



Dear Friends,

Over the years, the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois has begun several initiatives to implement effective pastoral planning. These initiatives have attempted to promote the best use of our resources at all levels of diocesan life, but most especially in our parishes. Pastoral planning is an important part of diocesan life, especially in the times in which we live, with changing demographics, shifting populations, and limited human and financial resources. Spiritually speaking, pastoral planning is a sign of the vitality of the church and the community of faith reflecting upon itself, its current conditions, hopes, dreams, struggles and needs. For these reasons, the church will always need to plan so that our future will be bright, alive and well. I believe God expects nothing less from us.

To that end, our Chancellor and Director of Pastoral Planning, Marlene Mulford recently announced a planning initiative which will begin in early Spring of 2010 that will involve all the parishes of the diocese. It is my hope and expectation that our priests and parish life coordinators will once again participate in this effort. The primary need is to provide the necessary leadership to bring about the anticipated goals. The most important goals are greater lay involvement in our parishes, more prudent and effective use of available resources and in general a spiritual renewal of Catholic life among us.

A key component in the current pastoral planning process will be greater involvement of the lay faithful. Through committees and town meetings, the laity will assist in the creation of realistic plans for their parishes. These plans will be submitted to a general planning committee for review, revision, and acceptance so that all plans for the various regions will be seen in relation to the others. The final plan will need the acceptance and implementation of the diocesan bishop.

One may ask why we would not wait until a new bishop is appointed and installed. The answer is simple. We cannot wait, nor should we. Pastoral planning must be ongoing. We will need to have in place plans for the immediate future, which will guide the appointment of parish priests, deacons and parish life coordinators as well as how parishes will collaborate and share ministries. In the end, however, these plans will need the approval and implementation of the new bishop. As Administrator, it is not in my authority to accept or implement such a plan for the future of the diocese.

While we wait for a new bishop, much is being done in our parishes and schools. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, let us ask for the grace to plan with hope for a future that is alive and well. May God who has begun the good work in us, bring it to fulfillment.

Msgr. Carl A. Kemme

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Diocesan Administrator