

May 12, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The 2010 Parish Pastoral Plan has been in motion since its announcement at the 2009 Convocation for our priests. The planning process was approved by Archbishop George J. Lucas before he was assigned to the Archdiocese of Omaha. Under the diocesan administration of Monsignor Carl A. Kemme, the process began in our parishes in January 2010. The final results are now ready to be promulgated.

Marlene Mulford, our Chancellor and Director of Pastoral Planning, implemented the process which involved resources at all levels of diocesan life, but most importantly in our parishes. The key component in the pastoral planning process was the involvement of the lay faithful. Through committees and town meetings, the laity assisted in the creation of realistic plans for their parishes.

I am pleased to present the final plans to our parishes and to the diocese. These final plans resulted from the cooperation and participation of all 131 parishes. The diocese was divided into 12 regions. Each region formed a planning committee composed of a priest moderator and a lay facilitator. The committee also included the pastor, parochial administrator or parish life coordinator and two lay representatives from each parish. Based on regional parish data, projections and pre-submitted individual parish proposals, the regional planning committee formulated a joint planning proposal for their region. These proposals were submitted to the Diocesan Planning Committee for review or revision in December 2010. The final draft proposals were then presented to the Presbyteral Council on May 2, 2011.

The final plans will not be implemented all at once. It is important to note that 100 percent of the plans may never be implemented. As stated from the beginning, the plans will be used as guidelines for the Priest Personnel Board in pastoral, parish life coordinator and deacon assignments in the months and years to come.

It is essential to mention that the priest statistics and proposed assignments used for the 2010 Parish Pastoral Plan included only diocesan priests and not religious priests. As long as religious orders are able to continue to supply pastoral assistance to our parishes, we are extremely grateful and welcome the religious priests who serve in the parishes of our diocese. Also, new deacon assignments for parishes according to the 2010 Parish Pastoral Plan are based on deacon availability.

Pastoral planning is a sign of the vitality of the church and the community of faith reflecting upon its current conditions, hopes, dreams, struggles and needs. May the Holy Spirit continue to provide the grace to plan with faith and hope in our parishes for a future that upholds the mission of Jesus Christ and the Church. With every best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ

Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois