

Our Journey in Faith & Grace

The Strategic Plan for Our Future



Diocese of Buffalo

795 Main Street | Buffalo, NY 14203 | 716.847.8700
www.buffalodiocese.org

Diocese of Buffalo



A Letter from the Bishop



May 2007

My Dear Friends in Christ,

Since we began the Journey in Faith & Grace, the spiritual revitalization of the diocese has always been our ultimate goal. We are the living stones that build up the Body of Christ. Our desire is to make all our parishes vibrant communities of faith that will provide sacramental preparation programs, religious formation for every age group, and outreach to those in need. We hope to see even more lay involvement, good pastoral leadership, and the financial stability of our parishes.

With this in mind, the Journey in Faith & Grace Commission, with the assistance of more than 100 people on various subcommittees, has developed "Our Journey in Faith & Grace: The Strategic Plan for Our Future." The plan focuses on seven areas of mission: Spiritual Revitalization, Parish Life, Lifelong Faith Formation, Finance and Administration, Catholic Elementary School Education, Community Involvement and Outreach, and Ministerial Leadership.

In each area of mission, goals and objectives were identified, lead agents named, and a timeline/effective date established. This plan is the result of a tremendous amount of work and consultation, and I believe that as we begin to act on these areas of mission, our diocesan Church will become more responsive to the needs of our time and more faithful to the mission and vision that we articulated as we began our strategic planning process.

As we work together to build the Kingdom of God, let us continue to journey, pray, and serve together, in faith and grace.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ 

Most Rev. Edward U. Kmiec
Bishop of Buffalo

Area of Mission: Spiritual Revitalization

For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them. Let love be sincere...hold on to what is good...Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit...exercise hospitality (Romans 12: 4-6a). Do this because you know the time; it is the time for you to awake. (Romans 13:11)

Goal 1: To keep the focus of the planning process on the building of the Kingdom of God and the great commission of Jesus by providing resources that will maintain a spiritual focus within the planning process.

Objective 1

Prepare resources and rituals for the parishes and institutions of the diocese that will assist them spiritually during the various phases of the Strategic Planning Process.

Lead Agent: Spiritual Revitalization Committee

Timeline/Effective Date: November 1, 2005 – December 31, 2007

Objective 2

Provide reflective material and opportunities that will assist the clergy, religious, and laity of the diocese to understand this time of planning as a journey of growth that involves the growing pains of letting go and letting something new become.

Lead Agent: Spiritual Revitalization Committee

Timeline/Effective Date: November 1, 2005 – December 31, 2007

Objective 3

Create and establish rituals of transition which can easily be adapted/modified for merged, or re-configured parishes and schools.

Lead Agent: Spiritual Revitalization Committee

Timeline/Effective Date: May 2007

Goal 2: To continue diocesan spiritual revitalization beyond the Journey in Faith & Grace process.

Objective 1

After researching various possibilities, suggest a spiritual renewal or evangelization program to Bishop Kmiec that might be implemented in the Diocese of Buffalo soon after the Journey in Faith & Grace is completed.

Lead Agent: Diocesan office responsible for parish life

Timeline/Effective Date: December 2007

Area of Mission: Parish Life

The vitality of a parish depends on merging the diverse vocations and gifts of its members into a unity which manifests the communion of each one and of all together with God the Father through Christ, constantly renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. (Pope John Paul II, Address to American Bishops, 1993)



Goal 1: To restructure diocesan parishes in order to ensure that parishes will have the membership, leadership, and resources necessary for vibrant parish life.

Objective 1

Create and implement a process for the restructuring of parishes.

*Lead Agent: Department of Research & Planning and
the Journey in Faith & Grace Commission*

Timeline/Effective Date: March 1, 2005 – December 31, 2007

Objective 2

Provide continuous assistance/mentoring to parishes as they participate in the restructuring process.

*Lead Agent: Various Diocesan Offices, Journey in Faith & Grace
Commission, and Spiritual Revitalization Committee*

Timeline/Effective Date: November 1, 2005 – December 31, 2009

Goal 2: To provide care and support to restructured parish communities.

Objective 1

Identify/create a diocesan office that will be responsible for ongoing parish life and write a detailed job description for that office.

Lead Agent: Bishop Kmiec

Timeline/Effective Date: September 1, 2007

Objective 2

Provide the assistance necessary for all parishes to have effective parish/pastoral councils.

Lead Agent: Diocesan office responsible for parish life

Timeline/Effective Date: January 1, 2008

Objective 3

Develop an educational initiative promoting and supporting vibrant parish life.

Lead Agent: Diocesan office responsible for parish life

Timeline/Effective Date: January 1, 2008

Objective 4

Assist vicariates in identifying all institutions within their boundaries, assessing the pastoral care needs of each, and developing a system for training and assigning ministerial personnel.

Lead Agent: Diocesan office responsible for parish life

Timeline/Effective Date: January 1, 2009

Goal 3: To engage in ongoing diocesan pastoral planning.

Objective 1

Develop a process that will continue to address the pastoral concerns of the diocese using a five-year model with annual reviews.

Lead Agent: Diocesan Chancery, Department of Research & Planning, Diocesan office responsible for parish life, and Office of Priests' Personnel

Timeline/Effective Date: June 1, 2008

Objective 2

Evaluate the effectiveness of the vicariate structure.

Lead Agent: Diocesan Chancery

Timeline/Effective Date: June 1, 2008

Objective 3

Publish a resource booklet for parishes that would give a variety of suggestions/best practices for continuing inter-parish collaboration.

Lead Agent: Diocesan office responsible for parish life

Timeline/Effective Date: June 1, 2008



Area of Mission: Lifelong Faith Formation

Adult faith formation, by which people consciously grow in the life of Christ through experience, reflection, prayer, and study, must be the central task in [the] catechetical enterprise, becoming the axis around which revolves the catechesis of childhood and adolescence as well as that of old age...Such lifelong formation is always needed and must be a priority in the Church's catechetical ministry; moreover, it must be considered the chief form of catechesis. All the other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it.

The primary role of the diocese is to affirm the priority of adult faith formation and to provide leadership, personnel, services, and resources to assist parishes in developing this ministry."

(USCCB, Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States, 1999, #5, 13, 160)

Goal: To foster an environment within the diocese that supports and facilitates parish-based lifelong faith formation.

Objective 1

Develop a job description for a person who would be responsible for diocesan lifelong faith formation. The following areas of responsibility should be included:

- *creation and implementation of a diocesan-wide, lifelong faith formation process which includes an intergenerational, non-classroom approach*
- *creation and/or enhancement of opportunities for evangelization and a spirit of welcoming within the parish community*
- *assistance to parishes in order to use technology in a way that is informative, educational, inspirational, and invitational*

Lead Agent: Lifelong Faith Formation Committee

Timeline/Effective Date: December 2007

Objective 2

Designate a person to be responsible for diocesan lifelong faith formation who will work with the Department of Catholic Education and the Office of Church Ministry to facilitate and coordinate parish-based faith formation at all levels.

Lead Agent: Diocesan Chancery

Timeline/Effective Date: June 2008

Area of Mission: Finance and Administration

"It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them." (Matthew 25:14)



Goal 1: To develop "Best Practices" policies for parishes to strengthen administration and internal controls and facilitate increased lay administration in view of the declining number of priests.

Objective 1

Distribute "Best Practices" policies to parishes.

Lead Agent: Finance Department and other temporal offices

Timeline/Effective Date: June 2007

Objective 2

Develop parish standards for lay compensation.

Lead Agent: Office of Human Resources and Finance Department

Timeline/Effective Date: January 2008

Objective 3

Require, at a minimum, semi-annual meetings of parish trustees, and active Parish Councils and Finance Committees that meet regularly.

Lead Agent: Diocesan Chancery and Finance Department

Timeline/Effective Date: January 2006

Goal 2: To establish logistics to implement the final consolidation plan to accommodate the sale, reuse, or demolition of excess property.

Objective 1

Promulgate merger/closing policies with regard to disposition of parish assets and liabilities.

Lead Agent: Finance Department and Department of Buildings & Properties

Timeline/Effective Date: June 2007

Objective 2

Secure professional consultation, including Delta Development, on reuse and disposition of excess properties.

Lead Agent: Department of Buildings & Properties

Timeline/Effective Date: January 2007 – January 2008

Goal 3: To ensure that Diocesan Boards and Commissions are gender inclusive and culturally diverse and that members possess the appropriate expertise and background to fulfill their duties.

Objective 1

Develop a pool of qualified individuals for Diocesan Boards and Commissions to enhance cultural diversity and gender inclusiveness.

Lead Agent: All administrative offices

Timeline/Effective Date: Ongoing

Goal 4: Support and provide financial analysis to the Schools' Strategic Plan Committee on the implications of various elementary school funding alternatives on parishes, with an emphasis on transitioning from parish elementary schools to regional schools over the long term (5-10 years).

Objective 1

Determine a formula for the level of financial support that a parish or set of parishes can provide to Catholic elementary education.

Lead Agent: Finance Department, Department of Catholic Education, and Development Office

Timeline/Effective Date: April 2007

Objective 2

Define benchmark ranges for teacher salaries, tuition rates, and parish subsidy ratios for urban, suburban, and rural schools.

Lead Agent: Finance Department, Department of Catholic Education, Development Office, and Office of Human Resources

Timeline/Effective Date: January 2008

Objective 3

Support the implementation of the Catholic Schools Development Program.

Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education, Finance Department, and Development Office

Timeline/Effective Date: 2006-2008

Goal 5: To determine the most cost-effective manner of maintaining the education of future priests for the Diocese of Buffalo at any location.

Objective 1

Establish a study group to consider

- diocesan ministries that might be located at the seminary
- reconfiguration of the seminary complex to maximize the investment in the physical plant

Lead Agent: Diocesan Chancery and Christ the King Seminary Board

Timeline/Effective Date: December 2006

Goal 6: To enhance the financial support of Catholic organizations and ministries in a cost-effective manner.

Objective 1

Promote participation in the professionally managed St. Joseph Investment Fund, Inc. to maximize short-term and long-term investment income within the investment guidelines consistent with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Lead Agent: Diocesan Chancery and Finance Department

Timeline/Effective Date: September 2006

Objective 2

Promote the charitable planned giving and endowment management services of the Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo to further the educational, social service and pastoral missions throughout the Diocese of Buffalo.

Lead Agent: Development Office and Finance Department

Timeline/Effective Date: November 2006

Goal 7: To evaluate the five-year budget plan of the Central Administrative Offices with consideration of the impact of asset stewardship strategies on the Central Administrative Offices budget.

Objective 1

Maintain a balanced budget in view of potential loss of investment income through program reductions or increased revenues.

Lead Agent: Diocesan Finance Council and Finance Department

Timeline/Effective Date: June 2007

Objective 2

Study program reductions or combination of ministries with programs from other related entities.

Lead Agent: Diocesan Chancery and Finance Department

Timeline/Effective Date: January 2007

Objective 3

Determine how to best fund secondary Catholic education grants and subsidy.

Lead Agent: Development Office, Finance Department, and Department of Catholic Education

Timeline/Effective Date: April 2007

Objective 4

Identify and plan for long-term trends of the Catholic Charities Drive and Bishop's Fund for the Faith.

Lead Agent: Development Office, Finance Department, and Catholic Charities

Timeline/Effective Date: June 2007



Area of Mission: Catholic Elementary School Education

Catholic schools provide young people with sound Church teaching through a broad-based curriculum, where faith and culture are intertwined in all areas of a school's life. By equipping our young people with a strong education, rooted in the Gospel message, the person of Jesus Christ, and rich in the cherished traditions and liturgical practices of our faith, we ensure that they have the foundation to live morally and uprightly in our complex, modern world. (USCCB, Catholic Schools on the Threshold, no. 9, 1997)

Goal 1: To restructure elementary schools to ensure that they will have the enrollments, academic programs, facilities, technology, and resources necessary to maintain viable, vibrant schools.

Objective 1

Create and implement a process for the restructuring of schools.

Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education and Department of Research & Planning

Timeline/Effective Date: November 2005 – December 2007

Objective 2

Research effective Catholic elementary school models.

Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education and Shea Consulting Services

Timeline/Effective Date: November 2006 – December 2007

Objective 3

Provide assistance/monitoring to schools as they participate in the restructuring process.

Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education, Finance Department, and Shea Consulting Services

Timeline/Effective Date: January 2007 – Ongoing

Objective 4

Support the implementation of the Catholic Schools Development Program and diocesan marketing initiatives.

Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education and Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo

Timeline/Effective Date: Ongoing

Goal 2: To strengthen the role of a school's Catholic identity so that the Catholic faith is a prominent characteristic of all aspects of the school (academics, extracurricular activities, spirit of faculty, involvement with parents, etc.).

Objective 1

Develop or adapt a tool to assist principals with effective assessment of a teacher's knowledge of the Catholic faith. Provide assistance with the interview process and ongoing supervision of the theological development of the faculty.

*Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education/Principals' Committee
Timeline/Effective Date: September 2008*

Objective 2

Develop programming strategies to assist teachers in integrating Catholic social teaching across the curriculum which will include maintenance of a resource listing of support materials for cross-curricular programming.

*Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education/Teachers' Committee
Timeline/Effective Date: January 2008*

Goal 3: To create an evaluation process to be used in the schools to establish individual school goals based on diocesan goals and policies.

Objective 1

Develop an evaluation tool for use by the Department of Catholic Education staff, local school administration, and the school's Educational Advisory Council.

*Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education
Timeline/Effective Date: September 2007*

Goal 4: To develop a continuum of collaborative efforts in regard to staff development, school-to-school partnerships, and faith formation programs.

Objective 1

Implement a diocesan-wide program of staff development, continuing education, and mentoring.

*Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education
Timeline/Effective Date: 2006-2007*

Goal 5: To ensure the maintenance and integrity of all diocesan educational facilities and grounds.

Objective 1

Determine baseline physical standards/benchmarks for all diocesan school and church buildings and properties in order to assist parishes and schools with short-term and long-term capital improvements.

*Lead Agent: Department of Buildings & Properties
Timeline/Effective Date: September 2008*

Objective 2

Assist pastors/canonical administrators/principals to provide a realistic budget figure that will include funding for ongoing maintenance costs, upgrades, and capital improvements.

*Lead Agent: Department of Buildings & Properties and Finance Department
Timeline/Effective Date: Ongoing*



Goal 6: To increase the visibility of and enrollment in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Buffalo through a comprehensive marketing plan.

Objective 1

Identify the appropriate tools needed to reach the target market; set objectives for the message, call to action, budget and timeline.

Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education, The Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, and Office of Communications
Timeline/Effective Date: 2006 – Diocese and CSDP Phase I elementary schools, 2007-2009 – Remaining elementary schools

Objective 2

Determine the delivery method for internal and external audiences and define the measurement of success through cost/benefit analysis.

Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education, Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, Office of Communications, and Department of Computer Services
Timeline/Effective Date: 2006 – Diocese and CSDP Phase I elementary schools, 2007-2009 – Remaining elementary schools

Objective 3

Establish a financial base to fund training and marketing efforts for schools by obtaining estimates for desired projects, setting budgets, identifying existing available resources, and researching and securing new revenue sources.

Lead Agent: Department of Catholic Education, Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, Finance Department, and Office of Communications
Timeline/Effective Date: 2006 – Diocese and CSDP Phase I elementary schools, 2007-2009 – Remaining elementary schools



Area of Mission: Community Involvement and Outreach

Love of neighbor, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every level: from the local community to the particular Church and to the Church universal in its entirety.

*As a community, the Church must practice love. Love thus needs to be organized if it is to be an ordered service to the community.
(Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, #20)*



Goal: To make the Catholic Diocese of Buffalo a living sign of Jesus' presence (Matthew 25:31-45) by engaging the faithful in the life of the Church and actively fostering their mission of social responsibility.

Objective 1

Prepare motivational presentations, including video, audio, and printed materials, as a vehicle for the bishop to explain the obligation of Catholics as twofold: to *worship* and to *serve*. The bishop, as leader of the diocese, can educate the faithful to their responsibility, and urge them to respond in and through each parish.

*Lead Agent: Diocesan Chancery and Office of Communications
Timeline/Effective Date: Within one year of implementation*

Objective 2

Provide an assessment tool for each parish and/or cluster to ascertain what community outreach is already being done and how it can grow in the future. Include financial and volunteer opportunities through parish-based social services and advocacy of Catholic Charities.

*Lead Agent: Catholic Charities
Timeline/Effective Date: June 2008*

Objective 3

Request each parish to appoint a director of volunteers or similar individual who will work with parish membership and perhaps neighboring parishes to:

- develop and implement a plan for the parish or cluster to address the needs of the area
- compile a list of those with whom parish volunteers/staff should be in dialogue
- develop volunteers' skills and educate them about the needs and assistance available in the area

*Lead Agent: Catholic Charities
Timeline/Effective Date: June 2008*

Area of Mission: Ministerial Leadership

Ministry in the Church continues the ministry of Jesus through the ages and throughout the world. Continually, the Spirit calls forth new ministries and new ministers to serve evolving needs, as the history of the Church shows.

Lay ecclesial ministers, just like the ordained, need and deserve formation of high standards, effective methods, and comprehensive goals.

(USCCB, Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, 2005)



Goal 1: To establish effective collaborative ministry within parishes.

Objective 1

Increase the resources available to parishes for education and formation, including use of Christ the King Seminary as a center for ministerial formation on post-graduate, graduate, certificate, and continuing formation levels through additional programmatic offerings, increased accessibility, and improved technological capabilities.

*Lead Agent: Office of Church Ministry and Christ the King Seminary
Timeline/Effective Date: December 31, 2007*

Objective 2

Provide parishes with models of ministerial leadership and collaborative ministry including job descriptions for various ministerial leadership roles.

*Lead Agent: Office of Church Ministry
Timeline/Effective Date: January 1, 2008*

Objective 3

Approval of the "Guidelines for the Ministry of Pastoral Administrators in the Diocese of Buffalo."

*Lead Agent: Office of Church Ministry
Timeline/Effective Date: December 31, 2006*

Objective 4

Establish the framework for a consolidated personnel board that will present to the bishop candidates for assignment as pastors, parochial vicars, deacons, and pastoral administrators.

*Lead Agent: Priests' Personnel Board in collaboration with the Office of Church Ministry, Office of the Permanent Diaconate, and Vicar for Religious
Timeline/Effective Date: January 1, 2009*

Goal 2: To promote vocations to the priesthood and permanent diaconate.

*Lead Agent: Office for Vocations and Office of Permanent Diaconate
Timeline/Effective Date: Ongoing*

Goal 3: To develop and provide an ongoing program for foreign-born priests that will help them to understand American culture and to enter effectively into ministry in the American Church.

*Lead Agent: Christ the King Seminary and Priests' Personnel Board
Timeline/Effective Date: June 2007*