

ALL AT THE TABLE



**Pastoral Priorities
for the
Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise
2008-2013**

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS A PASTORAL PLAN?

A pastoral plan is a major initiative of the diocesan Church that seeks to identify key priority areas within the diocese. It provides a common “roadmap” for how parishes, schools, campus ministries, councils, diocesan offices, Catholic organizations and groups, as well as individual parishioners can collectively and collaboratively respond to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Catholic community and those served by it.

WHAT IS A PASTORAL PLAN MEANT TO DO?

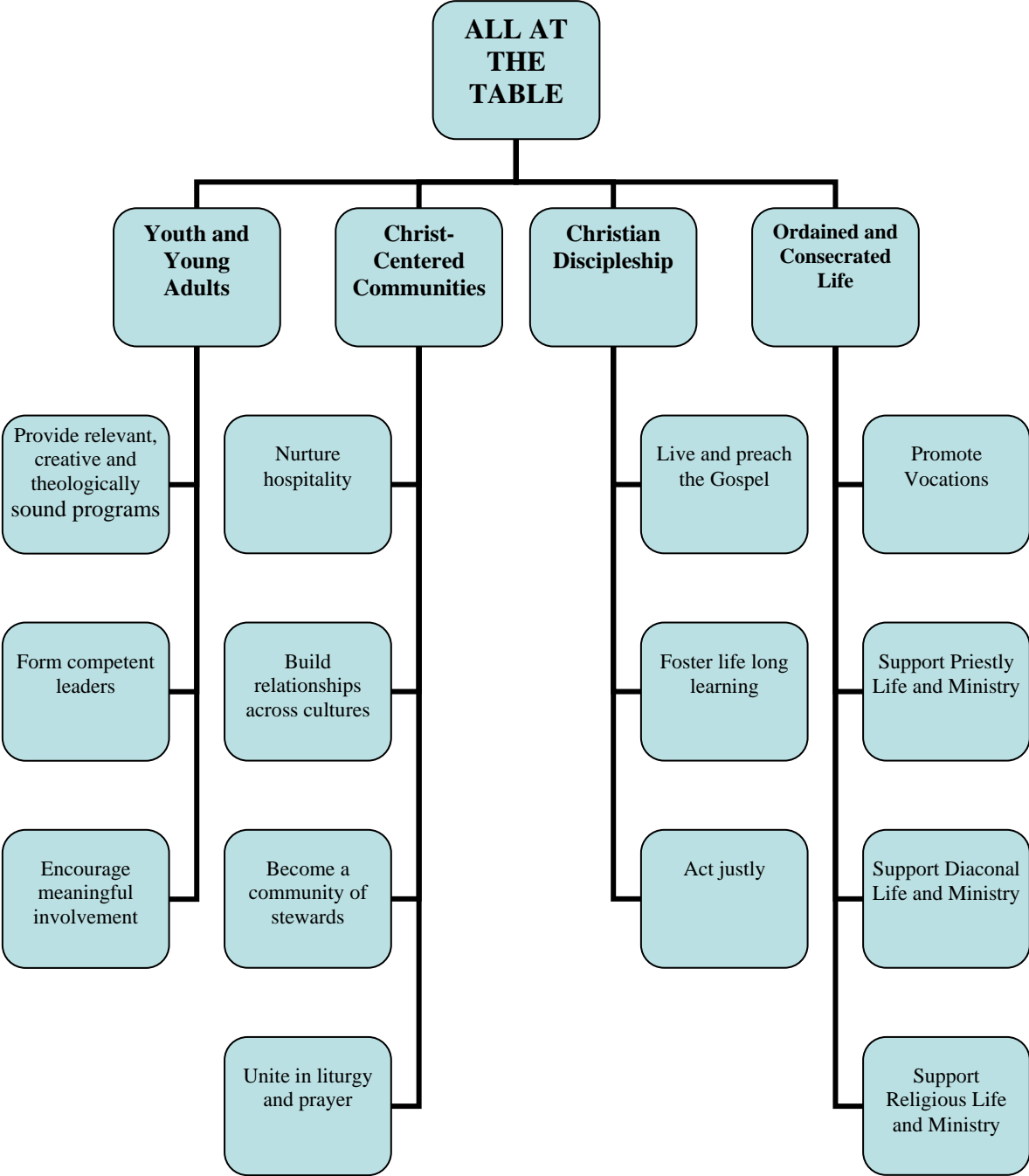
Through a process of pastoral planning, the diocesan Bishop invites the clergy, religious, and laity to enter a time of discernment around the mission of the Church and, together with the Bishop, create a life-giving vision for our future. By its very nature, pastoral planning is built on consultation and dialogue that leads to action as the needs of the diocese are assessed, the effectiveness of existing programs are evaluated, and creative ideas are generated that respect our diocesan heritage while ensuring our ongoing vitality and sustainability. Plainly stated, pastoral planning seeks to assess “**what is,**” decide “**what should be,**” and then develop a focused course of action for advancing the diocese from where it *is* to where it *should be*.

“ALL AT THE TABLE” PASTORAL PLAN

In 2007 Bishop Michael P. Driscoll announced his desire to begin a pastoral planning process entitled “*All at the Table.*” The intent was to discern ways to build a Church of Idaho ***where all would be invited to use their unique gifts and particular roles to grow in personal holiness, to transform our parish communities, and to renew our world.*** Input was solicited from parishioners and pastoral leaders across the state via an “*All at the Table*” survey. This information was disseminated and discussed by pastoral leaders at Convocation 2008. While recognizing and celebrating the considerable pastoral, sacramental, catechetical, and charitable work that is being performed throughout the diocese on a daily basis, Convocation 2008 also identified several areas that warrant diocesan-wide attention. Through a process of ongoing consultation and deliberation, eight (8) generalized areas of pastoral concern emerged: Youth and Young Adults, Cultural Diversity, Stewardship, Hospitality, Evangelization, Formation, Ordained Life and Ministry, and Discipleship. Based on input and recommendations from Convocation 2009, these areas were then further consolidated into the four (4) specific priorities (listed on page 3). These priority areas form the cornerstone of our pastoral plan by providing a “snapshot” of what it means to be an “*All at the Table*” community. They present clear areas of focus for our pastoral efforts as together we discern where “we are,” where “we want to be” in the future, and how we plan to get there.



OUR PASTORAL PRIORITIES



HOW TO READ OUR PASTORAL PLAN

Each priority area begins with a **goal statement**. The purpose of this broadly-stated objective is to focus our attention on *what* needs to be done in order to advance our diocesan vision. It provides, in other words, the overarching “target” we hope to accomplish through our pastoral efforts in that particular priority area.

Suggested **strategies** are then offered for consideration. The purpose of the strategy is to focus our attention on ways we can accomplish our goal in each priority area. Some of these strategies, by their nature, need to be implemented on the diocesan level, while other initiatives are more appropriately implemented at the local level.

Strategy alone is no guarantee of success. The success of our pastoral plan will ultimately depend on how well our strategies are implemented. This means action at every level. With that in mind, a number of possible **actions** are proposed. These actions are not mandated, but are simply an attempt to help provide practical ideas on what can be done to best implement the strategies. Keenly aware that each parish is unique, it is up to the Pastor and his pastoral leadership to reflect on, adapt, and implement the pastoral actions most needed and relevant to their parish community. Parishes, deaneries, councils, Catholic organizations and groups, schools, and campus ministries are encouraged to use the actions provided as a “springboard” to guide their own brainstorming and pastoral planning.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT OUR PASTORAL PLAN

The success of our diocesan pastoral plan depends on the degree to which the strategies in each priority area are implemented. What concrete “action,” in other words, is being taken to achieve our goals and move forward our vision? This is the role of action plans. Action plans fill in the details by identifying the **how, who, and when** of the pastoral plan. They lay out specific steps necessary to achieve each strategy and assign timetables and accountability to these steps. The action plan serves as a means of coordinating and focusing our resources while providing an understanding of how our efforts (at every level) fit into the larger *All at the Table* vision.

1. Each **parish** is to focus on one or more of the suggested strategies in each priority area and develop an action plan which is reflective of local needs and realities.
2. Based on input from the parish action plans, each **deanery** is to discern realistic “deanery-wide” activities for each priority area that promote collaboration, network, and the sharing of resources.
3. **Catholic schools** and **campus ministries** are to seek ways to integrate the diocesan priorities into their own strategic planning.



4. **Councils** at all levels are to use the pastoral plan to guide their deliberations and recommendations.

5. **Catholic organizations and groups** (i.e., religious communities, Knights of Columbus, Council of Catholic Women, St. Vincent De Paul, etc.) are invited to use the pastoral plan to inform and guide their unique ministries.



6. The **Diocese** is to oversee the pastoral planning process and provide ongoing support to the various groups as they organize and implement their action plans.

The success of our diocesan pastoral plan also depends on the willingness of all involved to actively promote the plan and implement the designated actions plans in a timely and responsible manner. The process of pastoral planning is an opportunity to break away from “*business as usual*” and to vision together what we **can** do to be a Church of Idaho “*where all are invited to use their unique gifts and particular roles to grow in personal holiness, to transform our parish community, and to renew our world*” (*All at the Table* Vision Statement).

Whereas some may believe that pastoral planning leads to “more” work, the reality is that it should lead to “different” work as together we strive to bring to life our *All at the Table* vision. With this in mind, it is important that all pastors, parish life directors, councils, deaneries, and schools take the necessary steps to engage in the pastoral planning process. Ongoing communication, clear and concise reporting, as well as responsible adherence to designated timelines and requests is expected.



OVERVIEW OF OUR PASTORAL PRIORITIES

Pastoral Priority **YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS**

...the younger generation too yearns for a deep and demanding faith in Jesus Christ. They want to have an active role in the Church, and to be sent out in the name of Christ to evangelize and transform the world around them. Young people are ready to commit themselves to the Gospel message if it is presented in all its nobility and liberating force. (Pope John Paul II, Message to the Northwest Bishops, 1998)

Goal Statement: THE CHURCH OF IDAHO INVITES AND ENGAGES YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN THE LIFE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

Strategy 1: Provide relevant, creative, and theologically sound programs.

Possible actions:

- 1.1 Work with diocesan Regional Coordinators to assess effectiveness of current parish programs and ministries.
- 1.2 Integrate new methods and styles of teaching and reaching out to youth and young adults.
- 1.3 Actively listen to youth and young adults when designing and evaluating programs and events.
- 1.4 Collaborate by sharing resources and personnel for inter-parish and regional events.



Strategy 2: Form competent leaders

Possible actions:

- 2.1 Utilize Church documents and nationally recommended competencies to assess and guide current efforts.
- 2.2 Develop clear job descriptions and evaluations for Coordinators of Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry according to diocesan guidelines.
- 2.3 Establish mentoring relationships between new and experienced ministry coordinators.
- 2.4 Support and provide funding for the ongoing professional formation of Youth Ministry Coordinators and Young Adult Ministry Coordinators.

Strategy 3: Encourage meaningful involvement

Possible actions:

- 3.1 Introduce youth and young adults to a variety of prayer experiences to increase their understanding and participation.
- 3.2 Engage youth and young adults in leadership capacities when planning programs and events.
- 3.3 Include more than one youth and young adult representative on pastoral council and parish committees.

Pastoral Priority **CHRIST CENTERED COMMUNITIES**

It is not therefore a matter of inventing a "new program." The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures ... But it must be translated into pastoral initiatives adapted to 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, mould communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture. (Pope John Paul II, Novo Millennio Ineunte, 2001, Section 3, paragraph 29)



Goal Statement: **ROOTED IN PRAYER, THE CHURCH OF IDAHO WELCOMES, RESPECTS, AND SEEKS THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF ALL.**

Strategy 1: **Nurture hospitality**

Possible actions:

- 1.1 Utilize “greeters” from all parish demographics to promote an environment of hospitality at all parish events.
- 1.2 Create warm and inviting gathering spaces for all parish celebrations and meetings.
- 1.3 Encourage all parish groups and ministries to reach out, invite, and welcome a diversity of people to participate in parish activities.

Strategy 2: Build relationships across cultures

Possible actions:

- 2.1 Identify, invite, and provide training for members of cultural populations for ministry in the local Church.
- 2.2 Seek culturally diverse representation on parish, deanery, finance, and diocesan councils.
- 2.3 Promote collaboration among cultures and ministries, especially when organizing common parish-wide events such as parish picnics, ministry fairs, and bilingual or multicultural liturgies.
- 2.4 Network with local interfaith and civic organizations to meet the unique needs of immigrant communities.



Strategy 3: Become a community of stewards

Possible actions:

- 3.1 Establish a parish Stewardship Council to work with the pastor in creating a stewardship vision for the parish.
- 3.2 Conduct an annual parish appeal of time, talent, and treasure to call forth gifts and to increase parishioner understanding and participation in the life of the Church.
- 3.3 Annually review parish programs, activities, and budget to ensure the responsible use of all parish resources (staff, volunteers, property, finances, etc.).
- 3.4 Model stewardship by allocating a percentage of the parish collection for charity.

Strategy 4: Unite in liturgy and prayer

Possible actions:

- 4.1 Enhance liturgy as the unifying force for the parish community.
- 4.2 Integrate prayer into all parish gatherings and activities.
- 4.3 Offer liturgy, sacraments, traditions, and devotions in the context and language that best ensures the full participation of cultural and generational groups.
- 4.4 Draw upon the depth and breadth of Catholic spirituality and devotion to enhance individual and communal prayer life.



Pastoral Priority
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP



Sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the church. Their activity within the church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect. (Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, #10)

Goal Statement: THE CHURCH OF IDAHO CALLS EACH BAPTIZED CATHOLIC TO A LIFELONG JOURNEY OF CONVERSION, FORMATION, AND ACTIVE PRACTICE IN THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY.

Strategy 1: Live and preach the Gospel

Possible actions:

- 1.1 Engage the faithful in bringing the Good News into the entire society by word and action.
- 1.2 Use all means of communication to make Christ's presence known, especially to non-practicing and alienated Catholics.
- 1.3 Use homilies and catechesis to promote a broad understanding of Catholic evangelization as encouraged in church documents.
- 1.4 Provide opportunities for interfaith prayer, dialogue, and social outreach as a way of witnessing to and sharing faith.
- 1.5 Promote each Catholic household as a domestic Church and develop programs that strengthen Christian marriage and family life.

Strategy 2: Foster life long learning

Possible actions:

- 2.1 Establish ongoing formation, education, supervision, and evaluation for all parish ministers and leaders.
- 2.2 Support and form parents as first teachers of faith to their children.
- 2.3 Provide opportunities for all parish members to learn, share, and teach the faith.
- 2.4 Promote the benefits of Catholic school education.



Strategy 3: Act justly

Possible Actions:

- 3.1 Support (time and treasure) parish and civic organizations that provide services to the poor.
- 3.2 Incorporate Catholic Social Teaching into homilies, bulletins, sacramental preparation, and all adult and youth catechetical programs.
- 3.3 Create parish Social Justice Committees to inform and engage the community in the social mission of the Church.



Pastoral Priority
ORDAINED AND CONSECRATED LIFE

Let the doctrine you teach be true nourishment for the people of God. Let the example of your life attract the followers of Christ, so that by word and action you may build up the house which is God's Church...Seek to bring the faithful together into a unified family and lead them effectively, through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, to God the Father. Always remember the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and to seek out and rescue those who were lost. (Rite of Ordination for Priest)



Goal Statement: THE CHURCH OF IDAHO SUPPORTS THE UNIQUE ROLE OF PRIESTS, DEACONS, AND RELIGIOUS IN THEIR PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS AND BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Strategy 1: Promote Vocations

Possible actions:

- 1.1 Conduct regional "discernment days" for men and women exploring religious vocations.
- 1.2 Utilize vocation prayers and awareness materials in school and parish religious education curriculum at all grade levels.

- 1.3 Assist parents in their role as primary vocation promoters in their families.
- 1.4 Increase the number of seminarians and deacon candidates from all cultural groups.
- 1.5 Identify and call forth candidates who have the potential and ability to serve as future priests, deacons, and religious.

Strategy 2: Support Priestly Life and Ministry

Possible actions:

- 2.1 Utilize the Presbyteral Council as a vehicle to surface and address the needs of the presbyterate.
- 2.2 Encourage the creation of and participation in priest support groups.
- 2.3 Provide ongoing opportunities for clergy to strengthen their pastoral, financial, and administrative skills.
- 2.4 Create opportunities to recognize, affirm, and celebrate clergy as they transition from one parish to the next or to other ministries, including retirement.

Strategy 3: Support Diaconal Life and Ministry

Possible actions:

- 3.1 Encourage the Deacon Council to surface and address the needs of the diaconate.
- 3.2 Encourage the creation of and participation in deacon support groups.
- 3.3 Encourage collaboration between pastors and deacons in the creation of a written ministry agreement.
- 3.1 Make resources available for ongoing spiritual and educational development.

Strategy 4: Support Religious Life and Ministry

Possible actions:

- 4.1 Increase awareness and support of religious communities and their ministries.
- 4.2 Encourage religious priests, brothers, and sisters to participate in ongoing spiritual and ministerial development opportunities.
- 4.3 Encourage greater collaboration by utilizing the services/ministries provided by religious communities.
- 4.4 Host appreciation events to show gratitude for religious priests, brothers and sisters.



PROJECTED OUTCOMES

The active and faithful involvement of all groups will not only ensure the success of our “*All at the Table*” pastoral plan, it will ensure a Church of Idaho that is more vibrant, more active, and more prepared to address the challenges of the future. It is hoped that the successful implementation of our pastoral plan will lead to the following outcomes:

1. Each parish will have a trained and active Parish Pastoral Council that is attuned to the needs and concerns of the Catholic faithful.
2. Each parish will have a designated deanery representative who consistently attends both parish and deanery council meetings to facilitate the smooth and accurate exchange of information.
3. All Catholic groups will become more familiar with the process of pastoral planning and will be able to regularly use this process to assess the ongoing effectiveness of pastoral programs and services.
4. All groups will more effectively collaborate with one another in order to share resources, ideas, and best practices.
5. Councils at all levels will better understand their purpose and function and council members will be adequately prepared to exercise their consultative leadership.
6. The Bishop and his advisory councils will have more accurate, up-to-date information about the needs, concerns, and activities of our parishes and schools.
7. Parishioners, especially our youth and young adults, will be more actively involved in the life and mission of the parish.
8. Improved communication and a stronger sense of unity will exist throughout the diocese.
9. Priests, religious, and lay leaders will feel affirmed in their unique ministries and will find new and exciting ways to communicate and collaborate with one another.
10. Family life will be supported.
11. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life will increase.
12. The unique gifts and talents of parishioners will be recognized and called forth in service to the local community.

