"The Christian view is that human beings are to be valued for what they are, not for what they have."
- U.S. Bishops, *In All Things Charity: A Pastoral Challenge for the New Millennium*

Goal – Act with Charity and Promote Social Justice in our Society and in our World

Objectives

- To integrate the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, which all have the life and dignity of the human person at their foundation, in diocesan processes of ministerial formation
- To raise awareness among all Catholics about the social mission of the Church and develop a sense of shared responsibility
- To speak out consistently and explicitly about the dignity of the human person and protect life from the moment of conception to natural death
- To organize for effective legislative advocacy within the diocese
- To collaborate more effectively with Catholic, ecumenical, interfaith and secular partners in pursuit of the common good
- To consider all temporal decisions through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching
- To make appropriate and timely responses to needs in the global community



Pastoral Priority: Youth and Young Adults

"The comprehensive approach is not a single program or recipe for ministry. Rather, it provides a way for integrating ministry with adolescents and their families into the total life and mission of the Church, recognizing that the whole community is responsible for this ministry."—U.S. Bishops, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, Part 3

"We join the Holy Father in affirming the essential dignity of young adult men and women—those in their late teens, twenties, and thirties—as 'sons and daughters of the light.' Yet, many young adults tell us that they face increasingly complex and difficult times and that they need the help of the Catholic Christian community to be this light." — U.S. Bishops, *Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults*, Introduction

Goal – Engage Youth (13-18 yrs) and Young Adults (19-35 yrs) More Deeply in a Relationship with Jesus Christ and the Catholic Community

Objectives

- To form leaders and provide resources for comprehensive youth ministry at the parish level
- To initiate efforts for leadership development of youth and young adults
- To form youth and young adults in discernment in order to help them seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in vocational and career choices
- To focus increased attention and resources on ministry to and with young adults at the diocesan, county or deanery, and parish levels
- To invest in and broaden the use of media, technology; and strengthen our web presence
- To encourage collaboration between college campus ministers
- To strengthen the Catholic identity of our high schools by supporting the interface between campus ministry, religion departments, and the entire school community
- To promote enrollment in Catholic high schools and colleges



Pastoral Priority: Ethnic Diversity

“You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.”—*Leviticus* 19:34

“The Church of the twenty-first century will be, as it has always been, a Church of many cultures, languages and traditions, yet simultaneously one, as God is one—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—unity in diversity.”—USCCB, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*, 56

Goal – Minister Effectively within Ethnically-Diverse Parish Communities

Objectives

- To challenge the Catholic community to confront prejudices, intolerance, and misconceptions through prayer, preaching, catechesis and communications
- To consistently include those to be served in identifying the needs of the community and the ways to meet those needs
- To increase the ability of diocesan offices, agencies and individual parishes to minister to the growing Spanish-speaking population
- To actively foster vocations to the priesthood arising from within ethnic communities
- To identify, develop and equip bi-lingual leaders at the parish and diocesan level
- To expand outreach services to new immigrant populations and monitor the growth of those populations within the diocese
- To begin a practical dialogue between parishes about the “best practices” of ministering among a variety of ethnic communities in a single parish



PART IV – HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

“Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.”—John 14:12

Responsibility for Pastoral Planning and Implementation

The *Goals and Objectives for Pastoral Planning in the Diocese of Trenton* are for the whole Church of Trenton. They form a framework to organize our planning efforts across the diocese. It is hoped that, by making a shared commitment to these goals and objectives, our efforts will become more focused and we can work together to serve the mission. Since these goals and objectives address our pastoral priorities, they will influence the decisions we make about how to use our limited resources most effectively.

Please note that there are no definitive action plans or strategies attached to the goals and objectives at this time. Action planning is the next step. It is best accomplished by those who will be responsible to carry out the tasks of the plan. Each diocesan office and agency is responsible to plan in order to meet its particular responsibilities in light of these goals and objectives. Each parish is being asked to undertake its own process of planning in reference to these goals and objectives.

It is imperative that every parish engage in pastoral planning in some way. “Maintenance” or “continuing what we have always done” is not an appropriate posture for a Church that is fundamentally missionary in its nature. However, the pastoral circumstance of each parish is different. For this reason, the pastor is in the best position to determine what method a given parish will follow in planning. The pastor – with the help of parochial vicars, adjunct priests, the parish staff and the Parish Pastoral Council – will select from the diocesan plan the goals and objectives for which the parish will develop action plans in a given year.

While each parish will determine its own plan, the bonds of communion that connect Catholics to each other, parishes to parishes, and parishes to the Bishop compel us to undertake common planning as well. None of us stands alone. A particular opportunity exists to undertake common planning among neighboring parishes or at the deanery level around the goals or objectives.

Tools and Resources Available for Planning

To assist parishes in reflecting on this document and applying it to their own planning efforts, the Diocesan Office of Pastoral Planning has designed a number of tools. They are available on the diocesan website

<http://www.dioceseoftrenton.org/LBTS/ledbythespirit.asp>

and may be duplicated as needed. In addition, workshops will be offered on an on-going basis to stimulate and support local planning efforts.

Parishes desiring individualized assistance are strongly encouraged to call the Diocesan Office of Pastoral Planning or other appropriate diocesan office/agency to make the necessary arrangements. The diocesan staff is eager to help you.

Accountability, Evaluation and the Ongoing Nature of Pastoral Planning

By June 30, 2010, each parish will submit a simple parish pastoral plan detailing the action steps it will take over the next one to three years relative to the *Goals and Objectives for Pastoral Planning in the Diocese of Trenton*. A template has been created for your convenience and is attached in Appendix #1.

The parish pastoral plan will be among the ordinary items discussed with the pastor during the periodic pastoral visit by the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate to the parish. These plans will also be reviewed at deanery, county and diocesan levels in order to identify potential areas of cooperation or collaboration. Parish pastoral plans will help to shape the support and services offered to parishes by the diocesan offices.

Developing these *Goals and Objectives for Pastoral Planning in the Diocese of Trenton* and the resulting parish pastoral plans are only just a beginning. We must hold ourselves accountable for these plans, evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts, and commit to periodic review. Parishes and diocesan offices/agencies will evaluate their performance each year in light of their action plans. Action plans should be adjusted annually to take into account changes in pastoral circumstances.

The *Goals and Objectives for Pastoral Planning in the Diocese of Trenton* will be updated every five years following an evaluation of what has been accomplished and an assessment of the needs that exist. The next ordinary period of assessment and evaluation will occur in 2013, but may be altered at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop according to pastoral need.

Conclusion

The Blessed Virgin Mary was called by God to a life of faithfulness and service for the kingdom. As our Mother in heaven, she intercedes on our behalf with her prayer.

May we have the grace to follow her example and to respond generously to God's call.

May our lives proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and advance the kingdom of God.

*Blessed Mary of the Assumption
Patroness of the Diocese of Trenton
Pray for us!*

APPENDICES

- #1 Template for Parish Pastoral Plan**
- #2 Signs of the Times**
- #3 Eleven Elements of a Vibrant Parish**
- #4 List of Works Cited**

Appendix 1. Template for Parish Pastoral Plan

Parish ID:	Date:
Parish Name:	City:
Pastor:	Phone:
Deanery:	

Parish Mission Statement

Has the parish established a Parish Pastoral Council?

Was the Parish Pastoral Council involved in the development of this pastoral plan?

Instructions

Please list each objective that the parish plans to accomplish in the next one to three years.

- *Include an approximate timeline, cost, and action plan/strategies.*
- *Note whether the parish is partnering with any other parish(es), diocesan office/agency, or community organization to achieve objective.*
- *Identify the goal/objective from the Diocesan Pastoral Plan to which the parish objective responds.*

Parish Objective #1: To _____
(action verb) (describe desired outcome)

by _____ . **Approximate cost:** _____
(date of completion)

Action Plan/Strategies

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Partners: _____

Responds to _____
(goal or objective)

from the Diocesan Pastoral Plan



Parish Objective #2: To _____
(action verb) (describe desired outcome)

by _____ . **Approximate cost:** _____
(date of completion)

Action Plan/Strategies

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Partners: _____

Responds to _____
(goal or objective)

from the Diocesan Pastoral Plan

Add pages as necessary

Appendix 2. Signs of the Times

The internal and external signs of the times enumerated in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan can be explored further by consulting the sources of information and research listed below.

Association of Religion Data Archives (www.thearda.com)

Housed at Pennsylvania State University; includes data sets which show changes in denominational membership by county in ten-year increments

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), Washington, D.C.

A national, non-profit, Georgetown University affiliated research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church; specific studies of interest include:

- **“Project Report: A Projection of Priests for the Diocese of Trenton, NJ,” 2003**
- **“Self-reported Mass Attendance of U.S. Catholics Unchanged during Last Five Years,” January 10, 2005**
- **“Marriage in the Catholic Church: A Survey of U.S. Catholics,” October 2007**
- **“Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice Among U.S. Catholics,” April 2008**

D’Antonio, William. American Catholics Today: New Realities of Their Faith and Their Church, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007

Reports survey and research conducted by William V. D’Antonio, James P. Davidson, Dean R. Hoge, Mary L. Gautier done in 2005; and contrasts with previous research from 1999, 1993, and 1987

Hughes, James W. “New Jersey’s Emerging Demographic Profile,” www.njdigitalhighway.org, January 17, 2007

Author is the Dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life

Non-partisan “fact tank” that conducts independent research to promote a deeper understanding of issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs; of interest is:

- **“U.S. Religious Landscape Survey,” February 25, 2008**

United States Census Bureau (www.census.gov)

Government agency provides demographic information from the 2000 census and interim American Community Surveys by state, county, city/town, and census tract. Also provides analysis and projections regarding population segments. Of interest:

- **“An Older and More Diverse Nation by Midcentury,” August 14, 2008**

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is an assembly of the hierarchy of the United States and the U.S. Virgin Islands who jointly exercise certain pastoral functions on behalf of the Christian faithful of the United States. The departments of the Conference make reports available on a periodic basis that aggregate information and/or analyze current developments within the pastoral circumstances of the Church in the United States. Some examples are:

- **“The Catholic Church in the U.S. at a Glance,” Office of Media Relations, based on figures for 2007**
- **“Catholic Church in the U.S. 1965-2003,” Office of Media Relations, June 2005**
- **“Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church in the United States,” prepared by the National Review Board for the Protection of Children and Young People, February 27, 2004**

Appendix 3. Eleven Elements of a Vibrant Parish

1. A vibrant parish has a strong sense of itself as a community of faith, called by God, united in Christ and led by the Spirit. Members identify themselves with the community and are relatively well-satisfied with their parish life.
2. Members of a vibrant parish see themselves as called and willing to participate actively in the leadership of the parish and in staffing its various ministries.
3. The pastor of a vibrant parish knows the people, and they know him. He presides well at liturgy, and his homilies bring forth both comfort and challenge. The pastor identifies the people's talents, helps them experience the empowering and demanding love of God, and encourages them to take part, in a sacrificial way, in the ministry of the parish.
4. In a vibrant parish, the staff, both ordained and non-ordained, are adequate in number for the work of the parish. They are properly trained for their ministries, have a sense of the purpose of the parish, and cooperate effectively and meaningfully with the pastor and the people in achieving parish goals.
5. Members of a vibrant parish community participate in its life and activity. They take part both in the liturgy and the other functions of the parish.
6. A vibrant parish sees the liturgy as the point to which all else leads, and the font from which all else flows. Clergy and laity alike take active roles in making the liturgy fully participative, alive and inspirational. At the same time, this gives the people a sense of pride and ownership in their worship.
7. A vibrant parish is strongly committed to the religious and spiritual development of its adults, youth and children. People participate in these ministries to contribute to their own formation and that of others. Resources are made available for all groups, as people need to keep growing in Christ.
8. A vibrant parish experiences the call of Christ to spread the Gospel and responds with an active program of evangelization. The R.C.I.A. is seen as a vital part of parish life, and the people are anxious to share the faith.
9. A vibrant parish has enough people to take on all the ministries seen to be necessary. The distribution of parishioners by age, race and gender indicates an inclusion of the whole people of God and an ability to keep the parish healthy in the future.
10. A vibrant parish has enough financial resources to carry out its work without placing undue strain on its people and becoming consumed with financial matters at the expense of real ministry.

11. A vibrant parish has facilities that are useful for its life and work, and that are being properly maintained. The community is not constrained by a plant that is too small, nor burdened by a plant that is too big, nor consuming its own future resources by maintaining a plant it no longer needs.

Articulated by John M. Smith, Bishop of Trenton at the Convocation for Priests, September 1999.

Appendix 4. List of Works Cited

- Congregation for the Clergy, *The Priest, Pastor and Leader of the Parish Community*, 2002
- Daly, William P. SPHR, Patrice Hughes, SC, Ann White, SL (Editors), Parish Job Description Manual, Cincinnati, OH: The National Association of Church Personnel Administrators, 1995 (revised 2006)
- Pope John Paul II, *At the Beginning of the New Millennium (Novo Millennio Ineunte)*, 2001
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- Pope John Paul II, *On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World (Christifidelis Laici)*, 1988
- New American Bible, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002
- Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church (Ad Gentes Divinitus)*, 1965
- Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 1965
- Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*, 1963
- Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem)*, 1965
- U.S. Bishops, *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment*, 1983
- U.S. Bishops, *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*, 1995
- U.S. Bishops, *In All Things Charity: A Pastoral Challenge for the New Millennium*, 1999
- U.S. Bishops, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, 1997
- U.S. Bishops, *Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults*, 1996
- U.S. Bishops, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*, 2000