

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings Pastoral Plan

2005-2010

*Promulgated by
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Mission Statement of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

We, the people of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, from diverse backgrounds yet guided by the same Spirit, are working together in eastern Montana to forge new dimensions in our Church.

The sacred richness of our land and people shapes us. Rooted in the Eucharist and Catholic Tradition, we are living witnesses who struggle to embody the values of Christ's reign.

We commit ourselves to discover and to make known God's presence in our world by living the Gospel joyfully, working for justice and peace, and continuing our spiritual growth through a lifetime.

“Together we stand at the threshold of a ‘great venture’, both challenging and wonderful. For the vision to take place, however, we need to commit ourselves anew, bishops and people, to prayer and dialogue, to reflection and action”. (*Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, USCCB, 1995*)

Pastoral Plan Overview

The Diocesan Pastoral Council has undergone a two-year process of review of the Diocesan Strategic Plan (1998-2003) and planning for an updated plan. The process was begun using a Theological Reflection model followed by listening sessions, dialogue and discernment with members of the Diocesan Outreach staff and vicariate sessions for pastors, pastoral administrators and parishioners about diocesan pastoral priorities. This document is the result of that effort.

It begins with the Mission Statement of the Diocese. Discussion and reflection upon the Mission Statement occurred early in the process and it was decided that our mission statement reflected our vision. A vision is broad by definition providing guidance and direction for our future.

The pastoral plan was written in the spirit of the mission and vision, as well as within reasonable limits imposed by our times and circumstances. It is our hope that the pastoral goals are tangible ways for our Diocese to work together towards the fulfillment of our mission as disciples of Jesus Christ. Strategies have been identified to strengthen and support the pastoral focus of the plan.

The Diocesan Outreach Staff plans to implement the strategies through action plans that will be developed from the strategies. Parishes will be asked to participate in the plan through selecting those strategies that are feasible for them to do. Each pastoral plan goal has a worksheet that can track the action plans undertaken. The tracking sheets can also serve as a tool for dialogue with members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, members of the Outreach Staff, parish pastoral and finance councils, and commissions. The document has been designed as a tool for increased collaboration.

The strategy task sheet can be duplicated as needed. It is a way to design specific actions with a timeframe for completion. These sheets can also serve as tools for dialogue and evaluation. In five years these accumulated sheets can serve as the beginning of review and planning for the next phase of the plan. Finally, there is a glossary page of terms applicable to each of the goals and a page citing church references that were used throughout the document. In these rapidly changing times, we acknowledge that our efforts may be incomplete and partial but they are our best effort at this time.

Gratitude is expressed to all those who willingly participated in the process with special thanks to Bishop Milone for his guidance and insight and to members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council for their dedicated input.

A. Spirituality and Worship

“Jesus explained to them: ‘I myself am the bread of life. No one who comes to Me shall ever be hungry, no one who believes in Me shall ever thirst.’ *John 6: 35*

The act of worship (liturgy) is the only thing that happens in all of the parishes of the diocese every week. Therefore, it is the contact point with all practicing Catholics. Because it is the only weekly activity of the whole body, there is a direct relationship between the quality of liturgy and the active participation of the faithful in the work of the Church. The liturgy is the source and summit of the life of a Christian and has a vital role to play in the formation of the faith. (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*)

“This Sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impact an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions that are subject to change; to strengthen whatever can help promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of humanity into the household of the Church.” (*The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy #1 of the Introduction*)

Strategies

- A.1 Impart an ever-increasing vigor for full, conscious, active participation in Eucharistic celebrations with an intergenerational focus
- A.2 Promote and foster vocations to the priesthood, family life, religious life, and lay ministry
- A.3 Maintain and develop liturgical expertise
- A.4 Provide the necessary background knowledge for legitimate variations and adaptations of liturgical signs and symbols applicable to different groups and traditions
- A.5 Nourish liturgical practices for evangelization
- A.6 Provide diocesan and local opportunities for on-going spiritual growth
- A.7 Foster a welcoming spirit at liturgies

Action Plan Tracking Worksheet

A. Spirituality and Worship

Strategy	Funding Sources*	Action	By whom	By when
A.1 Impart an ever increasing vigor for full, conscious, active participation in Eucharistic celebrations with an intergenerational focus	Diocese (C&S/COF)** Parish			
A.2 Promote and foster vocations to the priesthood, family life, religious life, and lay ministry	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
A.3 Maintain and develop liturgical expertise	Diocese (C&S/COF)			
A.4 Provide the necessary background knowledge for legitimate variations and adaptations of liturgical signs and symbols applicable to different groups and traditions	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
A.5 Nourish liturgical practices for evangelization	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
A.6 Provide diocesan and local opportunities for on-going spiritual growth	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
A.7 Foster a welcoming spirit at liturgies	Parish			

*"Funding Sources" refers to already existing funds, or funds anticipated to be available in the diocese or the parish, that would properly finance the designated strategy. In many cases the funds are already supporting the strategies identified. In some cases, funds have not been identified as already existing, but the pastoral need is seen as important enough to identify. Clearly, if funds are not available within the parish or the diocese, then the accomplishment of the stated strategy will be impacted by that reality.

** C&S refers to Care and Share Collection; COF refers to Current Operating Fund Assessment of the Diocese.

B. Evangelization and Faith Education

“Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation.” *Mark 16:15*

The new evangelization will become a reality only if ordained and lay members of Christ’s faithful understand their roles and ministries as complimentary, and their purposes joined to the one mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.” (*Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium USCCB, 1995*)

“A major challenge for the third millennium is to bring our Catholic tradition to life in the hearts, minds, and spirits of new generations. The Church needs a well-educated, inquiring and vocal laity if the new evangelization is to achieve its full potential.” (*Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, USCCB, 1995*)

“This is what is needed: a church for young people, which will know how to speak to their heart and enkindle, comfort, and inspire enthusiasm in it with the joy of the Gospel and the strength of the Eucharist; a Church which does not fear asking from young people the effort of a noble and authentic adventure, such as that of following the Gospel.” (*John Paul II, 1995 World Day of Prayer for Vocations*), (*Renewing the Vision, USCCB, 1997*)

“We seek to form parishes that are vitally alive in faith. We seek to form adults who cultivate a lively baptismal and Eucharistic spirituality with a powerful sense of mission and apostolate.” (*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, USCCB, 1999*)

Strategies

- B.1 Continue developing youth ministry programs
- B.2 Train and certify all lay ecclesial ministers for religious education in parishes and Catholic schools
- B.3 Promote adult faith formation through education and prayer experiences
- B.4 Support and encourage Catholic school education
- B.5 Bring the good news of the Gospel to all the diverse cultures in our diocese
- B.6 Reach out to those who are alienated from the Church by developing a spirit of healing and reconciliation in our churches
- B.7 Foster a deeper understanding of our Catholic faith

Action Plan Tracking Worksheet

B. Evangelization and Faith Education

Strategy	Funding Sources*	Action	By whom	By when
B.1 Continue developing youth ministry programs	Diocese (C&S/COF)** Parish			
B.2 Train and certify all lay ecclesial ministers for religious education in parishes and catholic schools	Diocese (C&S/COF)			
B.3 Continue to develop adult faith formation through education and prayer experiences	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
B.4 Support and encourage Catholic school education	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish Individuals			
B.5 Bring the good news of the Gospel to all the diverse cultures in our diocese	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish Grants			
B.6 Reach out to those who are alienated from the Church by developing a spirit of healing and reconciliation in our churches	Not established			
B.7 Foster a deeper understanding of our Catholic faith	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			

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C. Christian Service and Social Justice

“Treat others the way you would have them treat you: this sums up the law and the prophets.” *Matthew 8: 12*

“Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 1928, 1994*)

“The validity of our having accepted the Gospel does not only come from what we feel or what we know; it comes also from the way we serve others, especially the poorest, the most marginal, the most hurting, the most defenseless, the least loved.” (*Go and Make Disciples, USCCB, 1993*)

Strategies

- C.1 Recognize the essential relationship between Eucharist and Catholic Social Teaching
- C.2 Foster understanding and respect among the diverse cultures in Montana
- C.3 Continue our outreach activities in response to local needs of individuals and communities
- C.4 Address environmental issues affecting life today and into the future
- C.5 Develop a process for ways to understand racism and its effects on individuals and communities
- C.6 Respond to the issues and concerns of the native peoples
- C.7 Support family life through intergenerational activities

Action Plan Tracking Worksheet

C. Christian Service and Social Justice

Strategy	Funding Sources*	Action	By whom	By when
C.1 Recognize the essential relationship between Eucharist and Catholic Social Teaching	Diocese (C&S/COF)** Parish			
C.2 Foster understanding and respect among the diverse cultures in Montana	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
C.3 Continue our outreach activities in response to local needs of individuals and communities	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
C.4 Address environmental issues affecting life today and into the future	Diocese (C&S/COF) (Montana Catholic Conference)			
C.5 Develop a process for ways to understand racism and its effects on individuals and communities	Not established			
C.6 Respond to the issues and concerns of the native peoples	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
C.7 Support family life through intergenerational activities	Parish			

***"Funding Sources" refers to already existing funds, or funds anticipated to be available in the diocese or the parish, that would properly finance the designated strategy. In many cases the funds are already supporting the strategies identified. In some cases, funds have not been identified as already existing, but the pastoral need is seen as important enough to identify. Clearly, if funds are not available within the parish or the diocese, then the accomplishment of the stated strategy will be impacted by that reality.

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D. Christian Stewardship

“Wherever your treasure lies, there your heart will be.” *Luke 12:34*

“Stewardship is an expression of discipleship with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives. (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response. USCCB, 1992*)

“Accountability is absolutely essential for stewardship to grow an flourish in parishes as well as the diocese.” (*Stewardship-Disciples Respond-A Practical Guide for Pastoral Leaders, Our Sunday Visitor, 1997*)

Strategies

- D.1 Reinststate a diocesan-wide educational program of Christian stewardship for all ages
- D.2 Encourage a spirit of generosity regarding the use of one’s time, talent and treasure
- D.3 Continue to provide responsible, accountable, and effective financial management of the resources entrusted to us
- D.4 Deal with the needs of our urban and rural parishes in the light of the complexities of our vast diocese
- D.5 Address rural issues and concerns of our diocese
- D.6 Participate more fully in our parish and diocesan collegial structures
- D.7 Make more effective use of existing communication structures (such as websites, print media, electronic media, emails, church bulletins and announcements, committee meeting minutes, and mailings)

Action Plan Tracking Worksheet

D. Christian Stewardship

Strategy	Funding Sources*	Action	By whom	By when
D.1 Reinstate a diocesan-wide educational program of Christian stewardship for all ages	Diocese (C&S/COF)**			
D.2 Encourage a spirit of generosity regarding the use of one's time, talent and treasure	Parish			
D.3 Provide responsible, accountable, and effective financial management of the resources entrusted to us	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
D.4 Address the needs of our urban and rural parishes in the light of the complexities of our vast diocese	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
D.5 Address rural issues and concerns of our diocese	Diocese Parish Grants			
D.6 Participate more fully in our parish and diocesan collegial structures	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			
D.7 Make more effective use of existing communication structures (such as websites, print media, committees, and mailings)	Diocese (C&S/COF) Parish			

*"Funding Sources" refers to already existing funds, or funds anticipated to be available in the diocese or the parish, that would properly finance the designated strategy. In many cases the funds are already supporting the strategies identified. In some cases, funds have not been identified as already existing, but the pastoral need is seen as important enough to identify. Clearly, if funds are not available within the parish or the diocese, then the accomplishment of the stated strategy will be impacted by that reality.

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Strategy Task Sheet (2005-2010)

Duplicate Task Sheet as needed for each Pastoral Goal Strategy.

Date Begun _____ Date Completed _____

Pastoral Goal: _____

Strategy: _____

Action Steps:

What do we want to accomplish-a specific objective or task?	How are we going to achieve it?	Who is going to do it?	What activities will we undertake to do it?	When are we going to do it?	How much money do we need?	Where will the money come from?	How will we measure if objective is achieved?

Glossary

Care & Share (C&S) The Care and Share Appeal, often referred to as “Care and Share”, is the Bishop’s annual appeal to parishioners throughout the Diocese. The appeal is a direct mail appeal from the Pastoral Center to all parishioners who are registered in parishes throughout eastern Montana. Care and Share is the primary source of funds to meet the local, national and international obligations of the Diocese. The appeal is usually initiated on the first weekend in March and continues through October of every year.

Catechesis An education of children, young people, and adults in the faith of the Church through the teaching of Christian doctrine in an organic and systematic way to make them disciples of Jesus Christ.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church USCCB, 1989*)

Catholic Social Teaching The teaching of the Church on the truth of revelation about human dignity, human solidarity, and the principles of justice and peace, the moral judgments about economic and social matters required by such truth and about the demands of justice and peace. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church USCCB, 1989*)

Collegiality “Collegiality as both a doctrine and an attitude is one of the distinctive features of the ecclesiology of Vatican II. In the strict sense collegiality refers to the doctrine that all bishops, by virtue of their Episcopal consecration and their hierarchical communion among themselves and with the head of the college, the pope, have a corporate responsibility for the unity of the faith and of communion in the universal church. A spirit of collegiality can also be reflected in the local church or diocese through Presbyteral and pastoral councils.” (*The New Dictionary of Theology, Editors: Komonchak, Collins, Lane; Glazier, Inc., 1987*)

Current Operating Fund (COF) From an accounting standpoint, the Diocese manages many funds, each with a specific purpose. The Current Operating Fund provides an accounting structure to record unrestricted income and expenses related to the day-to-day operations of the Diocese. Revenues in the Current Operating Fund consist primarily of contributions to the Care and Share Appeal and support in the form of parish assessments known as Current Operating Fund assessments. Typical but not all-inclusive Current Operating Fund expenses include diocesan personnel salaries and benefits, office supplies, utilities, the cost of property and casualty insurance, legal and accounting expenses, travel expenses, facility maintenance and repair costs and obligations to the national and international church.

Evangelization: “Evangelization is the proclamation of Christ and his Gospel by word and the testimony of life, in fulfillment of Christ’s commands.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000*)

Funding Sources: “Funding Sources” refers to already existing funds, or funds anticipated to be available in the diocese or the parish, that would properly finance the designated strategy. In many cases the funds are already supporting the strategies identified. In some cases, funds have not been identified as already existing, but the pastoral need is seen as important enough to identify. Clearly, if funds are not available within the parish or the diocese, then the accomplishment of the stated strategy will be impacted by that reality.

Lay Ecclesial Ministers: Professionally prepared men and women, including vowed religious, who are given positions of responsibility in service and leadership in the Church. Some examples are Directors of Religious Education, Directors of Music, and Pastoral Associates. (*Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Question USCCB, 1999*)

Liturgy: “In its original meaning, a ‘public’ work or service done in the name of or on behalf of our redemption through the Church’s celebration of the Paschal Mystery by which he accomplished our salvation.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church USCCB, 1989*)

Ministry: “Ministry is the service or work of sanctification by the preaching of the word and the celebration of the sacraments by those in Holy Orders, or in determined circumstances, by laity. The New Testament speaks of a variety of ministries in the Church; Christ himself is the source of ministry in the Church. Bishops, priests, and deacons are ordained ministers in the Church.” Some examples of lay ministers are Eucharistic ministers, Catechists, Lectors. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2000*)

Stewardship: “What identifies a steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly is one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian Steward means more. As Christian stewards, we receive God’s gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.” (*Summary: Stewardship, Our Sunday Visitor, 1991*)(*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response, USCCB, Bishops’ Pastoral Letter, 1992*)

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