

Christ Our Life



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NEW ULM, MN

DIOCESAN PLAN FOR PARISHES

FROM 2013 TO 2020 AND BEYOND

Pursuing the Mission of Jesus Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NEW ULM, MN
DIOCESAN PLAN FOR PARISHES
FROM 2013 TO 2020 AND BEYOND

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PRAYER FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE *FOURTH PLAN FOR PARISHES*

Heavenly Father, we place in your hands the *Fourth Plan for Parishes* of the Diocese of New Ulm. It was only with your grace that this pastoral plan has been formulated. It will only be with your grace that its implementation will take place.

Help us to recognize our dignity as baptized Catholics, who have been configured to Christ. We ask for the grace to live out our share in the triple offices of Christ – priest, prophet, and king – and thereby to show the loving face of Christ to others in our families, parishes, work places, schools, social gatherings, and all other activities.

Strengthen our priests as they carry out the ministerial priesthood of Christ by teaching, shepherding, and sanctifying the people entrusted to their care by the bishop. Be with our consecrated women religious as they give their lives to Christ for the sake of building up his Church.

Unite us all as one in the New Evangelization, so that all may share the Good News of Christ. May Jesus work in us and through us to bring about a culture of life and love in our diocese and beyond. Strengthen our marriages and families so that they may be places of love, formation in the faith, generosity, and vocations. Assist our country. May the religious liberty of all be respected.

For these intentions, we ask the maternal intercession of the patroness of our diocese, Our Lady of New Ulm. All of this we ask through Christ our Life, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------------|
| Foreword..... | ix |
| Synopsis of General Principles | xi |
| Previous Plans for Parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm | xiii |
| Section I: Foundational Principles | 1 |
| Chapter 1. The Identity and Mission of the Diocese of New Ulm..... | 3 |
| Chapter 2. The Single Pastor Model of the Area Faith Community | 7 |
| Chapter 3. The Role of Pastoral Administrators | 10 |
| Chapter 4. Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of New Ulm..... | 13 |
| Chapter 5. Consecrated Life: Those Called to Christian Perfection | 16 |
| Chapter 6. The Role of the Laity in Society | 20 |
| Section II: Pastoral Vision..... | 25 |
| Chapter 1. Synopsis of Pastoral Priorities..... | 27 |
| Chapter 2. Christ Our Life | 30 |
| Chapter 3. The Priestly Office: Embracing a Eucharistic Spirituality | 35 |
| Chapter 4. The Prophetic Office: Evangelizing the Church to Evangelize the World..... | 43 |
| Chapter 5. The Kingly Office: Transforming the World in Christ’s Love | 50 |
| Chapter 6. Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life..... | 67 |
| Chapter 7. Hispanic Ministry: An Opportunity for Mutual Enrichment..... | 72 |
| Chapter 8. Catholic Schools: A Vital Part of the Prophetic Mission of the Church | 75 |
| Chapter 9. Conclusion: Living Heroic Lives in Imitation of Christ..... | 80 |
| Section III: People of the Diocese | 83 |
| Chapter 1. Demographics of the Diocese..... | 85 |
| Chapter 2. Population Projections for the Diocese | 89 |
| Chapter 3. The Hispanic Population and Racial Composition of the Diocese..... | 92 |
| Chapter 4. Parish Population and Mass Attendance Trends | 94 |
| Chapter 5. Conclusion: The Present and Future of the Diocese of New Ulm..... | 97 |
| Section IV: Parish Organization..... | 101 |
| Chapter 1. Overview of Diocesan Organization | 103 |
| Chapter 2. The Area Faith Community..... | 105 |
| Chapter 3. The Parish..... | 108 |
| Chapter 4. The Church and the Church Building..... | 112 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 5. The Small Parish | 115 |
| Chapter 6. Options for Small Parishes | 119 |
| Section V: Pastoral Leadership | 127 |
| Chapter 1. Overview of Pastoral Leadership in the Diocese of New Ulm..... | 129 |
| Chapter 2. Our Present and Future Priests | 131 |
| Chapter 3. Pastoral Leader Allocation | 134 |
| Chapter 4. Consultation and Implementation..... | 140 |
| Chapter 5. Area Faith Community and Parish Ministry | 145 |
| Addenda: Guidelines | 147 |
| Appendix 1. Area Pastoral Council Guidelines | 149 |
| Appendix 2. Area Assessment Guidelines | 154 |
| Appendix 3. Administrative Council Guidelines | 155 |

FOREWORD

On October 11, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI issued the apostolic letter *Porta Fidei (The Door of Faith)*, calling for a Year of Faith. The Year of Faith is being observed from October 11, 2012, until November 24, 2013. It coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council and the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which the Holy Father calls the authentic fruit of Vatican II.

The Holy Father begins his letter: “The ‘door of faith’ (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church” (no. 1). We enter the “door of faith” by accepting the Word of God and letting God’s grace, received especially in the Eucharist, transform our hearts. With transformed hearts, we begin a journey of faith that lasts a lifetime.

Our “journey of faith” in the Diocese of New Ulm began in 1957 with the founding of the diocese. Over the years, we have seen many changes in the diocese. With the advancement of agricultural technology, the farming industry has changed significantly. In years past, there were many large families in the diocese, working smaller family farms. Technology now allows farmers to do much more, cultivating larger plots of land, but requiring fewer people. Consequently, today there are many fewer families in agriculture and much larger farms.

When people are no longer needed on the farm, they look elsewhere for economic opportunity. This has meant that many of our small cities and towns have grown over the years. However, they have not offered enough good jobs to keep many of those who were born and raised here from moving and searching for employment opportunities elsewhere. Overall, the general population of the diocese has remained about the same as it was seventy years ago. The changes in agricultural technology have been one factor in a significant decrease in family size. The average age of the general population continues to rise as well.

For many years, the Catholic population of the diocese had remained steady at about a quarter of the general population. The last ten years have witnessed a significant decline. The decrease in our Catholic population is manifested in fewer sacraments being celebrated in the parishes, Catholic school and religious education student populations decreasing, and parish membership decreasing. The aging population is manifested with more residents in assisted living facilities and more funerals. At the same time, many older people are moving away. The diocese is challenged to attract the younger generation to the Church and to encourage them to be faithful, practicing Catholics. These factors pose significant financial challenges for the future as we struggle to fund our programs and maintain our buildings.

A considerable number of our brothers and sisters from Hispanic countries now live, work, and worship in our diocese. In addition, there are many non-Christian immigrants moving into the diocese. This has significantly impacted the population mix. The diocese is committed to ministering well to these newer populations, regardless of their religious beliefs. We also value our relationships with our Native American neighbors.

The numbers of religious sisters serving in the diocese is decreasing as many religious orders of sisters are experiencing lower numbers. However, we are encouraged by the fact that some religious communities, such as the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus, are growing and are drawn to serve in the Diocese of New Ulm. The average age of priests in our diocese is 55. The number of priests has decreased over the past years and thus there are fewer priests serving in parishes. Most disturbingly, only thirty-seven percent of Catholics attend Mass on any given weekend in the Diocese of New Ulm. More and more, the practice of the faith is being marginalized by the increased secularization of the culture.

It is in the context of the Year of Faith that we unveil this new pastoral plan, ready to face the challenges of the future. As the Holy Father reminds us, “There is a need to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ” (*Porta Fidei*, no. 2). “We must rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the Word of God, faithfully handed down by the Church, and on the bread of life [the Eucharist], offered as sustenance for his disciples” (no. 3).

The theology of this pastoral plan is based on the documents of the Second Vatican Council. The Council taught that Catholics are united to Christ through Baptism and together with Christ and his Church, they are called to live his life within the Church and to show forth the loving face of Christ to the world. In other words, they are called to “be Christ” for others.

About the baptized person’s identification with Christ, the *Catechism* teaches: “Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ” (CCC, no. 1272). Further, St. Augustine wrote about baptized Christians saying: “Let us rejoice, therefore, and give thanks to God: Not only have we become Christians, but we have become Christ Himself” (*In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus*, tr. 21, 8).

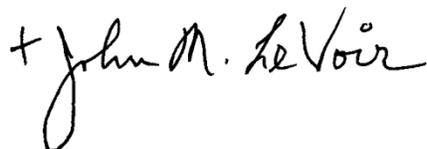
The Christian faithful’s identification with Christ by Baptism should express itself by their participation in the mission of Christ, both within the Church and in the world. This expression is accomplished by participating in the triple offices of Christ: priest, prophet, and king. This plan is based on what it meant for Christ to be priest, prophet, and king; and what it means for the Catholic laity, together with their priests, to imitate Christ’s triple offices.

This theology of the Church clarifies the identity and proper activity, or mission, of the diocesan staff and the organizations and activities of the parishes of the diocese. In some manner, all that happens on the diocesan level and in the parishes should be an expression of the priestly, prophetic, and kingly offices of Christ and the Church.

It is the hope that as we implement this pastoral plan, we will continue our journey of faith refreshed by a rediscovery of the riches of Vatican II and with a heart deeply converted to Christ so as to show forth the loving face of Christ to all. “It is the love of Christ that fills our hearts and impels us to evangelize. Today as in the past, he [Jesus] sends us through the highways of the world to proclaim his Gospel to all the peoples of the earth (cf. Mt 28:19)” (*Porta Fidei*, no. 7). All of this will happen as we “rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the Word of God, faithfully handed down by the Church, and on the bread of life [the Eucharist], offered as sustenance for his disciples (cf. Jn 6:51)” (no. 3).

As we renew our commitment to Christ and his Church in this pastoral plan, we ask the intercession of Our Lady of New Ulm. Under her maternal care and watchful eye, may we journey safely through this life and come to enjoy in eternity “what eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2:9).

Cordially yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ John M. LeVoir". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend John M. LeVoir
Bishop of New Ulm

SYNOPSIS OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. **Imitation of Christ** – All Christians in the Diocese of New Ulm are called to imitate Christ in his triple offices of priest, prophet, and king. By virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they are configured to Christ and participate in carrying out his sanctifying mission in the world. By virtue of their ordination, priests are enabled to act as representatives of Christ, Head of the Church, and thus are conformed to Christ as priest, prophet, and king in a new way. These different ways of imitating Christ are important, for they help us understand the differences between priests and other members of the faithful.
2. **Area Faith Community** – Introduced in the *Third Plan for Parishes*, the area faith community is the primary functional and consultative organization by which pastoral care is carried out in its constituent parishes. An AFC is a group of two or more parishes located in the same geographical area. Large and small, all parishes benefit from working together in an AFC, providing comprehensive pastoral care for their parishioners. The *Fourth Plan* renews the diocesan emphasis on AFCs, seeking increased collaboration and cooperation among constituent parishes.
3. **A Single Pastor in Each AFC** – Emphasizing the indispensable role of the ordained minister in building up and overseeing the Church, the *Fourth Plan* takes the area faith community model a step further. It establishes that as soon as it becomes practical, a single priest should be the pastor of each parish in an AFC. Like a business with a single CEO or a school system with a single superintendent, AFCs need an ultimate decision-maker to oversee the entire organization and to ensure that things get done for the benefit of the faithful.
4. **Pastoral Administrators** – A pastoral administrator is a religious or lay person who is responsible for the day-to-day pastoral ministry in a parish. This person is supervised by a priest, who has the rights and responsibilities of a pastor. As the diocese moves toward having a single pastor in each AFC, pastoral administrators will come under the direction of these priests. At the same time, current pastoral administrators are encouraged to discern whether their talents and abilities might be best utilized as a pastoral associate in the service of multiple parishes in the AFC.
5. **Parishes and Church Buildings** – A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a diocese. Each parish has specific territorial boundaries, although Catholics outside this area can register and become members. A church building, by contrast, is a sacred place designated for divine worship of the faithful. For the good of souls, churches are entrusted to parishes for the exercise of divine worship. Parishes can have more than one church building, but only one primary church, which is called the “parish church.”
6. **Provisional Character** – As compared to the *Third Plan*, the *Fourth Plan* will be more provisional in nature – which means that it will be more flexible and adaptable. Instead of stating that specific parishes will become oratories or close, the *Fourth Plan* will present a number of options for parishes and church buildings to accommodate a shifting and slowly declining Catholic population and a reduced number of priests. Options for parishes may include a reduction in the number of its Masses on a weekend, Mass only every other weekend, or an eventual merger with another parish. Options for church buildings might include eventual closure, due to the inability of the parish to support it financially. The *Fourth Plan* will encourage pastoral leaders, parishioners, and diocesan personnel to participate in ongoing dialogue to determine the best options for parishes and church buildings within the AFC.

PREVIOUS PLANS FOR PARISHES IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

A. First Plan for Parishes, 1988-1995

The first *Diocesan Plan for Parishes* was approved by Bishop Raymond A. Lucker in September 1988 and published in *The Prairie Catholic* in October of that year (pp. 6-10). Highlights include:

- **Task Force on Parishes** – The *Plan* was the work of the Task Force on Parishes, “a group of dedicated people representing the Priests’ Council, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Sisters’ Council, pastoral administrators, Council of Catholic Women, Long Range Planning Committee, Personnel Committee, Priests’ Personnel Board, and diocesan staff.” The Task Force evolved into the current Committee on Parishes.
- **Extensive Consultation** – The Task Force engaged in a two-year consultative process with every interested group in the diocese, including priests and pastoral administrators; diocesan and parish staff; diocesan, regional, and parish council members; and the faithful. The *Plan* reports that they “listened to the voices of virtually every parish in the diocese.”
- **Profound Demographic Changes** – The *Plan* addressed a number of changes that were deeply affecting the diocese: “population shifts, the decline of some rural communities, the decreasing number of priests and religious available for parish and school ministries, and the remarkable growth in the participation of the laity in the life and mission of the Church.”
- **Pastoral Administrators** – The *Plan* called for a greater use of pastoral administrators to respond to the declining number of priests available for ministry. This would enable “some parishes to continue with resident pastoral leadership” in the absence of a priest.
- **Staffing Levels** – According to the *Plan*, “Every parish (whether a single or in an area or cluster) needs to have the equivalent of one full-time staff person (ordained or non-ordained). If a parish is not able to support a full-time parish worker (a pastor, a pastoral administrator, or a parish staff person), it needs to think seriously about consolidation.”
- **Number of Parishes and “Consolidation”** – The *Plan* concluded that “there are too many parishes within our diocese – ninety-three parishes and only 70,000 Catholics.” To address the situation, the *Plan* called on several parishes to “consolidate,” which it described as “a process of merging two or more parishes into new parish corporations.” In the implementation of the *Plan*, eight parishes were amalgamated into other parishes: those in Barry, Bechyn, Clarkfield, Holloway, Middle Lake, Raymond, St. Peter (Immaculate Conception), and Swan Lake. Two additional parishes in Silver Lake were consolidated into a new parish, Holy Family.
- **Clustering of Parishes** – Most of the parishes of the diocese were called upon to cluster (or to continue to cluster), meaning “to work cooperatively with a neighboring parish or parishes.” It suggested several ways in which this cooperation could take place: “scheduling Masses; celebrating Holy Week, Confirmation, and other liturgies; operating a Catholic school; conducting religious education classes; [and] collaborating in sacramental preparation programs [and] in adult education, youth ministry, charity, and social concerns.” Only nine parishes in the diocese were to remain unaffected by a merger or clustering as a result of the *Plan*.

B. Second Plan for Parishes, 1995-2000

The second *Diocesan Plan for Parishes* was promulgated by Bishop Lucker in April 1995 and published in *The Prairie Catholic* in June of that year (pp. 7-10). Highlights include:

- **Extensive Consultation** – Beginning in 1992, the Committee on Parishes engaged in an in-depth two-and-a-half-year period of consultation in preparation for the *Plan*. During the process, every parish was consulted through parish council meetings and general parish meetings. Pastoral leaders were again heard at parish, regional, and diocesan meetings.
- **Parish Classifications** – The Committee on Parishes “felt that it would be helpful to classify parishes according to specific criteria (for example, size, staff needs, revenues, and the ability of a parish to meet the needs for ministry).” Three classifications were outlined: parish, small parish, and mission. The mission was described as having fewer than 200 members, revenues below \$40,000, and a pastoral council and subcommittees which were to be shared with another parish. Two parishes were given this designation: Jessenland and Regal.
- **Hispanic Ministry** – The *Plan* was the first to discuss, however briefly, what was soon to become a key component of diocesan pastoral ministry. Hispanic Ministry and/or migrant ministry sites were identified at parishes in Bird Island, Clara City, Glencoe, Litchfield, Marshall, Olivia, Renville, Sleepy Eye, and Willmar.
- **Slightly Fewer Parishes** – Three parishes were to be merged with neighboring parishes under the *Plan*. Implementation saw two parishes being assimilated by others: Vesta and Eden Valley.
- **Reduction in Regions** – The *Plan* called for reducing the number of regions in the diocese from seven to six; Region 1 was to combine with Region 7 to form a new Region 1 in the fall of 1995.
- **Parish Self-Study** – Annual reports to the diocese from parishes containing data on such things as parish size, households, sacramental participation, and finances were used for the first time in the preparation of the *Plan*.

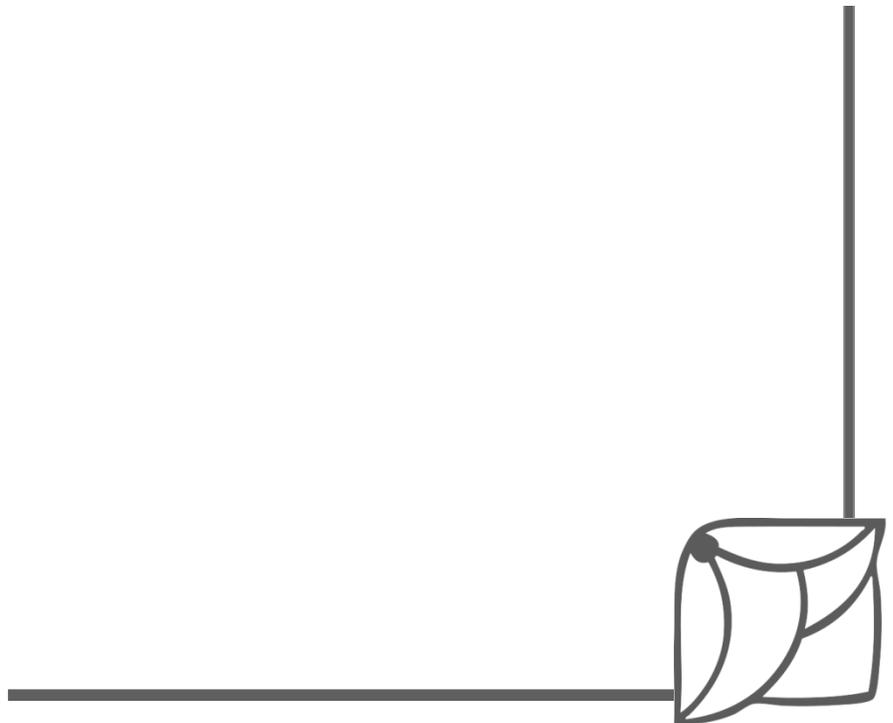
C. Third Plan for Parishes, 2003-2008

The third *Diocesan Plan for Parishes* was approved by Bishop John C. Nienstedt in November 2003. A summary was published in *The Prairie Catholic* that same month as a special pull-out section. A couple of highlights are:

- **Area Faith Community** – More than a cluster, this new way of organizing parishes was to be characterized by the increased collaboration of its constituents. The *Plan* called for all pastoral ministries to be carried out under the auspices of a single Area Pastoral Council and associated subcommittees. Individual parishes were to retain only their finance councils, to be called Administrative Councils. Of the sixteen stand-alone parishes from the second *Plan*, only two were to remain ungrouped in AFCs or quasi-AFCs.
- **Parish Classifications** – The mission category from the second *Plan* was dropped, and a new category, the oratory, was adopted. Of the ten parishes whose churches were slated to receive this status, four had it implemented: Danvers, Clements, Jessenland, and Sanborn. Two others opted to be merged: Regal and Taunton.

SECTION I

Foundational Principles



CHAPTER 1. THE IDENTITY AND MISSION OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

The Catholic clergy and laity of the Diocese of New Ulm are called to be the loving face of Christ in the diocese and beyond. In other words, they are called to “be Christ” for others. This identification with Christ comes from Baptism for the laity, and Baptism and Ordination for the clergy. Each of these sacraments gives rise to a different way of imitating Christ in his triple offices of priest, prophet, and king.

A. Configured to Christ

About the baptized person’s identification with Christ, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ” (CCC, no. 1272). Further, St. Augustine wrote about baptized Christians, saying: “Let us rejoice, therefore, and give thanks to God: Not only have we become Christians, but we have become Christ himself” (St. Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus*, tr. 21, 8).

The Christian faithful’s identification with Christ by Baptism should express itself by the faithful’s participation in the mission of Christ. This is accomplished by participating in the threefold office of Christ: prophet, priest, and king.

Clergy receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders in addition to Baptism. “This sacrament [Holy Orders] configures the recipient to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit, so that he may serve as Christ’s instrument for his Church. By ordination, one is enabled to act as a representative of Christ, Head of the Church, in his triple office of priest, prophet, and king” (CCC, no. 1581).

This chapter outlines what it meant for Christ to be prophet, priest, and king, and what it means for Catholics, shepherded by the priests, to imitate Christ’s triple offices. (For an expanded treatment of this topic, see Richard M. Hogan and John M. LeVoir, *Faith for Today: Pope John Paul II’s Catechetical Teachings*, pp. 94-148.) In some manner, all that happens on the diocesan level and in parishes should be an expression of the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ and the Church.

B. Christ’s Triple Offices

Jesus is God the Son, who has taken on our human nature, without ceasing to be God.

1. Jesus Christ as Prophet

In his human prophetic office, Christ teaches us truth, that is, he reveals God, who is Truth. Since we are images of God, we do not know ourselves unless we know God. Christ, by revealing God (Truth), reveals the truth about us, that is, he reveals who we are.

2. Jesus Christ as Priest

As images of God, we not only need to know who God is, we also need to know how God acts. Unless we know how God acts, we will not know how we should act as images of God. By loving us, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ reveals to us how God acts and how we should act. He reveals love to us.

Love is the only way for us. We cannot live without love. In loving the way God loves, Christ shows us how we should love God and others.

The fullness of love (the giving of oneself to others for their true good) was revealed in the Incarnation and in the Death and Resurrection of Christ (the Paschal Mystery). “This revelation [of love] reaches its definitive fullness in the gift of love which the Word of God makes to humanity in assuming a human nature, and in the sacrifice which Jesus Christ makes of himself on the Cross for his bride, the Church” (*On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, no. 13).

3. Jesus Christ as King

Christ revealed God not only through his offices of prophet and priest, but also through his kingly office. Christ’s kingly office was manifested in his bodily self-discipline. Since it was precisely in and through his physical body that Christ revealed God, kingly self-rule over his body was absolutely essential to Our Lord’s mission. Without this kingly self-rule, Christ’s human body could not have expressed truth (known by the intellect) or love (chosen by the will).

Just think of the self-discipline that it took for Christ to die on the cross. There were many who were encouraging him to come down from the cross. But Jesus remained there until the bitter end.

Further, in his kingly office, Christ revealed that we are called to love others by using things for their benefit. As the Creator, God cares for the universe. Since God created every *thing* in the world *for* us, God exercises a divine dominion over the things of the earth for our sake. Through his human kingly office, Christ governs created things on behalf of people. In this way, he reveals God’s dominion over the things of the earth.

Examples of Christ using things for others would be the wedding feast at Cana (changing water into wine), the multiplication of the loaves and fish to feed thousands, the washing of the Apostles’ feet at the Last Supper, and the changing of bread and wine into his body and blood.

C. The Acts of the Church

1. The Prophetic Office of the Church

Christ exercised his prophetic office by revealing Truth, that is, by revealing God to us. Of course, in revealing God, Christ also revealed who we are. As images of God, we do not know ourselves unless we know God. In revealing God by the teaching of the Truth through his prophetic office, Christ taught us who we are.

The Church exercises the prophetic office of Christ. The prophetic office exists among the members of the Church in two ways: hierarchical and baptismal. In classical terminology, the pope and the bishops in union with him are the Magisterium or teaching authority of the Church. This teaching authority, the hierarchical prophetic office, activates the baptismal prophetic office. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, “Bishops, teaching in communion with the Roman Pontiff, are to be respected by all as witnesses to divine and Catholic truth. In matters of faith and morals, the bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 25).

The prophetic office of the parishes: Together, in their respective roles, the priests and the parishioners of the parishes of the Diocese of New Ulm carry out the prophetic office of the Church by living and handing on the Truth revealed by Jesus Christ. Included in this prophetic mission of the parishes would be Catholic schools, religious education and faith formation programs, and all other programs that hand on

the teaching of the Gospel in accord with the Magisterium of the Church. In this way, the parishes reveal our proper identity as images of God. In other words, they reveal who we are.

2. The Priestly Office of the Church

Christ exercised his priesthood by revealing love to us, that is, by revealing to us how God acts. Christ showed us God's love in his every word and action. Christ expressed God's love primarily in and through his sacrifice on the cross. Christ gave himself totally on the cross for our salvation, according to the will of the Father. On the cross, Christ showed us how to love God and others.

First and foremost, the Church manifests the love of God through the re-presentation of the sacrifice of the cross in the Eucharist. His sacrifice is made present under the appearances of bread and wine. All the other sacraments of the Church also reveal God's love. They are expressions of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Through the exercise of the priesthood of the Church, we come to know how we should act, that is, that we are to love God and others.

As mentioned above, the priestly office of Christ in the Church is shared in the baptismal manner by all members of the Church. It is shared in a hierarchical manner by those who are ordained as priests. The baptismal priestly office is expressed in many different ways, for example, seeking the sacraments and praying. The hierarchical priestly office is expressed in the celebration of the sacraments.

The priestly office of the parishes: Together, in their respective roles, the priests and the parishioners of the Diocese of New Ulm carry out the priestly office of the Church by celebrating the sacraments of the Church, especially the Holy Eucharist. Through the Eucharist, Christ gives the faithful a special way of sharing in his priestly function of offering spiritual worship for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. As the Council Fathers explain,

The laity, dedicated to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and wonderfully prepared so that ever more abundant fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne – all these become “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pt 2:5). Together with the offering of the Lord's body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God. (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 25)

By participating in the holy sacrifice of the Mass and the other sacraments, the faithful reveal their proper activity, which is to love God and to love others. Parish organizations involved in the priestly office of the Church would be those involved in the preparation and celebration of the liturgy of the Church. This would include the clergy, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, servers, readers, musicians, singers, adorers of the Eucharist, ushers, and so forth.

3. The Kingly Office of the Church

Christ exercised his kingly office by governing or ruling himself. Christ's kingly self-rule enabled him to reveal truth through his prophetic office and to reveal love through his priestly office. Further, Christ's kingly office enabled him to express God's love in and through his body. Christ's kingly office revealed that we are called to love God totally (body and soul) and to love others by using things for their benefit.

The laity, by virtue of their membership in the royal priesthood of the baptized, participates in Christ's kingly office by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 31). As Pope John Paul II explains, this means two things:

Because the lay faithful belong to Christ, Lord and King of the Universe, they share in his kingly mission and are called by him to spread that Kingdom in history. They exercise their kingship as Christians, above all in the spiritual combat in which they seek to overcome in themselves the kingdom of sin (cf. Rom 6:12), and then to make a gift of themselves so as to serve, in justice and in charity, Jesus, who is himself present in all his brothers and sisters, above all in the very least (cf. Mt 25:40). (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 14 §7)

The universal Church also continues the Lord's kingly self-rule by maintaining an internal order. This internal order of the Church enables the Church to reveal truth and love. In addition, through this internal order, the Church expresses God's love in a bodily way. The primary example of the internal ordering of the Church is the *Code of Canon Law*.

The Church also fulfills the second aspect of Christ's kingly office: using things for the sake of people. At almost every level of the Church's structure, there are endeavors to provide the necessities of life for all human beings. There are numerous offices administered by the Church that attempt to provide food, clothing, and shelter for all people in need, locally and throughout the world.

The kingly office of the parishes: Together, in their respective roles, the priests and the parishioners of the Diocese of New Ulm carry out the kingly office of the Church by living the discipline of the Church as set forth in Church law. This would include the parish corporate organization under the authority of the bishop. Examples of parish organizations involved here would be parish councils, finance committees, parish staff, and so forth.

The parishes also carry out the kingly office of the Church through works of charity, that is, by using things for the benefit of persons. This would include many of the parish charitable activities, for example, the Council of Catholic Women's charitable works, food shelves, clothing drives, disaster relief collections, and so forth.

CHAPTER 2. THE SINGLE PASTOR MODEL OF THE AREA FAITH COMMUNITY

The Third Plan for Parishes proposed the area faith community as the model for pastoral ministry in the Diocese of New Ulm. Emphasizing the indispensable role of the ordained minister in building up and overseeing the Church, the Fourth Plan takes this model a step further. It establishes that a single priest should be the pastor of each parish in an AFC.

A. The Royal Priesthood of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the eternal high priest, “has made of the Church ‘a kingdom, priests for his God and Father’” (CCC, no. 1546, quoting Rev 1:6). In other words, he transmits his own priesthood to his faithful people. He does this so that by leading holy lives, we can become more and more like him and ultimately be saved. Through regeneration in Baptism and the anointing of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, the members of his Church are endowed with a common dignity derived from their rebirth in Christ and receive a common vocation to perfection (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 10; *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Nonordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, Theological Principles, no. 1).

Though they are grounded in the one priesthood of Christ, the royal priesthood of the baptized and the ministerial priesthood of the clergy are specifically different. By virtue of his sacred power received at ordination, the priest sanctifies, teaches, and governs the priestly people. He represents Christ as Head of the Church to them. He receives a special calling to serve the People of God, that is, to do those things that will make them holy.

B. Participation of the Faithful in the Life of the Church

Activated by the ministerial priesthood, the baptized engage in a host of complementary activities to build up the life of the Church. Each in their own way imitates Christ as priest, prophet, and king:

1. *Priest:* As the priest makes present the Eucharistic sacrifice, so too do all the faithful join in offering the Eucharist by virtue of their royal priesthood (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 10). In this way, all of the faithful participate as members of the liturgical assembly. Some of the faithful participate as lectors, altar servers, musicians, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, ushers, and greeters.
2. *Prophet:* Whereas the pastor is the chief catechist in his parish, the faithful exercise their prophetic office by evangelizing others and by the witness of their lives. Some are also called to spread the Word as Catholic school teachers and instructors of religious education.
3. *King:* The governing office of the priest is most evident in his ordering of the affairs of the Church for the good of all her members, while that of the faithful is revealed in their ordering of the world’s temporal affairs for the benefit of others. Here again, some are called to serve the Church as, for example, members of pastoral councils or finance councils. Others participate in the Church’s outreach to the poor, the sick and dying, the elderly, the immigrant, and the unborn.

In every age, the ministers of the Church collaborate with certain members of their faithful people, who, by reason of their faith, moral character, expertise and/or dedication, are particularly suited to responding to the Church’s needs. In light of the recent shortage of priests in some parts of the world, questions have

arisen with regard to how far this collaboration can go. What ecclesiastical functions and tasks can religious and lay people do, and which ones are limited to priests?

Following the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II said that “when necessity and expediency in the Church require it, the pastors, according to established norms from universal law, can entrust to the lay faithful certain offices and roles that are connected to their pastoral ministry but do not require the character of orders” (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 23; *Instruction*, Theological Principles, no. 4).

Religious and lay faithful collaborate directly in carrying out the ministry of priests in a variety of ways. For example, if priests are lacking and the need of the Church requires it, they may exercise the ministry of the word or serve as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at Mass (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 230 §3). However, they may not preach the homily or pronounce the prayers of the liturgy reserved for priests (*Instruction*, Practical Provisions, Articles 3, 6, and 8). Another example is the pastoral administrator. These people, who are not themselves priests, exercise pastoral care in a parish in the absence of a priest (c. 517 §2). Their participation in governing the parish is dependent upon a priest who, because he has the powers and faculties of a pastor, is able to direct that pastoral care (*Instruction*, Practical Provisions, Article 4).

By reason of their baptismal call, religious and lay faithful participate in the life of the Church by carrying out various functions and tasks. As circumstances require, they may even take on certain roles and offices connected with the ministerial priesthood, but do not require ordination. In these two ways, they commit their time and talent within the Church to foster the salvation of souls. In a third way, too, the faithful are called to build up the Church. This is through the contribution of their treasure. Canon law speaks of the duty of the Christian faithful “to assist with the needs of the Church so that the Church has what is necessary for divine worship, for the works of the apostolate and of charity, and for the decent support of ministers” (c. 222 §1). This can be done in various ways: regular offertory contributions, participation in parish and diocesan capital campaigns, funding Church-related endowments, and/or donating a portion of one’s estate in a will.

C. The Care of Souls in the Diocese of New Ulm

Pastoral planning examines the care of souls in parishes both from the perspective of the ministerial priesthood and from the perspective of the royal priesthood of the baptized. It proposes solutions that take both into account. Regarding the clergy, it seeks to determine how the diocese can provide a pastor for each of its parishes. Regarding the faithful, it seeks to determine whether there are sufficient numbers of parishioners in each parish to fill the various roles and functions properly entrusted to them for a vibrant faith community, and whether they have sufficient financial resources to provide for the ongoing needs of their parish.

Smaller parishes, whose numbers might be decreasing due to economic factors, shifting demographics, or a decline in the number of children, raise a particular challenge for pastoral planning. The strong desire to see them continue to function as parishes is challenged by the decreasing number of members to support them. To address this difficulty, the *Third Plan for Parishes* introduced the area faith community model of parish organization. The AFC was conceived to provide a complete set of pastoral services to those parishes that did not have the resources to provide them for themselves, while permitting them to retain their specific identity and maintain control over their finances. Through an area pastoral council and its several subcommittees, the AFC would be able to provide the spiritual care for the faithful in a comprehensive way.

By pooling their funds and concentrating their energies, pastoral leaders, employees, and volunteers of small parishes can now do through the AFC what they could not do in their own individual parishes. Yet,

in order to realize the full benefits of the AFC, all of its parish members must participate fully. The reason is simple. When some people in a group want to pursue a pastoral objective and others do not, the success of the project is dependent primarily, if not exclusively, on those who are committed to the goal. When the goal is such that everyone's commitment is necessary, it is jeopardized when it fails to garner the support of any member.

D. A Single Pastor for a Single Area Faith Community

The AFC is comprehensive in its approach to pastoral care in an area. Not surprisingly, the resolutions to many of the issues it proposes demand the active support of all its leaders to be truly effective. For example, how should we coordinate our weekend Mass times for the benefit of the entire area? Which prospective area employees should be hired for the good of all parishes? What kind of benefits package should we offer our employees? How much financial support should we lend to our school(s)? How should the curriculum in our combined religious education program be revised?

It is important to realize that this is not fundamentally a problem of some pastoral leaders making better decisions than others – although this can happen. By virtue of their varying backgrounds and experience, pastoral leaders may take different approaches and come up with different solutions to the same problem. Correspondingly, parishes have different histories, different ways of doing things, and parishioners with different talents and abilities. This leads to different solutions being proposed for the same problem. In many of these situations, there may not be a “right” answer. What is important is that a single decision be made for the good of all. Like a business with a single CEO or a school system with a single superintendent, AFCs need an ultimate decision-maker to oversee the entire organization and to ensure that things get done for the benefit of the faithful.

The single pastor model of the AFC does not imply that each AFC will have only one priest. On the contrary, many AFCs will continue to have several priests: a pastor, and one or more parochial vicars. Parochial vicars are appointed by the diocesan bishop and share with the pastor the threefold ministry of teaching, sanctifying, and governing in the parish (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 545 §1). They exercise these offices under the authority of the pastor. In practice, these men are (1) senior priests who no longer desire the responsibilities of a pastor, (2) recently ordained priests gaining pastoral experience with an eye toward becoming a pastor, or (3) priests who, by reason of preference or current circumstance, are better suited to carrying out their ministry under the direction of another priest.

The single pastor model of the AFC also does not imply that every AFC will have a single pastor as soon as this pastoral plan is approved. As of July 2012, almost half of the AFCs in the Diocese of New Ulm conform to this pattern. The ones that do not may have various obstacles to overcome – such as the lived histories of parishes and their relative sizes – in realizing this goal. Nonetheless, pastoral leaders in these areas are called upon to envision how a single pastor would work in their areas and to do their best to prepare their parishes for this eventual arrangement.

Pastoral administrators, too, will continue to play an important role in the AFC with a single pastor. This role will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3. THE ROLE OF PASTORAL ADMINISTRATORS

In the Diocese of New Ulm, a pastoral administrator is a religious or lay person who is responsible for pastoral ministry in a parish on a day-to-day basis. This person is supervised by a priest, who has the rights and responsibilities of a pastor. As the diocese moves toward having a single pastor of each parish in an AFC, pastoral administrators in these AFCs will come under the direction of these priests.

A. Delegation of Ecclesiastical Roles to the Laity

By virtue of their specific vocation, the lay faithful are called to transform the secular world in all its activities, places, and circumstances. They are called to be witnesses and instruments of Christ, extending his love to every facet of human existence. In addition, certain lay men and women are called to a more direct form of cooperation with the ministers of Christ's Church. They receive from the clergy certain ecclesiastical functions to be performed for a spiritual purpose (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 33). We have already mentioned a number of these roles above (see The Single Pastor Model, Part B).

The desire of both religious and laity to participate in the life of the Church traces its origin to the nature of the Church and her mission of evangelization: "The Holy Spirit continues to renew the youth of the Church and . . . he has inspired new aspirations towards holiness and the participation of so many lay faithful. This is witnessed, among other ways, in the new manner of active collaboration among priests, religious, and the lay faithful; the active participation in the Liturgy, in the proclamation of the Word of God, and catechesis; the multiplicity of services and tasks entrusted to the lay faithful and fulfilled by them" (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 2).

B. Pastoral Administrators in the Diocese of New Ulm

Over the past thirty years, women religious, a deacon, and lay faithful have served in the Diocese of New Ulm as pastoral administrators by participating in the pastoral care of parishes without a pastor. These small parishes and the diocese as a whole have greatly benefited from their service. They have planned liturgies and prayer services, visited the sick and homebound, directed catechesis, managed employees, collaborated with parish leaders on pastoral councils and finance councils, and supervised the upkeep of parish buildings. These are just some of the important tasks delegated to them and carried out with love and enthusiasm.

The Church's *Code of Canon Law* makes provision for pastoral administrators in situations where a shortage of priests makes it impractical for a priest to direct the daily operations of a parish:

If, because of a lack of priests, the diocesan bishop has decided that participation in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish is to be entrusted to a deacon, to another person who is not a priest, or to a community of persons, he is to appoint some priest who, provided with the powers and faculties of a pastor, is to direct the pastoral care. (c. 517 §2)

Only the diocesan bishop can appoint a pastoral administrator to a parish. If he does so, he must also appoint a priest to direct and oversee the pastoral care of the parish. Through most of their thirty-year history in the diocese, pastoral administrators have received direction from a single priest serving as the supervisor of pastoral administrators. The position involves interviewing candidates for open positions, offering initial and ongoing training, and conducting monthly meetings of pastoral administrators.

C. Clarification of Canon 517 §2

A 1997 instruction clarifying the correct interpretation of this canon was authored by the heads of eight Vatican offices and approved by Pope John Paul II. It emphasizes that the situation that requires a pastoral administrator must truly be exceptional. Other possibilities, such as assigning several parishes to a single pastor or availing of the services of a retired priest, should be explored first. The instruction also points out that the “participation in the exercise of pastoral care” is not equivalent to governing a parish. That office must belong to a priest in virtue of his ordination (*Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Nonordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, Practical Provisions, Article 4 §1b).

The work properly carried out by pastoral administrators does not require Holy Orders, yet is closely tied to it. An office exercised due to an absence of priests “takes its legitimacy formally and immediately from the official deputation given by the pastors, as well as from its concrete exercise under the guidance of ecclesiastical authority” (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 23). The continuing guidance is as important as the original delegation of authority. While monthly meetings with a supervisor-priest certainly provide some guidance, a priest who provides sacramental ministry for the parish of a pastoral administrator can provide much more. Such a priest knows the parishioners of the parish. By virtue of his relationship with them, he is better able to address the issues and challenges that arise. Accordingly, it is better that a pastoral administrator receive oversight from a priest involved in the parish than from some other priest in the diocese.

D. Unity of the Priest’s Triple Offices

This preference is also evident by considering the unity of a priest’s charisms. His three offices of teaching, sanctifying, and governing form a single indivisible unity founded on the singular, indivisible priesthood of Christ. In the exercise of each of these functions, he represents Christ as Head of the Church in a different way. Each way is related to and complements the others.

For example, as celebrant of the Mass, the priest as sanctifier demonstrates Christ’s love for us. This occurs especially at the consecration, where the bread and wine become Christ’s body and blood. Christ’s supreme sacrifice, in turn, elicits our love for him. It also elicits our love for others, insofar as we see Christ in them. In loving Christ, we want to find out more about him. Accordingly, we depend on the priest for the authoritative preaching of the Word of God. Receiving the Word of God is fostered and strengthened through proper catechesis. Our love for Christ is further strengthened through acts of charity. Religious education programs and outreach programs require that we use the things of this earth for the benefit of others. Through the sacred power of Christ, which is received at ordination, the priest’s governance of these activities directs them to our spiritual good.

The interdependencies of the activities associated with the three offices of the ministerial priesthood give us insight into why they are conferred together at ordination. The fact that they are bestowed together gives us good reason to think that they should be exercised together as well. The same priest who is charged with the sanctifying role in a parish should also be responsible for teaching and governing. Under this *Fourth Plan*, this is the priest assigned to lead all the parishes in a single area faith community as the pastor.

E. Transition of Pastoral Administrators to the New Model

As the single-pastor approach advances in area faith communities, pastoral administrators, in conversation with the diocese and their pastors, might consider whether they might make their services available to

more than one parish within the AFC. The talents, skills, and dedication that they have so successfully placed at the service of one parish could perhaps be expanded to others. While the move would lead to a different title (for example, area pastoral associate), the benefits to other parishes could easily eclipse those enjoyed by their current parish alone.

At the same time, pastoral administrators who choose not to alter their roles within the area faith community will not be asked to give up their positions. The bishop will allow them to complete their terms under the direction of the supervisor of pastoral administrators. Once their term has been completed, they are welcome to seek reappointment, if they have not already served ten years in their position, or to find another leadership position in the diocese.

Nothing in this *Plan for Parishes* precludes the bishop from exercising his authority to appoint a new pastoral administrator to replace a former one, or even to establish a new pastoral administrator position at a parish that previously did not have one. He must simply be careful to observe the requirements of canon law and its clarification by the 1997 Vatican instruction. Following the instruction, these situations must be exceptional. When they occur, the pastoral administrator will receive supervision from a pastor of another parish within the area faith community.

CHAPTER 4. PERMANENT DIACONATE IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

Flowing from reflections on the sacramental nature of the Church, the Second Vatican Council called for a renewal of the Order of Deacons. Deacons, along with priests, are complementary yet subordinate collaborators in the apostolic ministry of bishops as heirs to the apostles. The deacon's particular charism, received at ordination, is to imitate Christ the Servant. With gratitude to God and with much rejoicing, the Diocese of New Ulm welcomed eleven new permanent deacons into service of the local Church in April 2012, to add to the three already working in the diocese.

A. The Identity and Mission of the Deacon

The ministerial office of deacon traces its origins to the decision of the Apostles to appoint ministers to attend to the needs of the Greek-speaking widows of the early Church at Jerusalem:

At that time, as the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the Apostles, who prayed and laid hands on them. (Acts 6:1-6)

The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* comments that the Apostles' action was a practical response to Jesus' command to them at the Last Supper. As head and shepherd of the Christian faithful, he modeled the service he wanted his disciples to extend to others by washing their feet (see Jn 13:1-15). In this act of love, Christ the Servant gave them a powerful example of the *diakonia*, or service, they were to render to one another (*National Directory*, no. 38).

Through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the deacons are marked "with an imprint ('character') which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the 'deacon' or servant of all" (CCC, no. 1570). This outpouring of the Holy Spirit makes the deacon a sacred minister and a member of the hierarchy with a distinct identity. He is neither a lay person nor a priest. Rather, he is a cleric ordained to *diakonia*, or service to God's people in communion with the bishop and the priests of his diocese (*National Directory*, no. 29).

B. The Deacon as Priest, Prophet, and King

As a visible sign of Christ the Servant among the People of God, the deacon carries out Christ's threefold mission of priest, prophet, and king in his own unique way. This is most evident at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, where the deacon's role emphasizes the intimate connection between sharing at the Lord's Eucharistic table and responding to the needs of all God's children (*National Directory*, no. 33). The *National Directory* describes the actions of the deacon at Mass in some detail:

During the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy, the deacon participates in specific penitential rites as designated in the *Roman Missal*. He properly proclaims the Gospel. He may preach the homily in accord with the provisions of canon law. He voices the needs of the people in the General Intercessions, needs with which he should have a particular and personal familiarity from the circumstances of his ministry of charity. The deacon assists the presider and other ministers in accepting the offerings of the people – symbolic of his traditional role in receiving and distributing the resources of the community among those in need – and he helps to prepare the gifts for sacrifice. During the celebration he helps the faithful participate more fully, consciously, and actively in the Eucharistic sacrifice, may extend the invitation of peace, and serves as an ordinary minister of Communion. Deacons have a special responsibility for the distribution of the cup. Finally, he dismisses the community at the end of the Eucharistic liturgy. (no. 35)

It goes on to itemize several additional ways that the deacon acts as sanctifier: “Other liturgical roles for which the deacon is authorized include those of solemnly baptizing, witnessing marriages, bringing viaticum to the dying, and presiding over funerals and burials. The deacon can preside at the liturgies of the word and Communion services in the absence of a priest. He may officiate at celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours and at exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament” (*National Directory*, no. 35).

Regarding the ministry of the word, the deacon’s office is evident when the Christian people are gathered for prayer. By virtue of his ordination, he proclaims the Gospel and may preach at the Mass and in those liturgies where he is the presiding minister. Other ways that the deacon participates as evangelizer and teacher include catechetical instruction; religious formation of candidates and families preparing to receive the sacraments; leadership roles in retreats, evangelization efforts, and renewal programs; outreach to alienated Catholics; and counseling and spiritual direction to the extent he is qualified (*National Directory*, no. 31).

The deacon’s service in word and in worship naturally extends to his ministry of charity and justice. The three areas of ministry represent a unity of service: the ministry of the word leads to ministry at the altar, which by the transformation of his life results in acts of charity. As an imitator of Christ the Servant, the deacon is called to be a driving force for service, which is an essential part of the mission of the Church. He expresses the Church’s commitment to justice in addressing the injustices that arise among God’s people. Attentively concerned with the needy, he follows Christ’s example to seek out the poor wherever they may be found (*National Directory*, no. 37).

C. New Deacons for the Diocese of New Ulm

In 2007, then-Bishop John C. Nienstedt initiated a program to prepare qualified men for the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of New Ulm. Candidates accepted into the program completed a year of aspirancy, followed by four years of formation. Formation of the candidates was broad-based, addressing four fundamental aspects of development: spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, and human. A diocesan Admissions and Scrutinies Committee recommended each candidate’s acceptance into the program and monitored his progress annually.

Eleven new permanent deacons from every region of the diocese were ordained by Bishop John M. LeVoir in April 2012 and began their ministry to the faithful. A twelfth was ordained in April 2013. They joined three permanent deacons who were already working in the diocese, having been ordained in other dioceses.

How are deacons assigned to their work once they are ordained? The diocesan bishop is responsible for conferring upon the deacon his specific parish or diocesan assignment (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 157).

According to the *National Directory*, “the principal criteria for the assignment are the pastoral needs of the diocesan Church and the personal qualifications of the deacon, as these have been discerned in his previous experience and the course of his formation. The assignment also acknowledges the deacon’s family and occupational responsibilities” (no. 42).

Like priests in the Diocese of New Ulm, deacons will have the opportunity to participate in a diocesan-sponsored continuing education program. Like our women religious and pastoral administrators, they will be represented on the Diocesan Pastoral Council. As much as prudently possible, deacons working in specific parishes or area faith communities are to be members of their respective parish or Area Pastoral Councils (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 536 §1; Pope Paul VI, *General Norms for Restoring the Permanent Diaconate in the Latin Church*, no. 24).

CHAPTER 5. CONSECRATED LIFE: THOSE CALLED TO CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

In its fifty-plus year history, the Diocese of New Ulm has been richly blessed by the work of many consecrated women religious. These women have dedicated their lives to prayer and service, to build up the Kingdom of God on earth. Even now, members of some twenty different religious congregations currently live and carry out the works of their apostolates in our diocese. While the diocese continues to appreciate the outstanding contributions of these women, it looks forward to new ways in which the Holy Spirit will inspire the faithful to follow the call to Christian perfection. Among these new religious congregations is the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus, a new Public Association of the Faithful, which is the first to have a motherhouse in our diocese.

A. The Call to Consecrated Life

The consecrated life is distinguished by profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 43). These are the characteristic features of Jesus – the chaste, poor, and obedient one. Through the witness of men and women religious throughout the life of the Church, these characteristics are constantly being made manifest to the world, reminding the faithful that the mystery of the Kingdom of God is already present in their midst, even as it awaits its full realization in heaven (*Vita Consecrata*, no. 1).

One's call to the religious life builds on the grace of Baptism. Through Baptism, the Christian dies to sin and is consecrated to God the Father through Jesus Christ. However, to follow Christ more closely and to derive more fruit from this baptismal grace, religious persons seek to free themselves from those obstacles that might hinder the attainment of Christian perfection. Accordingly, they dedicate themselves to lives of chastity, poverty, and obedience. This allows them to put aside the cares of this world and to devote themselves to heavenly things. By following their Lord with an undivided heart, they are able to stir up the fervor of charity in their souls and thereby lend greater service to their brothers and sisters (see *Lumen Gentium*, nos. 44, 46).

The religious state in life is not an intermediate state between the clergy and laity. Rather, the Christian faithful are called by God from the ranks of each (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 43). Bishops, priests, and deacons enjoy membership in various religious orders, as do non-ordained men and women. Each serves the Church according to the special charism of their religious life, as well as by their participation in the ministerial priesthood and/or royal (baptismal) priesthood of Christ.

The special consecration that women and men religious receive commits them to making their own – in chastity, poverty, and obedience – a particular way of life modeled after Christ and proposed by him to his disciples (*Vita Consecrata*, no. 31). Embracing this way of life, they fulfill the threefold offices of his royal (baptismal) priesthood with greater zeal and perfection:

1. *Priest*: As Christ devoted much time to praying to his Heavenly Father, so consecrated persons are sanctified by prayer: participating in Holy Mass, adoring the Blessed Sacrament, praying the Divine Office, and so forth.
2. *Prophet*: As Christ announced the Good News of salvation, so consecrated persons spread the Gospel by the very witness of their lives and by proclaiming Christ to those who do not yet know him fully.
3. *King*: As Christ exercised kingly self-discipline in that his intellect and will governed his bodily emotions (which was revealed especially in his Passion and Death), so consecrated persons

exercise control over their passions through a committed, ordered, and stable way of life. And as Christ fed the hungry thousands and healed the sick, so too do consecrated persons respond generously to the spiritual and material needs of their fellow human beings.

B. A Strong Tradition of Service

The strong presence of women religious in the area of what is now the Diocese of New Ulm goes back well over a century. While the number of women religious working in the diocese has declined in recent years, their presence today is still impressive. The *Quinquennial Report* of the Diocese of New Ulm, submitted to Pope Benedict XVI and the Congregation of Bishops in 2011, reports that forty-seven sisters in sixteen women's religious institutes were active in the diocese at the end of 2010.

Among these institutes, sixteen sisters (or a third of the total) are members of the Mankato Province (now the Central Pacific Province) of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Eleven are Benedictine sisters from five different congregations. Another eleven are Franciscan sisters from five different congregations. Four are members of the Daughters of St. Mary of Providence. The Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary are also represented.

The *Quinquennial Report* states that in addition to these institutes of women religious, there is also one secular institute of consecrated life in the diocese. The Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, which operates the Schoenstatt on the Lake Catholic retreat center in Sleepy Eye, had eight members working in the diocese as of the end of 2010.

The sisters from all these institutes participate in the pastoral care of the faithful in several different ways, according to the *Quinquennial Report*. One very important area of involvement is education. Three congregations provide principals, teachers, and volunteers in several Catholic elementary schools. Two congregations organize adult faith formation programs in parish settings. Many congregations also have at least one sister who volunteers to teach religious education in parishes or area faith communities.

Women religious also serve the faithful in the administration of parishes. In 2010, there were four sisters from four different congregations serving as pastoral administrators. Three different congregations had a sister working as a parish minister or pastoral associate. At least four religious orders had sisters serving as parish workers, liturgists, or musicians in a parish setting.

As of 2010, two congregations were involved in health care full time. One congregation runs a nursing home, and another runs a nursing home and a hospital. One religious community has a sister working as a counselor, spiritual director, and adoption representative for Catholic Charities. Three congregations are active in providing private nursing, county nursing, hospice service, and prison ministry. Three congregations are actively involved in Hispanic ministry: One sister is the diocese's director of the Office of Hispanic Ministry, two sisters serve at the parish level, and one sister volunteers full time.

C. A New Foundation for the Diocese of New Ulm

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, faithful Catholic men and women throughout the centuries have answered the Father's call to follow Christ in a special way, to respond to the needs of the Church in their particular times and circumstances. What has been true in the past is no less true today. Answering to the Spirit's promptings a few years ago, several young women were led to seek the foundation of a new religious community in the Diocese of New Ulm – the first such foundation in the diocese. After prayer and careful

discernment, Bishop John M. LeVoir approved their request. He established the Institute of the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus as a Public Association of the Faithful on March 24, 2010.

As central to their particular charism, the Handmaids have been inspired to carry out the New Evangelization in parishes:

We, the Institute of the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus (*Ancillae Cordis Jesu*), feel called to live in imitation of Mary as handmaid, virgin, and mother in the diocesan life of the Church, carrying out the New Evangelization in parishes. As a Public Association of the Lay Faithful in the Diocese of New Ulm, with the intention of becoming a Religious Community of Diocesan Right, we vow poverty, chastity, and obedience. (*Statutes of the Handmaids of the Heart of Jesus*, no. 4)

The Handmaids see the witness of their consecrated lives as the most important aspect of their apostolic life in the diocese: “What counts most is not what religious *do*, but who they *are* as persons consecrated to the Lord” (*Statutes*, no. 29, quoting Pope John Paul II). Yet, God calls people to the consecrated life for the sake of others. In this way, consecration implies a mission, which is carried out through apostolic works. For the Handmaids, these works are both contemplative and active.

First and foremost, the Handmaids will devote themselves to prayer. According to their statutes, “our sisterhood is grounded primarily in our communal prayer and sacramental life, which includes daily Mass, regular confession, two daily Holy Hours of Eucharistic adoration, the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Rosary, spiritual reading, daily Examen, and regular times of retreat” (*Statutes*, no. 15). Their intercessory prayers confirm their diocesan mission: “Praying for the bishop, his priests, and the needs of the diocese, particularly those of the parishes we serve, ensures that our vocation is fruitful” (*Statutes*, no. 30).

Secondly, the Handmaids’ apostolic works will include serving the needs of the diocese, especially in parishes. Some of the areas of service envisioned by their statutes are “catechesis/faith formation, youth ministry, family life/marriage preparation, liturgy coordination, liturgical music, sacristy work, domestic care of churches and rectories, visitation of the sick and elderly, and education in Catholic schools.” Emphasizing that “each sister serves not as an individual but as a Handmaid,” their rule states that no fewer than two sisters should be assigned to a specific apostolate at a given time (*Statutes*, nos. 31, 32).

On the day of their founding, Mother Mary Clare, the moderator general of the Institute, professed her temporary vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience for a period of three years at a ceremony at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm. Three other women were received into the novitiate of the Handmaids at this time. Along with Mother Mary Clare, they received their religious habits and their new religious names. As of March 2013, there are six sisters in temporary vows, three novices, and two postulants that compose the community.

D. The Vocation of Consecrated Virginit

Just as the Church in our day is witnessing the founding of new religious communities, other forms of consecrated life are also experiencing a resurgence. As Pope John Paul II explains in *Vita Consecrata*,

It is a source of joy and hope to witness in our time a new flowering of *the ancient Order of Virgins*, known in Christian communities ever since apostolic times. Consecrated by the diocesan bishop, these women acquire a particular link with the Church, which they are committed to serve while remaining in the world. Either alone or in association with others, they constitute *a special eschatological image of the Heavenly Bride and of the life to come*, when the Church will at last fully live her love for Christ the Bridegroom. (no. 7, emphasis in the original)

Consecrated virgins were the first form of consecrated life in the Church. These women express the holy resolution of following Christ more closely and are consecrated by the diocesan bishop according to the approved liturgical rite. They are mystically betrothed to Christ and are dedicated to prayer and service in the Church as they live in the world (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 604 §1). Bishop LeVoir received the promises of the first virgin to consecrate herself to the Lord in the Diocese of New Ulm on October 7, 2011, at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm.

CHAPTER 6. THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN SOCIETY

The laity have their own unique way of conforming to Christ as priest, prophet, and king. Living in the ordinary circumstances of life, they hear the Word of God and act upon it. Their love for God and one another grows as they pray, participate in the Eucharist and the other sacraments, and engage in acts of service. Through the practice of the virtues, they sanctify the world from within as a leaven. They transform every aspect of secular life – from the family, to the workplace, to sports and recreation – in imitation of their Lord and Redeemer. Their work for the sanctification of the world is especially important in the social and political spheres, where they are called upon to witness to the intrinsic dignity of the human person and work for the realization of the rights of all people.

A. The Specific Vocation of the Laity

The question arises quite frequently as to the specific vocation or calling of the laity. Another way to put it would be: “How do the laity fulfill their call to become holy?”

We need to begin by asking, “Who are the laity?” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines them in this way: “The faithful who, having been incorporated into Christ through Baptism, are made part of the People of God, the Church. The laity participate in their own way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ. Laity are distinguished from clergy (who have received Holy Orders) and those in consecrated life” (CCC, Glossary). So, the laity are by far the largest group within the Church.

Vatican II speaks of the life of the laity, saying that they “live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 31).

Since the laity live in the world, they are called to become holy by their work in the world. Again, Vatican II tells us how they do that. The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* teaches: “The first and most necessary gift [of the Holy Spirit] is love, by which we love God above all things and our neighbor because of God” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 42). These are, of course, the Two Great Commandments of Love given by Christ to all of his followers (see Mt 22:36-40).

B. Accepting the Word of God

The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* also tells us how the love in the hearts of lay people brings forth fruit in the world: “Indeed, in order that love as good seed may grow and bring forth fruit in the soul, each one of the faithful must willingly hear the Word of God and accept his will, and must complete what God has begun by their own actions with the help of God’s grace” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 42).

The Word of God comes to us in the Bible and the Tradition of the Church. The laity can “hear” the Word of God through the preaching of the bishop and his priests and deacons, and by reading the Scriptures and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, for example. Their love grows and brings forth fruit when they accept what they hear and act upon it. It is the heavy responsibility of the Church’s Magisterium (the pope and the bishops in union with him) to hand on the Word of God, with the help of the Holy Spirit, from one generation to the next.

There are specific actions that lead the laity to holiness of life. “These actions consist in the use of the sacraments and in a special way the Eucharist, frequent participation in the sacred action of the liturgy,

application of oneself to prayer, self-abnegation, lively fraternal service, and the constant exercise of all the virtues” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 42).

C. Remaking the World in the Image of Christ

By living a holy life in the world, the laity can accomplish great things for Christ:

They are called there [to the ordinary circumstances of life] by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope, and charity. Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs, it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer. (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 31)

As one of the sending prayers of the Mass says, the laity are to “go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.”

As can be seen, the call of the laity is an exalted call. The laity are to work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. But this is not an easy task. Our society is becoming increasingly secularized and indifferent to the Word of God and sometimes hostile to Christianity. It is becoming more difficult to practice one’s religion without government interference, to act according to one’s conscience, and to speak openly about one’s religious convictions. Standing up for religious freedom in the secular world is the particular task of the laity. Strengthened by God’s grace, Catholic men and women will have the courage to bear witness to Christ in the public square.

D. Key Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

As the laity in the Diocese of New Ulm work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven, they need to direct their attention to several social themes that are foundational for transforming American society. The 2007 document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which was reissued in 2011, enumerates seven key themes of Catholic social teaching that provide a moral framework for decisions in public life. They are: The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable; Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; and Caring for God’s Creation (*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 44-54).

Faithful Citizenship is at pains to say that not all of these themes have equal weight. “This Catholic ethic neither treats all issues as morally equivalent nor reduces Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 40).

Faithful Citizenship is the United States bishops’ teaching document on the political responsibilities of Catholics. It states very well the principles that Catholics should use when faced with challenging moral decisions in the public square. As the document states, these themes “can provide a moral framework for decisions in public life” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 43). An understanding of each theme and a willingness to act according to the truth it expresses will do much to transform our society into a civilization of life and love. Let us look at each one briefly.

Theme 1: The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person

The right to life is the fundamental right of every human being from conception to natural death. God gives human life and desires that it be treasured. To unjustly take the life of any human being is a violation of his or her God-given right to life. “In our society, human life is especially under direct attack from abortion” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 44).

Each human life reflects God, and thus it is sacred and has an infinite dignity. Human dignity is so fundamental that “the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 44). Since the dignity of the human person is foundational, almost every major document of the Church or speech by the pope refers to human dignity.

Theme 2: Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Faithful Citizenship is very clear on the importance of the family and the need to defend marriage. “The family – based on marriage between a man and a woman – is the first and fundamental unit of society and is a sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children. It should be defended and strengthened, not redefined or undermined by permitting same-sex unions or other distortions of marriage” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 46).

In their communities, Catholics have a right and a duty to express their faith publicly, and by doing so, to contribute to the shaping of society, whether that is in economics, politics, law, or public policy. Catholics are called upon to work for the good of all – the common good – and to apply the principle of subsidiarity.

Theme 3: Rights and Responsibilities

“Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access to those things required for human decency – food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion, and family life” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 49). These are rights, but Catholics also have a responsibility to work for the realization of these rights in society.

“The right to exercise religious freedom publicly and privately by individuals and institutions, along with freedom of conscience, need to be constantly defended” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 49). Religious freedom and freedom of conscience have been seriously compromised in our country by a 2012 Health and Human Services ruling. In a letter to the bishops of the United States, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan wrote that this ruling “would force practically all employers, including many religious institutions, to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, sterilizations, and contraception. The regulations would provide no protections for our great institutions – such as Catholic charities, hospitals, and universities – or for the individual faithful in the marketplace” (Letter, February 22, 2012).

Theme 4: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Catholics are called by their faith to be always mindful of the poor and vulnerable. In fact, there should be a preferential care for them. “This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable includes all who are marginalized in our nation and beyond – unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and terminally ill, and victims of injustice and oppression” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 51). One might also add here the immigrant.

Theme 5: Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The first principle governing work is that “the economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 52). Workers develop their God-given gifts and talents by working. They also work together in the workplace, respecting one another’s dignity and producing goods and services that benefit others.

Workers have certain rights, for example, “to productive work, to decent and just wages, to adequate benefits and security in their old age, to the choice of whether to organize and join unions, to the opportunity for legal status for immigrant workers, to private property, and to economic initiative. Workers also have responsibilities – to provide a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay, to treat employers and co-workers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 52).

Theme 6: Solidarity

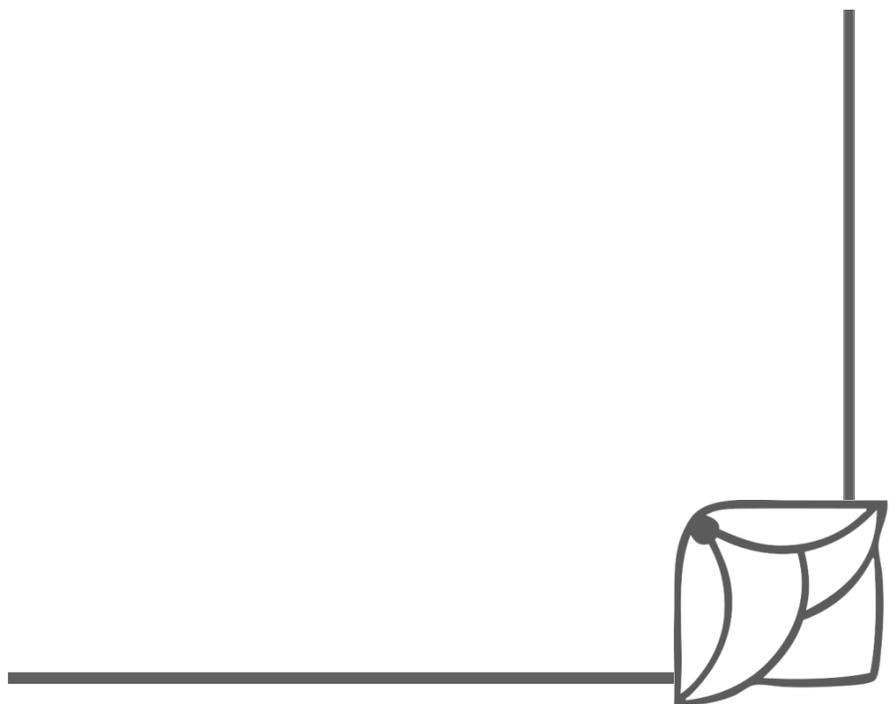
“We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 53). Solidarity means loving others and doing whatever good we can for them. Catholics are called to welcome the stranger, to be peacemakers, and to pursue justice in a world marred by terrible violence and conflict.

Theme 7: Caring for God’s Creation

Simply put, “We have a moral obligation to protect the planet on which we live – to respect God’s creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for human beings, especially children at their most vulnerable stages of development” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 54). God has given us dominion over the earth, but it is a dominion founded upon responsible stewardship. The things of the earth are given to us by God to use, not to abuse.

As stated above, these seven themes “can provide a moral framework for decisions in public life” (*Faithful Citizenship*, no. 43). When lived by the laity in the circumstances of ordinary daily life, they contribute to the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven. In this way, they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope, and charity” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 31). This is the critical and irreplaceable role of the laity in society.

SECTION II
Pastoral
Vision



CHAPTER 1. SYNOPSIS OF PASTORAL PRIORITIES

PRIESTLY PRIORITIES

1. *Formation in the Liturgical Life* – The faithful are encouraged to cultivate a deeper appreciation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, especially through a rediscovery of the Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and other magisterial documents on the liturgy issued by the Holy See following the Council.
2. *Promotion of Sacred Music* – Pastors and parish musicians are called to become familiar with the guidelines regarding sacred music as set forth by the Council Fathers and in subsequent magisterial documents on the liturgy. They should make use of the organ in liturgical worship to the extent possible. They are to incorporate use of the Latin language, especially in the ordinary parts of the Mass. They are also to make use of chant in the liturgy.
3. *Renewed Commitment to Eucharistic Adoration* – In every parish, or at least in every area faith community, pastoral leaders must set aside some time each week so that the faithful can adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.
4. *Promotion of the Sacrament of Reconciliation* – Priests are called to preach on the need for the faithful to have their sins forgiven and be reconciled with Christ and his Church. They must offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation at times convenient for their parishioners.
5. *Emphasis on the Importance of Prayer* – Every young adult and adult Catholic in the diocese is called to set aside some time each day for personal prayer. Pastors are to make the Liturgy of the Hours part of the life of their parishes. They should also discern what might be done to strengthen the fervor of the faithful in the practice of devotions.

PROPHETIC PRIORITIES

1. *Understanding the Teachings of the Second Vatican Council* – Pastoral leaders, directors of departments at the Pastoral Center, and leaders in various parish ministries are called to become increasingly familiar with its teachings – and especially its four constitutions – so that they can put them into practice.
2. *Renewed Emphasis on the Catechism of the Catholic Church* – We must heed Pope Benedict XVI’s call to make “a concerted effort to rediscover and study the fundamental content of the faith that receives its systematic and organic synthesis in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*” (*Porta Fidei*, no. 11). While this applies to everyone, it is especially important for parents, catechists, and religion teachers.
3. *Encouragement of Parish and AFC Small Faith Sharing Groups* – Pastoral leaders are to cultivate and support these small communities, which are very powerful in their ability to enliven the faith of believers. The diocesan Office of Religious Education and Adult Faith Formation will help facilitate this effort.

KINGLY PRIORITIES SPECIFICALLY REGARDING HUMAN DIGNITY

1. *Understanding of the Social Doctrine of the Church in its Wholeness* – This is to be the goal of all Social Concerns Committees and all other groups within the diocese working to address the various ills in society. The diocese’s Office of Ministries and Social Concerns will develop presentations and resources to foster this knowledge.
2. *Emphasis on the Importance of the Church’s Teaching on Human Life* – The right to life is the most foundational of all rights that proceed from the dignity of the human person. Again, the diocese’s Office of Ministries and Social Concerns and its Office of Family Life will develop presentations and resources to foster this knowledge at the parish and AFC levels.

3. *Underscoring the Importance of Freedom of Religion in Society* – This precious freedom, which was articulated so well by the Second Vatican Council, is increasingly under attack in our country. Our diocese must continue to help restore the rights of individuals and organizations in our society to act in accordance with their religious convictions and the dictates of their conscience.
4. *Strengthening Efforts to Reach Out to the Poor and Marginalized* – Continuing the efforts in this area that have been so successful in the past, pastoral leaders together with parishioners are called to discern the most efficacious ways to serve those most in need.
5. *Educating Catholics on Carrying Out Their Civic Responsibilities* – As faithful citizens, we must begin our analysis of political issues with reference to the social doctrine of the Church. While the Church generally does not endorse specific candidates or legislation, her members have a duty to bring their knowledge of the human person into the public square to promote genuine human flourishing. The diocese must continue to urge the faithful to carry out this obligation.

KINGLY PRIORITIES SPECIFICALLY REGARDING MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

1. *Cultivating a Better Understanding of the Church's Teaching on Marriage and Family Life* – The role of marriage is also being subverted in our society. Our first step in restoring it to its rightful status is to offer sound catechesis in this area, which is based on several magisterial documents issued since the Council. Parishes, together with the Office of Family Life, are called to develop opportunities for the faithful to receive this teaching.
2. *Promotion of John Paul II's Teaching on the Theology of the Body* – The Office of Family Life will lay the groundwork for a comprehensive theology of the body initiative in the diocese. This will include integrating this teaching into current programs in the diocese, providing opportunities for chastity education, and developing comprehensive adult education.
3. *Enriching and Developing Programs to Foster Authentic Christian Marriage* – The Office of Family Life is to review and, if needed, to revise and expand the diocesan marriage and remarriage programs to ensure that they communicate the Church's teaching on marriage and family life in its fullness.
4. *Promoting the Practice of Natural Family Planning Among Christian Couples* – Another priority of this *Plan for Parishes* is to increase awareness and use of NFP among married couples in our diocese, so that they can regulate the births of their children in conformity with God's loving plan. The Office of Family Life will spearhead this effort, making NFP a major component of diocesan marriage programs and recruiting and educating NFP instructors.
5. *Energizing the Faithful to Work for Laws Supporting Marriage as Intended by God* – In addition to educating the faithful on the nature of marriage and family life, we must also point out concrete ways of promoting them in our state and in our nation. The Office of Family Life, together with pastoral leaders, is to continue to find ways to help the faithful so that marriage and family life are protected in the public sphere.

OTHER KINGLY PRIORITIES

1. *Continued Commitment to Catholic Charities' Core Services* – Catholic Charities will stay focused on the core services that they have offered clients since their re-establishment in 2007. Their four main areas of service are (1) individual, marriage, and family counseling; (2) pregnancy and adoption counseling; (3) crisis response for parishes and communities; and (4) transition and grief services.
2. *Continued Commitment to Providing Safe Environments for Children and Young People* – The diocese must constantly strive to remain in conformity with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. This means taking every reasonable precaution to ensure that the youth in its care are protected from sexual abuse, assisting in the healing of those who have been injured, and restoring trust and harmony in our faith communities.

3. *Caring for Creation and Promoting the Dignity of Rural Life* – The diocese recognizes and fosters the dignity of rural life, the proper care of the land and farm animals, and the protection of the environment. This *Plan for Parishes* calls upon the diocesan Offices of Ministries and Social Concerns to identify and develop resources on these topics for distribution to parishes. Priests should also preach and teach on these topics, so that the faithful can better appreciate the great nobility of rural life.
4. *Stewardship of the Good Things Entrusted to Us* – As stewards of the many gifts that God has given us, all the faithful are called to use their time, talent, and treasure for the benefit of others. With the help of the diocesan Development Office, pastoral leaders are encouraged to identify and pursue strategies to help parishioners embrace stewardship as a way of life.

VOCATIONS PRIORITIES

1. *Pulpit Exchanges* –The director and assistant director of the Vocations Office are available to preside and/or preach on vocations at weekend Masses in parishes throughout the diocese, provided that the priests at these parishes can exchange duties with them. Priests are to determine how to make this practice work with their schedules on a regular basis.
2. *Prayer and Fasting for Vocations* – In the past, the bishop has encouraged prayer and fasting for vocations among the faithful, in addition to asking for prayers and petitions for vocations to be offered during every Mass and meeting. This practice needs to be resumed.
3. *Education About the Priest Shortage* – Pastoral leaders, parish leaders, and diocesan department directors should review the data found in Section Five, Chapter Two of this *Plan for Parishes* so that they can communicate it to others as needed. The diocese’s Pastoral Planning Office will update the figures on a regular basis and make them available on the diocesan Web site.
4. *Recommitment to Current Activities* – Those parishes and/or schools that are not currently involved in the vocations activities offered by the Vocations Team need to make this a priority.

HISPANIC MINISTRY PRIORITIES

Present initiatives to be expanded and new initiatives to be undertaken in the area of Hispanic Ministry will be detailed in the forthcoming diocesan *Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry*, expected to be published in 2015.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PRIORITIES

The ten broad goals of the initial *Plan for Schools* were grounded in the concept of the area faith community. A revised *Plan for Schools*, anticipated in 2014, will provide a progress report on these initiatives. The current *Plan for Schools* also calls for setting annual goals, which reflect innovations taking place at the national level and newly identified local initiatives. Many of these initiatives will also be considered for inclusion in the updated *Plan for Schools*.

CHAPTER 2. CHRIST OUR LIFE

Christ is our life. He is the source of our being, and he continues to keep us in existence. Yet, much more than that, he is the source of the divine life within us. Through his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, he raises us up to a new level of existence so that we can know and love God. By sending us his Holy Spirit, we are incorporated into his Body, the Church, and receive his graces in abundance. The Holy Spirit guides the Church throughout the ages, helping her always to discern the truth about her founder and helping her to articulate it to humanity. This happens in a particularly dramatic way through the Church's great ecumenical councils. The most recent event of this kind was the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, which Pope John Paul II called "the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century." To receive the great graces flowing from the Council, local churches such as the Diocese of New Ulm must work to understand its teachings correctly and work for their authentic implementation.

A. Christ, Giver of Life

In the fourth chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus tells a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob that if she asked, he could give her "living water." When she challenges him, saying that he has no bucket and the well is deep, he replies, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never be thirsty; no, the water I give shall become a fountain within him, leaping up to provide eternal life" (Jn 4:13-14).

The living water that Jesus provides flows in abundance. It satisfies us not only in the here-and-now, but also into eternity. Further on, Jesus tells the crowd that he will feed them: "You should not be working for perishable food, but for food that remains unto life eternal, food which the Son of Man will give you; it is on him that God the Father has set his seal" (Jn 6:27). The food and drink that Christ gives us fortifies us on our journey, our Christian pilgrimage that begins at Baptism and ends with the passage from death to eternal life. We are nourished on the Word of God and on the Bread of Life so that his life within us grows and we are transformed into his likeness.

Christ is our life. He is not only responsible for our creation, but keeps us in existence. This comes out clearly in St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians: "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures. In him everything in heaven and on earth was created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations, principalities or powers; all were created through him, and for him. He is before all else that is. In him everything continues in being" (Col 1:15-17).

Yet Christ's love for us extends well beyond this. In God's plan, he also became the source of our redemption through his suffering, Death, and Resurrection. St. Paul continues, "It is he who is head of the Body, the Church; he who is the beginning, the first-born of the dead, so that primacy may be his in everything. It pleased God to make absolute fullness reside in him and, by means of him, to reconcile everything in his person, both on earth and in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:18-20).

As Head of the Church, Christ wants to incorporate us into his Body, so that we might share his life and love. He sends us his Spirit, the Spirit of Life, so that we may receive his gifts in abundance.

When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church, and thus,

all those who believe would have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father. He is the Spirit of Life, a fountain of water springing up to life eternal. To men, dead in sin, the Father gives life through him, until, in Christ, he brings to life their mortal bodies. The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple. In them he prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons. The Church, which the Spirit guides in the way of all truth and which he unified in communion and in works of ministry, he both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with his fruits. (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 4)

The gifts of the Spirit are many. Through Baptism, we are first incorporated into the Body of Christ and participate in the life of God (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), no. 1997). The grace of Baptism justifies and sanctifies us, making us adopted sons and daughters of the Father and disposing us to eternal life. Other sacraments give us an increasing share in the life of Christ and enable us to collaborate in the salvation of others and in the growth of the Church (CCC, no. 2003). In particular, the Sacrament of Holy Orders gives bishops and priests the sacred power to imitate Christ, Head of the Church, in his three offices of priest, prophet, and king.

In addition to these sacramental graces, the Holy Spirit bestows special graces, or charisms, among his people. These include the gifts of teaching, healing, and various forms of service. They are given to specific people, according to God's will, and are intended for the common good of the Church (CCC, nos. 2003-2004).

B. The Great Gift of the Second Vatican Council

Just as the Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers to infuse them with the life of Christ through his various gifts, so he also guides the whole Church to greater holiness through his gifts. With his assistance, the College of Cardinals selects a new pope, the Successor of Peter, to lead the Church after the previous pope has died or renounced his office (*Universi Dominici Gregis*, no. 50). Through his inspiration, the pope calls together the whole College of Bishops in an ecumenical council. At these councils, the bishops, in union with the Bishop of Rome and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, resolve the most pressing issues facing the Church (see *Lumen Gentium*, no. 22).

There have been twenty-one ecumenical councils in the history of the Church. The most recent council, the Second Vatican Council, took place from 1962 to 1965. Pope John Paul II, who attended the Council as a young bishop, called it "the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century." "There," he said, "we find a sure compass by which to take our bearings" in the century in which we are now living. Even many years later, he said, the Council documents "have lost nothing of their value or brilliance. They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's Tradition" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 57).

What did the Second Vatican Council attempt to accomplish? In his address to open the Council, Pope John XXIII gave a twofold purpose: "that the sacred heritage of Christian truth be safeguarded and expounded with greater efficacy." Regarding the first, he said that the intention of the Council was "to give the world the whole of that doctrine which, notwithstanding every difficulty and contradiction, has become the common heritage of mankind – to transmit it in all its purity, undiluted, undistorted." However, regarding the expression of the faith, he called for a fresh approach. "What is needed, and what everyone imbued with a truly Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit craves today, is that this doctrine shall be more widely known, more deeply understood, and more penetrating in its effects on men's moral lives. What is needed is that this certain and immutable doctrine, to which the faithful owe obedience, be studied afresh and reformulated in contemporary terms."

C. Difficulties in the Implementation of the Council

In the years during and after Vatican II, many Catholics shared Pope John XXIII's yearning for a new enthusiasm, a new springtime in the Church. Now fifty years after the opening of the Council, it is clear that his vision has not yet been fully realized. Having now entered a new century, Pope John Paul II and his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, have asked us to evaluate the implementation of the Council. Have we really understood what the Council taught? Have we done our best to appropriate it and put it into practice? What can we say has been done well? Where have we not yet succeeded?

Pope Benedict XVI gave his own response to these important questions in his Christmas address to the Roman Curia in 2005:

The question arises: Why has the implementation of the Council, in large parts of the Church, thus far been so difficult? Well, it all depends on the correct interpretation of the Council, or – as we would say today – on its proper hermeneutics, the correct key to its interpretation and application. The problems in its implementation arose from the fact that two contrary hermeneutics came face to face and quarreled with each other. One caused confusion, the other, silently but more and more visibly, bore and is bearing fruit.

On the one hand, there is an interpretation that I would call “a hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture”; it has frequently availed itself of the sympathies of the mass media, and also one trend of modern theology. On the other, there is the “hermeneutic of reform,” of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church, which the Lord has given to us. She is a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God.

The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending in a split between the pre-conciliar Church and the post-conciliar Church. It asserts that the texts of the Council as such do not yet express the true spirit of the Council. It claims that they are the result of compromises in which, to reach unanimity, it was found necessary to keep and reconfirm many old things that are now pointless. However, the true spirit of the Council is not to be found in these compromises but instead in the impulses toward the new that are contained in the texts.

These innovations alone were supposed to represent the true spirit of the Council, and starting from and in conformity with them, it would be possible to move ahead. Precisely because the texts would only imperfectly reflect the true spirit of the Council and its newness, it would be necessary to go courageously beyond the texts and make room for the newness in which the Council's deepest intention would be expressed, even if it were still vague.

In a word: It would be necessary not to follow the texts of the Council but its spirit. In this way, obviously, a vast margin was left open for the question on how this spirit should subsequently be defined and room was consequently made for every whim.

The hermeneutic of discontinuity imagines almost two different Churches, the “pre-Vatican II” Church, which is conceived as dying away, and the “post-Vatican II” Church, to take its place. We see this exaggerated polarity being expressed in many areas of Church life, with newer ways always prevailing over the old. In our worship (priestly office), English is advanced to the exclusion of Latin, contemporary music to the exclusion of chant, and the Mass to other expressions of worship, including Eucharistic adoration. With respect to handing on the faith (prophetic office), “lived experience” triumphs over traditional catechesis, and the teachings of theologians over the Magisterium of the Church. In our moral

lives (kingly office), personal conscience wins out over the authority of the Church and the good motives of the acting person can outweigh the badness of intrinsically evil acts.

It is evident that these false dichotomies have weakened the identity and mission of our Church. Those who value tradition have been pitted against those who embrace change. The Church seems to be divided into two camps, with one emphasizing engagement with the world, and the other championing the enduring truth of the faith. Yet it was never supposed to be this way. As Pope Benedict points out, the Church maintains its identity throughout history, even if it increases and develops over time. After all, the Church is the Body of Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8).

There can be no fundamental divide between the Church and the truth of the faith before the Council and after the Council. For this reason, this *Plan for Parishes* places itself firmly on the side of the hermeneutic of reform. In every area of the Church's ministry, we need to rediscover what the Council Fathers had to say and apply it to the programs of the diocese and of our parishes. We need to reread the documents of the Council, as well as those of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, who have spent their entire pontificates working toward its authentic implementation. These texts will give us a proper understanding of the Council and provide ways to apply it to our Christian lives.

Like the Second Vatican Council, we seek an evolution in the Church, not a revolution. A greater appreciation of the truths of our faith will elicit in us a greater desire for conversion of heart. Participating more fully in the life of Christ, we will have a greater capacity to share our faith with others through the testimony of our words and the witness of our lives. Accordingly, we will reap the great graces of the Council in the Diocese of New Ulm.

D. Pastoral Priorities in the Diocese of New Ulm

This section of the *Plan for Parishes* presents a vision for the future of our diocese, a future in which we strive to understand and implement the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. On the next pages, several diocesan priorities are detailed. Ultimately, they express the bishop's favored means for helping us to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ, according to the designs of the Council. To the extent that we embrace them and try to live them out, they will ensure our salvation and foster our sanctification.

In the next three chapters, most of our pastoral priorities are grouped according to the threefold mission of Christ as priest, prophet, and king – functions that are carried out in different but complementary ways among his ordained ministers and lay faithful. There follows a brief chapter on vocations, which is concerned with identifying and cultivating candidates to the ministerial priesthood and to consecrated life. Two ministries – Hispanic Ministry and Catholic Schools – in important ways encompass all three of these areas of ministry and are each given separate treatment toward the end of this section.

Although specific objectives for achieving our pastoral goals are given in some cases, most of the priorities in this section are outlined in general terms. This gives pastoral leaders and the executive staff of the Pastoral Center some latitude in determining how they will be pursued in a particular place, at a particular time, and in particular circumstances.

Parishes and area faith communities are encouraged to review the new expression of the diocesan mission from the first chapter of the first section of this *Plan* and the pastoral priorities outlined in this section with a view to revising their own mission statements. These more specific statements would describe how the parish or area faith community views the diocesan mission being lived out and carried out in their respective areas.

It should be noted that the pastoral priorities in the 2013-2016 strategic plan of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are reflected well in the pastoral goals of the Diocese of New Ulm. According to the USCCB Web site, “*The New Evangelization/Journey With Christ: Faith-Worship-Witness* has a natural progression that engages the work of the Church and the USCCB in a three-fold movement” in the lives of American Catholics over the time span of the plan. This work will provide opportunities for “a deepening of our faith” and “increasing our participation in the sacramental life of the Church,” both of which lead finally “to our destination of being Christian witnesses” (www.usccb.org/about/strategic-plan.cfm).

Goals spelled out in this section of the *Fourth Plan* answer to specific items under each of the strategic plan’s broad categories (see especially www.usccb.org/about/2013-2016-priority-plan-roadmap.cfm). For example, the bishops’ focus on faith calls on dioceses and parishes to help “Catholics deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and increase their knowledge of the teaching of the Church.” The diocese’s prophetic goals are intended to accomplish these things. Again, the bishops’ focus on worship calls for “inviting people to rediscover the Sacrament of Penance and strengthen our participation in and understanding of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.” This *Plan*’s priestly priorities, whether directly or indirectly, are meant to do this. Finally, the bishops’ focus on witness makes the “promotion of the life and dignity of the human person” a priority, as well as “continuing to foster and support married couples and families as Christian witnesses.” Goals set forth among the *Plan*’s kingly priorities are intended to bring about these things.

It should be noted here, too, that the pastoral priorities discussed in this section are the goals on which the bishop desires to place special emphasis. This does not mean that the goals and objectives that the diocese and its parishes are already committed to are being deemphasized or are no longer important. For example, we still value youth ministry, the diocesan Tribunal, and social communications, even though they are not discussed in this *Plan*. This holds true also for the priorities outlined under the *Third Plan for Parishes*. Its four main diocesan priorities – stewardship, vocations, lay ministry, and evangelization – are all still essential to the work of the diocese, even though they are not all emphasized to the same degree in the current *Plan*.

CHAPTER 3. THE PRIESTLY OFFICE: EMBRACING A EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Christ revealed God's love for us through his every word and action – and especially on the cross. In imitation of its Savior, the Church fulfills her priestly mission by helping us to love God through our worship of him. This is accomplished principally through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the “source and summit” of our lives as Christians, and therefore also of all the activities in the parish. This Plan for Parishes calls for a more profound and reflective understanding of the Holy Eucharist, so that we may more fully reap the many graces it makes available to us. It also calls for a renewed appreciation to those other forms of prayer through which we enter into an ever more intimate relationship with Christ, deepening our love for him and for one another.

A. The Universal Call to Holiness

The Church exists for the salvation of souls and to lead her members to growth in holiness. Leading a holy life is not just something that clergy and religious are called to do; rather, it is for everyone:

The Lord Jesus, the divine teacher and model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and every one of his disciples of every condition. He himself stands as the author and consummator of this holiness of life: “Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). Indeed he sent the Holy Spirit upon all men that he might move them inwardly to love God with their whole heart and their whole soul, with all their mind and all their strength (Mk 12:30), and that they might love each other as Christ loves them (Jn 13:34; 15:12). (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 40)

Christ loved his Church so much that he laid down his life for her, his Bride, to make her holy. This gift of holiness is offered to every baptized person. Each member of the Church is invited to follow the path of radical transformation that Christ outlines in the Sermon on the Mount (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 30).

In his apostolic letter written to close the great jubilee year of 2000, Pope John Paul II affirms that “all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness.” But how can this be, if holiness is a gift? Can holiness be planned, or obtained, as if by our own efforts? First we must understand that perfection in the spiritual life is not something to be pursued now and then; we must desire it with our whole being, so that it permeates every aspect of our lives. “The whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction,” the pope explains (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, nos. 30-31).

B. The Centrality of the Holy Eucharist

1. The Source and Summit of our Catholic Lives

How, then, are we as Christians to become holy and lead the life that Christ calls us to lead? Our Savior himself gives us the answer when he tells the Jews that he is the Bread of Life:

Let me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood real drink. The man who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the Father who has

life sent me and I have life because of the Father, so that man who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike you ancestors who ate and died nonetheless, the man who feeds on this bread shall live forever. (Jn 6:52-58)

Jesus gives us his body to eat under the appearance of bread and his blood to drink under the appearance of wine each time we celebrate the Mass. As Christians, our whole life must strain toward union with him – a union which is expressed and brought about in the Eucharist (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 3).

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council taught that the Holy Eucharist is both the “source and summit” of our lives as followers of Christ: “The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.” It is the summit, “for the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and Baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s supper.” It is the source, because “from the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10; see also *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 5).

The end of this passage sets forth the two essential purposes of the liturgy. The first is to glorify God our Father and adore his divine Majesty (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 33). God is our creator. He gives us life and holds us in existence. We glorify God by praising him and thanking him for everything that we are and all the good things that he has given us. In gratitude we offer him the bread and wine, which he has first given to us. Then, by the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of Christ, they become the body and blood of Christ, truly present on the altar (CCC, no. 1357). By participating in the Mass, and especially by receiving Christ in Holy Communion, we receive the graces to become more and more like him. Accordingly, the second purpose of the Eucharist is accomplished, our sanctification.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* speaks of the many ways that we understand the Eucharist, inexhaustible in its meaning and in its power to save. It is the sacrificial memorial of Christ and of his Body, the Church (nos. 1362-1372). It is an encounter with the real presence of Christ by the power of his word and the Holy Spirit (nos. 1373-1381). It is also the Paschal Banquet, that feast in which we partake of the Lord’s body and blood. (nos. 1382-1390).

2. Our Sunday Obligation

Attending and actively participating in Sunday Mass is both a right and a duty for those who have been baptized (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14). Since the Mass is “the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice,” “the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor” (CCC, no. 2181). Failure to fulfill this duty is a serious (mortal) sin.

While it is appropriate to attend Sunday Mass out of a sense of obligation, there are other good reasons for assembling together on the Lord’s Day. In these ways, we express more ardently our love for Christ and his Church. We have already mentioned the desire to worship God and to become more holy. By participating in the Sunday Eucharist, we also rejoice in the Resurrection (Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, no. 82). We unite our joys and burdens with the sacrifice of Christ (*Dies Domini*, no. 43). Our participation strengthens our local community of faith as a “testimony of belonging and being faithful to Christ and to his Church” (CCC, no. 2182). Then, having been formed by the Scriptures and fed by the Eucharist, we are dismissed and sent on mission. We return to our everyday activities with a renewed commitment to spread the Good News and to offer our very selves as “spiritual sacrifices pleasing to God” (Rom 12:1).

As a result of the pastoral planning discussions that parishes are called to enter into as part of this *Plan for Parishes* (see especially the chapter “Options for Small Parishes” in Section IV), some parishes will not be able to celebrate Sunday Mass every weekend. Other parishes could be merged, and this might eventually entail that Sunday Mass would no longer be celebrated at their church building. For some people, fewer opportunities for Mass will involve a greater effort to meet one’s Sunday obligation. Yet the reasons we must do so are compelling: We must worship God as he deserves; we must grow in the knowledge and love of Christ, our Savior; we must love one another in the parish family with the affection of brothers and sisters.

3. Full and Active Participation

In its reform of the Mass, the Council sought to lead all the faithful to a “fully conscious and active participation” in the liturgy:

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14)

No one disputes that the Church has made great strides in this area. However, our successes have been mixed with shortcomings. Misunderstandings as to the nature of the liturgy and a blurring between the ministerial priesthood and the common priesthood of the baptized have led to abuses and polarization – the results of a hermeneutic of discontinuity.

The confusion even affected the proper understanding of the Council’s call for “active participation.” In his *ad limina* address to bishops of the United States on October 9, 1998, Pope John Paul II tried to set the record straight:

Full participation certainly means that every member of the community has a part to play in the liturgy, and in this respect a great deal has been achieved in parishes and communities across your land. But full participation does not mean that everyone does everything, since this would lead to a clericalizing of the laity and a laicizing of the priesthood; and this was not what the Council had in mind. The liturgy, like the Church, is intended to be hierarchical and polyphonic, respecting the different roles assigned by Christ and allowing all the different voices to blend in one great hymn of praise.

Active participation certainly means that, in gesture, word, song, and service, all the members of the community take part in an act of worship, which is anything but inert or passive. Yet active participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness, and listening: indeed, it demands it. Worshippers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the liturgy. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active. In a culture which neither favors nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior listening is learned only with difficulty. (no. 3)

The pope goes on to say that “conscious participation” requires that the faithful be schooled in the mysteries of the liturgy, so that all can understand the various aspects of the Eucharistic celebration. While he praised the use of the vernacular for opening up the “treasures of the liturgy” to everyone, he encouraged the use of Latin “and especially the chants which are so superbly adapted to the genius of the Roman Rite.” (no. 3)

Nine years later, Pope Benedict XVI provided further clarification about the meaning of “active, full, and fruitful participation” of the People of God in the Eucharistic celebration. In his apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, he writes,

It should be made clear that the word “participation” does not refer to mere external activity during the celebration. In fact, the active participation called for by the Council must be understood in more substantial terms, on the basis of a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life. The conciliar constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* encouraged the faithful to take part in the Eucharistic liturgy not “as strangers or silent spectators,” but as participants “in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, actively and devoutly” (no. 48). This exhortation has lost none of its force. (no. 52)

The pope continues to quote the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, emphasizing the vocation of the laity to imitate Christ in his priestly office. He says that the faithful “should give thanks to God. Offering the immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, they should learn to make an offering of themselves. Through Christ, the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and each other” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 52, quoting *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 48).

C. Pastoral Priorities as Christ’s Priestly People

1. Formation in the Liturgical Life

In the Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, the Council Fathers remind bishops of their duty to give their priests and the lay faithful adequate instruction on the liturgy. They are to help their priests “by every suitable means to understand ever more fully what it is that they are doing when they perform sacred rites” and ensure that the faithful “take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, nos. 11, 18).

In the months leading up to the implementation of the new translation of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, the Diocese of New Ulm undertook a concerted effort involving pastoral leaders and the faithful to discuss the new words of the Mass and to reflect upon their richer meaning. Initiatives such as these, which provide a deeper appreciation of and love for the Mass, should be carried out on a regular basis in our diocese.

Specifically, we need to rediscover the teaching of the Council Fathers as set forth in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and work toward its authentic implementation. To accomplish this effectively, we must read and put into practice the teachings of that document, as well as the magisterial documents issued by the Holy See on the liturgy since the Council. These include *Musicam Sacram* (1967), *Dies Domini* (1998), *Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal* and its *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* (2002), *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* (2002), *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), *Spiritus et Sponsa* (2003), *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004), and *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007).

2. Promotion of Sacred Music

The purpose of sacred music in the liturgy is none other than that of the liturgy itself: “the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 112). Through the sung liturgy,

prayer is expressed in a more attractive way, the mystery of the liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, is more openly shown, the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the

union of voices, minds are more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the sacred rites, and the whole celebration more clearly prefigures that heavenly liturgy which is enacted in the holy city of Jerusalem. (*Musicam Sacram*, no. 5)

The Second Vatican Council attached great importance to the teaching and practice of music in schools and Catholic institutions, and to the instruction of teachers for this purpose (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 115). Pastors in our diocese should strive to find the best musicians to foster fitting worship in their parishes, and instruct them in the guidelines set forth by the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and the other documents listed above. If at all possible, the musicians themselves should become familiar with these documents. For its part, the diocesan Worship Committee will renew its commitment to their study, so that more and more parish leaders will understand the teachings of the Council.

Parishes are strongly encouraged to make use of the organ. “In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church’s ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man’s mind to God and to higher things” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 120). To assist in these efforts, the diocese will continue to offer summer organ lessons to better equip parish musicians to play this beautiful instrument and to lead the assembly in sung prayer.

While expanding the use of the vernacular, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* sought to preserve the use of the Latin language in the liturgy (no. 36 §1). This applies especially to those parts of the Mass that do not vary: “Steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them” (no. 54). At the same time, it encouraged the use of chant in the liturgy: “The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy. Therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 116). To help parishes achieve this goal, the diocese will offer chant workshops to parish musicians in the years to come, so that they can become proficient in both English and Latin chant. Parishes will be especially encouraged to sponsor their musicians’ attendance at these workshops.

3. Renewed Commitment to Eucharistic Adoration

Pope John Paul II reminded us that Eucharistic adoration outside Mass is a natural extension of our worship and reception of the Blessed Sacrament during the Mass. Far from detracting from it, Eucharistic adoration increases our gratitude for it and our longing for the next time we receive it.

The worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass is of inestimable value for the life of the Church. This worship is strictly linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The presence of Christ under the sacred species reserved after Mass – a presence which lasts as long as the species of bread and of wine remain – derives from the celebration of the sacrifice and is directed towards communion, both sacramental and spiritual. It is the responsibility of pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic adoration, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species. (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 25)

The Year of the Eucharist (2004-2005) witnessed a renewed commitment to the practice of Eucharistic adoration in the Diocese of New Ulm. The efforts made at this time must be continued and expanded. In every parish, or at least in every area faith community, pastoral leaders should set aside some time each week so that the faithful can adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The hours devoted to this activity should be generous, and priests should encourage parishioners to make it a regular habit by signing up for a specific time. If possible, area faith communities should have perpetual adoration. Forty Hours

devotions, perhaps with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament rotating among the churches in the AFC, are also encouraged.

4. Promotion of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Christ instituted the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation for all sinful members of his Church (CCC, no. 1446). As we learn from the Church's *Rite of Penance*,

To obtain the saving remedy of the Sacrament of Penance, according to the plan of our merciful God, the faithful must confess to a priest each and every grave sin which they remember upon examination of their conscience.

Moreover, frequent and careful celebration of this sacrament is also very useful as a remedy for venial sins. This is not a mere ritual repetition or psychological exercise, but a serious striving to perfect the grace of Baptism so that, as we bear in our body the death of Jesus Christ, his life may be seen in us ever more clearly (see 2 Cor 4:10). (7a-b)

Christ comes to reveal to us who we are – people with whom he wants to share the fullness of his life and love. He gives us the means to attain this lofty destiny through the forgiveness of our sins. The Divine Physician seeks a personal encounter with sinners to cure them, to raise them up, and to reintegrate them into fraternal communion with his Church. This is why “individual, integral confession and absolution remain the only ordinary way for the faithful to reconcile themselves with God and the Church, unless physical or moral impossibility excuses from this kind of confession” (*Rite of Penance*, no. 31, as found in CCC, no. 1484).

It is a great tragedy, then, that many Catholics do not reach out to their Lord and Savior to receive this reconciliation in their lives. In fact, with Pope John Paul II, it is fair to say that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is in crisis. As he explains in his apostolic exhortation *Reconciliation and Penance*,

The sacrament of confession is indeed being undermined, on the one hand by the obscuring of the moral and religious conscience, the lessening of a sense of sin, the distortion of the concept of repentance, and the lack of effort to live an authentically Christian life. And on the other hand, it is being undermined by the sometimes widespread idea that one can obtain forgiveness directly from God, even in a habitual way, without approaching the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, no. 28 §3)

The loss of this “sense of sin” is particularly troubling. If people do not think that they need God’s mercy and forgiveness, then their felt need for a relationship with Jesus Christ is much diminished. Yet St. John tells us, “If we say, ‘We are without sin,’ we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn 1:8). In the Lord’s Prayer, Christ teaches us to ask for the forgiveness of our sins, linking our request to our willingness to forgive others (CCC, no. 1425; cf. Lk 11:4; Mt 6:12).

In his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, which marked the close of the great jubilee year of 2000, Pope John Paul II pointed to an encouraging sign. He said that more people, including many young people, were beginning to benefit from this sacrament. He exhorted pastors to “arm themselves with more confidence, creativity, and perseverance in presenting it and leading people to appreciate it” (no. 37).

Under this *Plan for Parishes*, we must take this appeal to heart. Giving generously of their time, our priests must make themselves available to offer this sacrament at times convenient for the faithful. They must preach on the need to be reconciled to Christ and his Church, and the benefits for souls who approach the sacrament. At special times, such as during Advent, Lent, and Forty Hours devotions,

pastors should schedule additional priests to facilitate penance services for larger groups of people and to give them the opportunity to go to a priest of their choice. If we are able to demonstrate the value of sacramental reconciliation, more and more people will come.

5. Emphasis on the Importance of Prayer

A commitment to personal prayer is essential if we are to grow in the love of God and our neighbor. How can we say that we love someone if we are not willing to spend time with that person? Just as our relationships with other people require that we spend time with them, so does our relationship with God.

Simply put, prayer is communication with God. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* quotes St. John Damascene, saying that it is “the raising of one’s mind and heart to God, or the requesting of good things from God” (no. 2559). In prayer, we praise and adore God, recognizing his greatness; we thank him for the good things that he has given us; we ask him for those things we need; and we ask for the forgiveness of our sins.

Like all good things, prayer is a gift from God. In a beautiful reflection on the Samaritan woman at the well, the *Catechism* reveals that prayer is really the coming together of a twofold longing:

“If you knew the gift of God!” (Jn 4:10) The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: There, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him. (no. 2560)

There are many reasons why prayer is important. First of all, in prayer we imitate Christ, who is the way to our salvation. Many times in the Gospels, Christ goes off to pray. Luke 6:12 is typical: “Then he went out to the mountain to pray, spending the night in communion with God.” Secondly, God always listens to our prayers. He never fails to answer a sincere prayer, even if it is not the answer we want or expect. Thirdly, through prayer we gain knowledge of ourselves and of our sins. It enables us to see ourselves as we are, so that with God’s grace we can change. Fourthly, prayer helps us to stay away from sin. It gives us the grace to overcome present and future temptations. Lastly, prayer disposes us to receive the sacraments. Prayer especially prepares us to participate in the Mass more fully and receive the Eucharist worthily.

In his apostolic exhortation *On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, Pope John Paul II emphasizes how prayer, in addition to the Eucharist and the other sacraments, transforms the daily lives of the faithful into “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pt 2:5). In this way they participate in the baptismal priesthood of Jesus Christ (*Familiaris Consortio*, no. 59 §1). In the context of the family, the prayers of spouses, parents, and children find their proper subject in the good of the family. Family life

in all its varying circumstances is seen as a call from God and lived as a filial response to his call. Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of the parents, departures, separations and homecomings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear, etc. – all of these mark God’s loving intervention in the family’s history. They should be seen as suitable moments for thanksgiving, for petition, for trusting abandonment of the family into the hands of their common Father in heaven. (no. 59, §3)

The Christian family can only fulfill its responsibility, the pope adds, with God's help. He will surely grant it if family members humbly and trustingly ask for it in prayer (no. 59 §3).

Drawing on their own rich prayer life, the priests of our diocese must urge the faithful to deepen their commitment to prayer. Our focus must be both on personal prayer and communal prayer. Following Christ's example and his words (for example, Mt 6:6), every Catholic should set aside some time every day for personal prayer. Those who are already in this practice should consider what more they can do.

Among the communal forms of prayer outside of Mass, the Liturgy of the Hours (or "Divine Office") holds a special place, for it is "like an extension of the Eucharistic celebration" (CCC, no. 1178). Through the celebration of the Divine Office, the mystery of Christ, his Incarnation and Passover, which we celebrate in the Eucharist, permeates and transfigures the time of each day, so that "the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praises of God" (CCC, no. 1174; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 84). The Council Fathers urged that this prayer become a regular part of parish life: "Pastors of souls should see to it that the chief hours, especially Vespers, are celebrated in common in church on Sundays and the more solemn feasts. And the laity, too, are encouraged to recite the divine office, either with the priests, or among themselves, or even individually" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 100). Following diocesan practice, parishes should also strongly consider praying the Liturgy of the Hours before meetings. Worship aids to support this practice are readily available online.

In connection with prayer, we must not forget the great value of the various devotions that animate our Christian lives and foster growth in holiness. Pope John Paul II saw them as "an opportunity for the faithful to encounter the living Christ," which when enriched by Catholic doctrine, "might lead to a sincere conversion and a practical exercise of charity" (*Ecclesia in America*, no. 16 §1). In this he echoed the Council Fathers, who said, "Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church, [and] above all when they are ordered by the Apostolic See" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 13). One devotion especially "ordered by the Apostolic See" is that to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was promoted in three encyclical letters leading up to the Council: *Annum Sacrum* (1899), *Miserentissimus Redemptor* (1928), and *Haurietis Aquas* (1956).

Some parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm already promote an active devotional life; others could increase these practices. Under this *Plan for Parishes*, pastoral leaders in all parishes should re-examine the devotional practices to see what might be done to strengthen the fervor of the faithful in this way. In addition to Eucharistic adoration and the devotion to the Sacred Heart, devotions to Jesus that might be considered anew include the Stations of the Cross, Divine Mercy, and Eucharistic processions, especially on Corpus Christi. Among Marian devotions, the Rosary deserves special mention, for according to Pope John Paul II, to recite it "is nothing other than to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ." "The Rosary," he says, "goes to the very heart of Christian life; it offers a familiar yet fruitful spiritual and educational opportunity for personal contemplation, the formation of the People of God, and the New Evangelization" (*Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, no. 3 §§1-2). Other practices honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary that we might consider for greater attention include devotions to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and the scapular.

CHAPTER 4. THE PROPHETIC OFFICE: EVANGELIZING THE CHURCH TO EVANGELIZE THE WORLD

Faith is the door to our life in Christ. By way of faith, we hold fast to God and assent to the whole truth that he has revealed to us, primarily through Christ. Faith is a gift: We can only believe what has been revealed to us with God's grace and the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Through faith, we are incorporated into the life of the Trinity. Conversion of heart makes us better witnesses to the faith and more effective in proclaiming the gospel message. In our current situation, it is more and more important to direct our evangelizing efforts to members of our own Church who have lost a living sense of the faith. This is what Pope John Paul II calls the "New Evangelization." Pastoral priorities following upon Christ's prophetic witness will focus especially on evangelizing and catechizing the faithful, so that they, in turn, might be better witnesses to the faith before the world.

A. Rediscovering the Journey of Faith

In his apostolic letter announcing the Year of Faith, Pope Benedict XVI said that he wanted to give the whole Church the opportunity for a reflection and rediscovery of the faith (*Porta Fidei*, no. 4). Why should we do this? The pope is concerned that many people either take the faith for granted (and therefore neglect it) or openly deny it (no. 2). Yet faith is the door to our life in Christ, a life that is the key to our happiness in this life and our fulfillment in the next. He explains:

The "door of faith" (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church. It is possible to cross that threshold when the word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace. To enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime. It begins with Baptism (cf. Rom 6:4), through which we can address God as Father, and it ends with the passage through death to eternal life, fruit of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, whose will it was, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, to draw those who believe in him into his own glory (cf. Jn 17:22). (*Porta Fidei*, no. 1)

What is this faith, through which we gain life in Christ and in his Church, and which is progressively deepened throughout our journey with him? According to the *Catechism*, "faith is first of all a personal adherence of man to God" by which we are able to follow him in truth and love. At the same time, faith is "a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed" (no. 150). God reveals himself to us and gives himself to us. Faith in God is the appropriate response (no. 26). Faith itself is a supernatural gift, for without God's help, this response would be impossible. The Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* puts it this way:

"The obedience of faith" (Rom 13:26; see 1:5; 2 Cor 10:5-6) "is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals," and freely assenting to the truth revealed by him. To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it." (*Dei Verbum*, no. 5)

The "full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals" means that we must accept the faith in its entirety; it is not up to us to pick and choose what we want to believe and what we would prefer to leave behind. God the Father reveals himself primarily through his Son, Jesus Christ, who established his

Church on earth to safeguard this truth and to hand it down from generation to generation. The Tradition of the Church is firmly grounded in Sacred Scripture and authoritatively interpreted by her Magisterium.

This leads us to consider a third related meaning of the word “faith.” Just as faith can mean our mystical relationship with God and the human act by which we assent to the truth he has revealed, so it can also mean those truths to which we assent. This is the content of our faith, those truths that we confess in our “profession of faith.” These truths are expressed in the Apostle’s Creed, which is professed personally by each believer, principally at Baptism, and in the Nicene Creed, which is professed by the bishops assembled in council, or more generally by the liturgical assembly of believers (CCC, no. 167; see also *Porta Fidei*, no. 10).

B. Evangelization and Conversion of Heart

Our assent to the truths of the faith follows from a conviction about the person – Jesus Christ – who reveals these truths to us through his Church. Our faith, then, is not in a set of abstract ideas, but in the person of Jesus. He is the primary subject of our inquiry, the only Son of God, who leads us to the Father and builds up his Body, the Church, through the Holy Spirit.

Pope Benedict affirms that the renewal of the Church is achieved “through the witness offered by the lives of believers: By their very existence in the world, Christians are called to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us” (*Porta Fidei*, no. 6). Yet this witness will attract others only insofar as it is authentic, or reflective of a truly Christian life. To accomplish this, we must experience a conversion of heart, so that we grow in the love of our Savior and imitate him more and more in our lives. This will give rise to a strong desire to spread the faith to others. As Pope Benedict describes it,

“*Caritas Christi urget nos*” (2 Cor 5:14): It is the love of Christ that fills our hearts and impels us to evangelize. . . . Through his love, Jesus Christ attracts to himself the people of every generation: In every age he convokes the Church, entrusting her with the proclamation of the Gospel by a mandate that is ever new. Today too, there is a need for stronger ecclesial commitment to New Evangelization in order to rediscover the joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith. In rediscovering his love day by day, the missionary commitment of believers attains force and vigor that can never fade away. Faith grows when it is lived as an experience of love received and when it is communicated as an experience of grace and joy. It makes us fruitful, because it expands our hearts in hope and enables us to bear life-giving witness: indeed, it opens the hearts and minds of those who listen to respond to the Lord’s invitation to adhere to his word and become his disciples. (*Porta Fidei*, no. 7)

The connection between evangelization and conversion of heart is an essential one. On the one hand, conversion of heart is necessary for any thorough-going, effective effort to spread the Gospel. On the other hand, ongoing conversion is the very purpose of evangelization. As Pope Paul VI taught,

For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: “Now I am making the whole of creation new” (Rev 21:5; cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism (cf. Rom 6:4) and by lives lived according to the Gospel (cf. Eph 4:24-25; Col 3:9-10). The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence, the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert (cf. Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 2:4), solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and

collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs. (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 18)

C. The New Evangelization

The impetus to evangelize proceeds from the Church's very nature. It is grounded in the fact that Christ came to save all people. He is the one who reveals God to us and is able to lead us back to him. In the Gospel of John, he tells us, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (14:6). As Pope John Paul II further explains in his encyclical letter *On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate*,

In this definitive Word of his revelation, God has made himself known in the fullest possible way. He has revealed to mankind who he is. This definitive self-revelation of God is the fundamental reason why the Church is missionary by her very nature. She cannot do other than proclaim the Gospel, that is, the fullness of the truth which God has enabled us to know about himself. (*Redemptoris Missio*, no. 5)

Yet the pope also points out that evangelization, while seeking to extend the life of Christ to all peoples, always occurs at a particular time, in a particular place, and within a particular cultural milieu. The varied circumstances in which evangelization is carried out in the modern world call for different approaches. He identifies three fundamental situations:

First, there is the situation which the Church's missionary activity addresses: peoples, groups, and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel are not known, or which lack Christian communities sufficiently mature to be able to incarnate the faith in their own environment and proclaim it to other groups. This is mission *ad gentes* ("to the nations") in the proper sense of the term.

Secondly, there are Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures. They are fervent in their faith and in Christian living. They bear witness to the Gospel in their surroundings and have a sense of commitment to the universal mission. In these communities the Church carries out her activity and pastoral care.

Thirdly, there is an intermediate situation, particularly in countries with ancient Christian roots, and occasionally in the younger Churches as well, where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case what is needed is a "new evangelization" or a "re-evangelization." (*Redemptoris Missio*, no. 33)

In the history of the Catholic faith in the Diocese of New Ulm, we can readily identify situations that correspond to each of these descriptions. Beginning with the first waves of immigration in the nineteenth century, our forbearers came to Minnesota and settled the land. Often with the assistance of missionary priests, they founded our parishes, built our churches, and made their Catholic faith a way of life. So well established was the faith by the time of the founding of our diocese that Bishop Alphonse J. Schladweiler was able to send diocesan priests to establish and develop the mission parish of San Lucas Tolimán in Guatemala. These efforts, through which our priests and dedicated lay volunteers strive for the integral human development of the Guatemalan people, continue even today.

At the same time, it is increasingly difficult to avoid the conclusion that our current situation corresponds most closely to the third description above. As will be discussed in the next section of this *Plan for*

Parishes, the diocese has lost over ten percent of its Catholic population in the last decade, while the population as a whole has remained stable. The percentage of registered parishioners in our parishes has also seen a significant decline during this period. At the same time, the number of people who are not affiliated with any religion has increased dramatically. Is there any doubt that many of them used to be practicing Catholics?

D. Catechesis, a Principal Part of Evangelization

How, then, are we to undertake a “New Evangelization” in our own diocese? Those who no longer espouse their Christian faith do not experience the love of Christ in their lives; perhaps they never experienced it. If they do not love Christ, then clearly they do not know him. To help them fall in love with him, we need to teach them about him – about his life, about his great love for them, and about how that love is extended to them in his Church. This is the role of catechesis. It begins with those already baptized – those who already are disposed to grow in the knowledge and love of their Redeemer – and especially those who still count themselves as members of the Church. Once our own members bear greater witness to the life of Christ within them, our initiatives to reach out to lapsed Catholics and those who have never embraced the faith will yield greater fruit (cf. *Porta Fidei*, no. 15).

What is catechesis? Following Pope John Paul II, the *Catechism* describes it as “an education of children, young people, and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life” (CCC, no. 5; *Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 18). Its aim is “to develop, with God’s help, an as yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful, young and old” (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 20). In other words, the goal of catechesis is none other than the goal of evangelization itself: conversion of heart and conformity to Christ.

If this is so, then what makes catechesis different? The pope explains it this way:

Within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ as the one Lord and having given him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know his “mystery,” the Kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and promises contained in his gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him. (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 20)

Far from being separated from or opposed to evangelization, catechesis constitutes a particular activity within it – indeed a principal activity. It is related to and interwoven with other evangelical activities, which contain aspects of it. These include “the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching . . . to arouse faith, apologetics or examination of the reasons for belief, experience of Christian living, celebration of the sacraments, integration into the ecclesial community, and apostolic and missionary witness” (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 18).

As he wrote his apostolic exhortation on catechesis, Pope John Paul II was firmly convinced that it should be given a privileged place in the Church’s pastoral programs:

The more the Church, whether on the local or the universal level, gives catechesis priority over other works and undertakings, the results of which would be more spectacular, the more she finds in catechesis a strengthening of her internal life as a community of believers and of her external activity as a missionary Church. As the twentieth century draws to a close, the Church is bidden

by God and by events – each of them a call from him – to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 15)

What the pope held then is no less true for our diocese in the first years of the twenty-first century.

E. Who Should Be Evangelized and Catechized

Christ sent his apostles out to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19). This is the mission of the Church, that everyone might hear the Good News and be saved. Yet the Church understands that in order to evangelize, she must first be evangelized.

She is the community of believers, the community of hope lived and communicated, the community of brotherly love, and she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love. She is the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols, and she always needs to hear the proclamation of the “mighty works of God” (cf. Acts 2:11; 1 Pt 2:9) which converted her to the Lord; she always needs to be called together afresh by him and reunited. In brief, this means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigor, and strength, in order to proclaim the Gospel. (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 15 §3)

Consequently, the Church is especially solicitous that all her members, from the youngest to the most advanced in age, receive a proper catechesis. Parents must teach their very young children their first short prayers, telling them about “a good and provident Father in heaven” who loves them and listens to them. At home, in school, and in church, older children must be taught the mysteries of the faith in a basic way, especially as they prepare for the celebration of the sacraments. The deeper questioning and searching that comes with adolescence must be met with a catechesis in which the meaning of life is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ (*Catechesi Tradendae*, nos. 36-38).

With the strong emphasis on Catholic schools in our country, it is easy to forget that the greater part of the Church’s catechetical efforts should be directed to adults. According to Pope John Paul II, the catechesis of adults “is the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.” The faith of adults, he says, “should continually be enlightened, stimulated, and renewed, so that it may pervade the temporal realities in their charge” (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 43).

This is all the more important because parents are the primary educators of their children. As the Second Vatican Council’s *Declaration on Christian Education* explains, “Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators” (*Gravissimum Educationis*, no. 3 §1; see *Code of Canon Law*, c. 793 §1). How can they teach the fundamentals of their faith to their children unless they understand it themselves?

The transmission of the faith from parent to child is carried out in the context of family, which the Second Vatican Council calls the “domestic Church” following an ancient expression (CCC, no. 1656; see *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11 §2). The family provides a unique environment for witnessing to the faith. Within it, members model Christ for each other in an intimate communion of love. As the *Catechism* teaches, members of the family “exercise the priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way ‘by the reception of the sacraments, prayer, and thanksgiving; the witness of a holy life; and self-denial and active charity’” (no. 1657, quoting *Lumen Gentium*, no. 10). It is evident, then, that the initiatives below should focus

especially on teaching and evangelizing adults in the faith, for they are primarily responsible for carrying out these actions in the family.

F. Pastoral Priorities as Christ's Prophetic People

1. Understanding the Teachings of the Second Vatican Council

In his apostolic letter announcing the Year of Faith, Pope Benedict XVI said that in timing the Year with the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, he wanted to give the faithful an opportunity to rediscover its teachings. Quoting his predecessor, he reiterated that the texts of the Council Fathers “have lost nothing of their value or brilliance. They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's Tradition” (*Porta Fidei*, no. 5, quoting Pope John Paul II's *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 57). Then, quoting his 2005 Christmas address to the Roman Curia where he discussed the difficulties in implementing the Council, he emphasized that “if we interpret and implement it guided by a right hermeneutic, it can be and can become increasingly powerful for the ever necessary renewal of the Church” (*Porta Fidei*, no. 5).

During this Year of Faith, the diocese has planned several events that in some way try to illuminate the teachings of the Council. Efforts of this sort must continue, not only through the conclusion of the Year of Faith, but for years to come. Pastoral leaders, directors of departments at the Pastoral Center, and leaders in various parish ministries should become increasingly familiar with its teachings so that they can put them into practice. While all of the Council's documents are important, its four constitutions (*Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Dei Verbum*, and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*) especially need to be studied.

2. Renewed Emphasis on the Catechism of the Catholic Church

In the same apostolic letter, Pope Benedict said that the start of the Year of Faith also marked the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. This signal text, he said, illustrates “for all the faithful the power and beauty of the faith” (*Porta Fidei*, no. 4). Later in the letter, he expands on this notion:

In order to arrive at a systematic knowledge of the content of the faith, all can find in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* a precious and indispensable tool. It is one of the most important fruits of the Second Vatican Council. . . . Here, in fact, we see the wealth of teaching that the Church has received, safeguarded, and proposed in her two thousand years of history. From Sacred Scripture to the Fathers of the Church, from theological masters to the saints across the centuries, the *Catechism* provides a permanent record of the many ways in which the Church has meditated on the faith and made progress in doctrine so as to offer certitude to believers in their lives of faith. (*Porta Fidei*, no. 11)

In the Diocese of New Ulm, we must heed Pope Benedict's call to make “a concerted effort to rediscover and study the fundamental content of the faith that receives its systematic and organic synthesis in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*” (no. 11). These efforts must not only take place during the Year of Faith, but in subsequent years as well. Religion teachers and catechists in religious education programs must be given opportunities to learn the fundamentals of their faith in a systematic and comprehensive way, especially as it is organized and expressed in the *Catechism*. Parishes must also make these opportunities available to parents, who are the principal teachers of their children in the faith.

3. Parish and AFC Small Faith-Sharing Groups

Faith sharing in small groups is a very powerful way of enlivening the faith of believers. Members of the faithful come together to pray, read a passage from Sacred Scripture or some other document of the Church, share their reflections on it, and enjoy fellowship. Experience has shown that many people who take part in a group weave it into their faith lives with a view to continuing it their entire lives. Traditional forms of small faith-sharing communities have included Bible study and *Lectio Divina* groups.

Pope Benedict XVI has strongly recommended that Christians be nourished on the living Word of God, saying that “the Church knows well that Christ lives in the Sacred Scriptures” (Papal Address of September 16, 2005). He echoes the Second Vatican Council’s *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, which commended the reading of Scripture to everyone:

Therefore, all the clergy must hold fast to the Sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priests of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists who are legitimately active in the ministry of the word. This is to be done so that none of them will become “an empty preacher of the Word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly” (St. Augustine, *Sermons*, 179, 1), since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the sacred liturgy. The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the “excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:8). “For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (St. Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, Prol.). Therefore, they should gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text itself, whether it be through the liturgy, rich in the divine Word, or through devotional reading, or through instructions suitable for the purpose and other aids which, in our time, with approval and active support of the shepherds of the Church, are commendably spread everywhere. And let them remember that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for “we speak to him when we pray; we hear him when we read the divine saying” (St. Ambrose, *On the Duties of Ministers* I, 20, 88). (*Dei Verbum*, no. 25 §1)

In addition to these traditional ways in which small groups invite the Word of God into their lives, a number of resources have been developed specifically for faith-sharing groups. Generally, these programs include the elements of prayer, reflection, and fellowship. Some offer the additional advantage of incorporating a service component.

Under this *Plan for Parishes*, the diocese will encourage parishes and area faith communities to cultivate and support these small communities among their members. Help in facilitating this effort will be offered by the diocesan Office of Religious Education and Adult Faith Formation.

CHAPTER 5. THE KINGLY OFFICE: TRANSFORMING THE WORLD IN CHRIST'S LOVE

In fulfilling our priestly mission, we extend our hearts to Christ in worship. We learn to pray and thus to love God our Father by imitating Christ, his Son. In fulfilling our prophetic mission, we offer God our minds. We come to know the Father by coming to know his Son, who reveals to us his Father even as he reveals to us who we are. In fulfilling our kingly mission, we give to God our very selves: everything we have and are. With God's help, we learn to imitate Christ by gaining mastery over our own bodies. This permits us to love others as they should be loved, that is, as Christ loves them. The genuine love that we show others in our families and close relations is gradually translated into a love for those we do not know so well or perhaps at all. Yet we love them because we see Christ in them. In this way, the whole world is transformed in the love of Christ.

A. The Dignity of the Human Person: Created in the Image of God

Human beings enjoy a status unlike any of the other creatures of this world. We are the only creatures on earth that are intended by God for our own good, rather than the good of some other creature. We are able to know and love our Creator, and in this we find our good. In his overflowing generosity, God gave us a share of his own divine life. For this reason, we were created in the image of God and invested with an intrinsic dignity (CCC, no. 356). The Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* sums it up this way:

For Sacred Scripture teaches that man was created "to the image of God," is capable of knowing and loving his Creator, and was appointed by him as master of all earthly creatures that he might subdue them and use them to God's glory. "What is man that you should care for him? You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him rule over the works of your hands, putting all things under his feet" (Ps 8:5-7). (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 12 §3).

The human person is endowed not only with senses and passions, but also intellect and will. A person is therefore a someone, not just a something. As human persons, we are capable of knowing ourselves and reflecting on our actions. We make choices of what to do and what not to do. We order our own acts, pursuing our own good in view of our ultimate end, which is God himself. The pursuit of the human good requires that we give freely of ourselves and enter into communion with other persons. Human beings are by nature social beings, and unless we relate ourselves to others, we can neither live nor develop our potential (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC), nos. 108, 110; *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 12 §4).

The glorious depiction of human beings as we were created by God often appears far removed from the everyday experience of ourselves and our world. What happened to mar the image of God in us? The answer, of course, is sin. We know from Revelation that Adam, the first man, disobeyed God and lost the rectitude of soul in which he was made, a rectitude which he received not only for himself but for all of humanity.

By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a *personal sin*, but this sin affected the *human nature* that they would then transmit *in a fallen state*. It is a sin which will be transmitted by propagation to all mankind, that is, by the transmission of a human nature deprived of original holiness and justice. (CSDC, no. 115; CCC, no. 404)

Original sin is not a sin that we committed. Nevertheless, we inherit it from our first parents. We experience its effects in manifold ways: We are subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death (CCC, no. 405). Worst of all, we are inclined to sin – to do those things that lead us away from our true ultimate end, God. As Vatican II teaches,

What Divine Revelation makes known to us agrees with experience. Examining his heart, man finds that he has inclinations toward evil too, and is engulfed by manifold ills which cannot come from his good Creator. Often refusing to acknowledge God as his beginning, man has disrupted also his proper relationship to his own ultimate goal, as well as his whole relationship toward himself and others and all created things.

Therefore man is split within himself. As a result, all of human life, whether individual or collective, shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, man finds that by himself he is incapable of battling the assaults of evil successfully, so that everyone feels as though he is bound by chains.

But the Lord himself came to free and strengthen man, renewing him inwardly and casting out that “prince of this world” (Jn 12:31) who held him in the bondage of sin. For sin has diminished man, blocking his path to fulfillment. (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 13)

The wound which is present in one’s inmost self gives rise to personal and social divisions. Insofar as it is an act of separation from God, sin leads to alienation, and in several ways. We are not only alienated from God, but also from ourselves, from other people, and from the world.

“Man’s rupture with God leads tragically to divisions between brothers. In the description of the ‘first sin,’ the rupture with Yahweh simultaneously breaks the bond of friendship that had united the human family. Thus the subsequent pages of Genesis show us the man and the woman as it were pointing an accusing finger at each other (cf. Gen 3:12). Later we have brother hating brother and finally taking his brother’s life (cf. Gen 4:2-16). According to the Babel story, the result of sin is the shattering of the human family, already begun with the first sin and now reaching its most extreme form on the social level.” (CSDC, no. 116, quoting John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, no. 15)

Yet, amidst all this division and destruction, there is good news. Even when we abandoned God, he did not abandon us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to save us and to restore the brilliance of the image of God in us. Jesus accomplished this through his life, Death, and Resurrection.

The new reality – the life of grace – that Christ gives us by virtue of his redemption is a communion with God “to which men and women have always been oriented in the depths of their being, thanks to their creaturely likeness to God. But this is also a reality that people cannot attain by their own forces alone” (CSDC, no. 122). Rather, he makes his gifts available to us through his Church. Though we still must cope with the effects of sin and battle against our inclinations to evil, these gifts provide a tremendous and indispensable help in setting our path aright. We are now capable of living the life of Christ, in communion with God and with others.

B. Pastoral Priorities Regarding Human Dignity

1. Promote an Understanding of the Social Doctrine of the Church in its Wholeness

The truth about the human person is at the heart of all pastoral activity in the Church, both as its starting point and with respect to its ultimate goal (CSDC, no. 527). Foundationally, this truth includes our intrinsic dignity, our fall into sin, and our redemption in Christ. How else can we begin to discern the nature of the problems that affect our relationships with each other and propose realistic solutions, except by reference to these fundamental realities? Can issues regarding human life, justice, peace, work, economic development, and international relations be surmounted without reference to the Gospel and its imperative that we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves?

The social doctrine of the Church is a set of teachings, grounded in Sacred Scripture and illumined by faith, that treat the whole ensemble of human associations, relationships, and communities – those things that flow from our nature as social beings. It is part of the moral theology of the Church (CSDC, no. 72). In addition to the principle of the dignity of the human person, the Church proposes three other principles – the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity – as the absolutely fundamental points of departure in our reasoning about social realities. Taken together, they strike a careful balance between the needs of freedom and the demands of social responsibility. Without appreciating them in their interrelatedness, one quickly falls prey to the distortions of one ideology or another (cf. CSDC, no. 162).

For this reason, this *Plan for Parishes* urges that all Social Concerns Committees and all other groups within the diocese working to address various ills in society come to a deeper understanding of the social doctrine of the Church in its wholeness. It directs the diocese's Office of Ministries and Social Concerns to develop presentations and resources to foster this knowledge.

2. Emphasize the Importance of the Church's Teaching on Human Life

If the social doctrine of the Church is not understood as a coherent whole, it is not really understood at all. That, however, does not hinder us from emphasizing certain portions of it that are particularly relevant to our own particular situation. One of these areas is human life. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that human life is sacred. "From its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: No one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being" (CCC, no. 2258, quoting *Donum Vitae*, Introduction 5).

Of all human rights, the right to life is foundational, since it is the condition for the exercise of all other rights (CSDC, no. 155). As Pope John Paul II explains,

The inviolability of the person, which is a reflection of the absolute inviolability of God, finds its primary and fundamental expression in the inviolability of human life. Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights – for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture – is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination. (*Christifideles Laici*, no. 38)

All forms of taking innocent human life are prohibited, as being serious (mortal) sins. These include intentional homicide, abortion, euthanasia, and embryonic stem-cell research. The Church now also teaches that capital punishment is to be avoided in modern society, where the government can render the offender incapable of doing harm without taking his life (CCC, 1997 edition, no. 2267; *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 56).

The diocese will profit from a deeper appreciation of the Church's teachings on life issues. This knowledge will strengthen our witness by crystallizing our reasons for our efforts in defense of life, and help us to evangelize those who are open to sharing our convictions. Our recent diocesan biomedical ethics conferences, organized by the Office of Family Life Education, have sought to convey this information, especially in areas where the medical techniques and practices involved have made it more difficult to discern how to act as followers of Christ.

At the same time, we must always be ready to suggest and facilitate life-affirming options to those in difficult situations, such as those experiencing an unplanned pregnancy or those whose family member is approaching the end of life. We must also stand ready to provide assistance to those dealing with the aftermath of a decision opposing life. Catholic Charities has been in the forefront of our efforts in these areas, offering counseling services to those affected by post-abortion trauma and empowering clients with an unplanned pregnancy to choose adoption. This work must continue.

3. Underscore the Importance of the Freedom of Religion in Society

In a certain way, one can say that the principle that gives rise to the right to life and all other human rights is religious freedom. In this sense, religious freedom is "the right to live in the truth of one's faith and in conformity with one's transcendent dignity as a person" (CSDC, no. 155, quoting Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 47). The Church's teaching on religious freedom received its first full expression at the Second Vatican Council. It said:

This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.

The Council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed Word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed, and thus it is to become a civil right. (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 2 §§1-2)

Since we are created in the image of God and have God for our ultimate end, we seek God as a function of human nature. To the extent that we can discover the truth about God, we are obliged to act according to that truth. We are harmed insofar as our path to God is thwarted; our fulfillment as human persons is compromised. "Injury, therefore, is done to the human person and to the very order established by God for human life, if the free exercise of religion is denied in society, provided just public order is observed" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 3 §4).

From its founding, the United States has maintained a strong tradition of religious liberty. Indeed, religious liberty is our "first freedom," inscribed in the First Amendment to the Constitution. It states plainly, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Yet today we find this most precious freedom increasingly under attack. Most notably, in 2011 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a mandate that will force companies and religious institutions that do not meet a very narrow exemption to fund health insurance plans that include coverage for contraception, sterilization, and abortion-inducing drugs. This mandate will force Catholic Church organizations to choose between violating their consciences or compromising their mission. Our Catholic

faith calls on us to provide food, education, health care, and social services to everyone in need – not just Catholics. This calling – ultimately, to lead the life of Christ – disqualifies us from the exemption.

Nor is the HHS mandate the only recent assault on our religious liberty in our country. Catholic Charities has been forced to discontinue its adoption and foster care services in several cities and in at least one state. This is because they refused, based on a religious conviction, to place children with same-sex couples and with unmarried opposite-sex couples who were living together. Additionally, the federal government disqualified a department of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops from administering contract services for victims of human trafficking because they declined to refer clients for contraception and abortion services. (For more information on this topic, see the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' 2012 Statement on Religious Liberty, *Our First, Most Cherished Liberty*.)

This ominous trend, which has gathered momentum in recent years, must be reversed. We must restore the rights of individuals and organizations in our society to act in accordance with their religious convictions and the dictates of their conscience. Catholics must join in this effort. Under this *Plan for Parishes*, the diocese and parishes need to educate the faithful about this threat and to help them find ways to repel it.

4. Strengthen Efforts at the Parish Level to Reach Out to the Poor and Marginalized

The first words of the Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* articulate the Church's special concern for the poor and marginalized: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ" (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 1).

Our obligation to our brothers and sisters in need is anchored in the social nature of the human person. It flows from the second of Christ's Great Commandments, that we love our neighbor as ourselves (Mk 12:31). In other places, Sacred Scripture is more specific. In Luke's Gospel, Christ tells us, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise" (3:11).

The *Catechism* teaches that the Church's love for the poor "is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor" (no. 2444). By alleviating their suffering, we imitate Christ in his office of servant-king, using the goods of this world for the benefit of others. The *Catechism* also explains why this love is a *preferential* one:

In its various forms – material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death – human misery is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin. This misery elicited the compassion of Christ the Savior, who willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with the least of his brethren. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church (no. 2448)

While "giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity" (CCC, no. 2447), our love for our brothers and sisters is expressed whenever we perform a work of mercy for someone in need. In our society, there are many poor and vulnerable people who require our attention: the unborn child, the hungry, the homeless, the imprisoned, victims of injustice, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and the terminally ill.

The Diocese of New Ulm has enjoyed a long history of reaching out to the poor and marginalized – as a diocese, in area faith communities, and in parishes. Often this work is carried out in cooperation with other local ecclesial communities, so that the work is truly ecumenical in character.

This *Plan for Parishes* calls for these efforts to help those in need to continue. Exercising their prudential judgment, pastoral leaders together with parishioners should discern the most efficacious ways to serve those most in need. In some areas, this can be accomplished best through the work of an area Social Concerns Committee. In other areas, pastoral leaders may prefer to work with other groups conducting this work, such as the Council of Catholic Women or the Knights of Columbus.

5. Educate Catholics on the Importance of Carrying Out Their Civic Responsibilities

Inherent in the dignity of the human person is the obligation to participate in social life. As individuals and in the various groups that we form, we must take responsibility for furthering the common good. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* counts among avenues of participation those actions by which “the citizen, either as an individual or in association with others, whether directly or through representation, contributes to the cultural, economic, political, and social life of the civil community to which he belongs” (CSDC, no. 189; CCC, no. 1913; *Faithful Citizenship*, no. 13).

It emphasizes that in a democracy, participation among the citizens is especially urgent. “Democratic government, in fact, is defined first of all by the assignment of powers and functions on the part of the people, exercised in their name, in their regard and on their behalf. It is therefore clearly evident that every democracy must be participative” (no. 190).

The virtue by which we pursue the good of the political community is called citizenship. It can be practiced in many ways in a democracy such as ours. Some people, by virtue of their understanding of the issues that face our government and their ability to persuade people, might be called to run for elected office. Others might be called to work for a government organization. Still others may be called to lobby for specific legislation or to organize groups to pursue this activity. Many of us are capable of educating others about issues of importance in our society. Voting for those candidates who we are convinced will do the best job in promoting the common good is the least we can do.

Yet how do we know which candidates are preferable, which issues are most pressing, and, in the final analysis, which paths will lead to genuine human flourishing? As faithful citizens, we must begin our consideration of these matters with reference to the social doctrine of the Church. Priorities arise on several fronts: the defense of human life and other human rights, the necessity of avoiding war and promoting peace, the strengthening of families, the option for the poor and vulnerable, recognition of the dignity and rights of workers, and care for the environment (cf. *Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 40-54). Yet, as we have seen, the Church teaches that there is an order among these values: Human life must be defended with maximum determination. Our efforts as a diocese to educate the faithful on their civic responsibilities, then, will flow from our commitment to teach the social doctrine of the Church in its wholeness.

C. Marriage and Family Life: A Reflection of God’s Love

Our vocation as human persons can be summed up in a few simple words: We are called to love. Just as God created us out of love, so we also are called to love. The *Catechism* calls this “the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being” (CCC, no. 1604). This teaching is grounded in the words of Genesis, “God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him” (1:27). Since God is love, the human person must also love in imitation of his Creator.

To love aright, we must seek the true good for ourselves and for others. Seeking these things will lead to our fulfillment as human persons. God did not leave it up to us to love in any way that we might see fit. Rather, he introduced a structure into our loves, an order corresponding to his divine law and his natural law. The existence of that order is revealed in the very next line from Genesis: “Male and female he created them” (1:27). Then we are told how this order is directed to our fulfillment: “God blessed them, saying: ‘Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it’” (1:28).

Hence, from the time of our first parents, man and woman in every culture have come together to form an intimate union, following the designs that God has inscribed in their inmost being. This union we call marriage. As the *Catechism* explains, “The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring” (no. 1601). Even on a natural level, husband and wife seek to love each other with an exclusive and permanent love. The mutual love expressed in their conjugal embrace helps them become one in mind and heart, facilitating their ability to love and educate the children that result from their union.

From the beginning, God not only intended that marriage have a natural dignity; he wanted to give it a supernatural meaning as well. The Father revealed this higher meaning through his Son, Jesus Christ, and enabled married couples to live out this new reality through the graces bestowed on them by his Church. The *Catechism* puts it succinctly: “This covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament” (no. 1601). By leading husband and wife to give themselves to each other and to their children, marriage already contributes greatly to the temporal good of family members. Now, transformed by Christ through his sacrament, the spouses are able to love each other and their children in a way that fosters their growth in holiness.

The Second Vatican Council’s *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* beautifully expresses the sacramental dignity of marriage. It says that through his grace, Christ comes into the lives of Christians in the Sacrament of Matrimony and remains with them so that they can love each other with the perpetual fidelity of self-giving love. In this way, they imitate their Lord and Savior, who gave himself completely to his Bride, the Church. The living out of their Christian vocation in marriage facilitates the sanctification of the whole family:

Authentic married love is caught up into divine love and is governed and enriched by Christ’s redeeming power and the saving activity of the Church, so that this love may lead the spouses to God with powerful effect and may aid and strengthen them in sublime office of being a father or a mother. . . . By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligation, they are penetrated with the spirit of Christ, which suffuses their whole lives with faith, hope, and charity. Thus they increasingly advance the perfection of their own personalities, as well as their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God.

As a result, with their parents leading the way by example and family prayer, children and indeed everyone gathered around the family hearth will find a readier path to human maturity, salvation, and holiness. (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 48 §§3-4)

The love of husband and wife in marriage finds its ultimate meaning and its source of life in the cross of Christ. Christ died to cleanse us of our sins and to make us holy. His supreme love for his Bride, the Church, serves as a model for married couples. In his Letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul expresses this truth powerfully: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word ‘For this reason a man shall leave [his] father and [his] mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church” (5:25-26, 31-32). Marriage between baptized

persons is a sacrament because it both signifies and communicates Christ's grace (see CCC, nos. 1615-1617).

D. Pastoral Priorities Regarding Marriage and Family Life

1. Cultivate a Better Understanding of the Church's Teaching on Marriage and Family Life

In God's plan, marriage is invested with an importance that goes beyond the good of the spouses and the good of their children. The good of society and the entire human race is implicated. The Second Vatican Council teaches, "God himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes. All of these have a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race, on the personal development and eternal destiny of the individual members of a family, and on the dignity, stability, peace, and prosperity of the family itself and of human society as a whole" (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 48 §1).

More and more people seem to have forgotten that marriage is based on human nature for the good of the spouses, their children, and society as a whole. When raised to the level of a sacrament, it is an outstanding and noble way of pursuing Christian perfection. Instead, people increasingly think that it is merely conventional, a product of choice that can be altered according to the desires of individuals and their governments.

The need for the Marriage Protection Amendment in Minnesota and the debate surrounding it aptly demonstrate that marriage has come under attack in our society. At the root of this movement is, of course, sin. The *Catechism* says, "As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. Their relations were distorted by mutual recriminations; their mutual attraction, the Creator's own gift, changed into a relationship of domination and lust" (no. 1607). Power and pleasure begin to redefine our most intimate human relations. In our day and age, this is often manifested as a distorted appeal to freedom "conceived not as a capacity for realizing the truth of God's plan for marriage and the family, but as an autonomous power of self-affirmation, often against others, for one's own selfish well-being" (Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 6).

In his apostolic exhortation *On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, Pope John Paul II points to several practices prevalent in today's society that are signs of a refusal of God's love when he established marriage and family life. These include "the growing number of divorces, the scourge of abortion, the ever more frequent recourse to sterilization, [and] the appearance of a truly contraceptive mentality" (*Familiaris Consortio*, no. 6). Other problems are specifically associated with the sacrament: "the acceptance of purely civil marriage in contradiction to the vocation of the baptized to 'be married in the Lord,' [and] the celebration of the marriage sacrament without living faith, but for other motives" (no. 7). Still other behaviors oppose the human person's call to chastity, the successful integration of sexuality within the person. Prevalent examples of these are fornication, pornography, prostitution, homosexual relations, and adultery (see CCC, nos. 2337, 2353-2359, 2380-2381).

How can we combat these various defects in a truly human and Christ-centered vision of marriage if we do not know, first and foremost, what marriage is? How can husband and wife enrich their own love for each other and foster the good of their children unless they understand the beautiful way of life that they are called to live? Our first step to restore marriage to its rightful, exalted status must be to offer sound catechesis in this area. The teachings found in several magisterial documents from recent popes will form a solid foundation for this initiative. These include Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* (1968); Pope John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio* (1981), *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988), and *Evangelium Vitae* (1995); and Pope Benedict XVI's *Deus Caritas Est* (2005).

2. Promote Pope John Paul II's Teaching on the Theology of the Body

Perhaps the most compelling new articulation of the Church's understanding of the human person has come in the form of Pope John Paul II's theology of the body. These teachings focus on the bodily dimension of the human person as revealed in the light of Christ. The pope gave these teachings at his regular Wednesday papal audiences between September 1979 and November 1984. Together, the audiences form a cohesive catechesis on human personhood, sexuality, marriage, sin, and redemption, especially as they concern the body – all from the perspective of biblical Revelation. (For more information, see John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*, with a forward by John S. Grabowski, especially pages 16-18.)

An understanding of the theology of the body will be highly advantageous to the faithful of our diocese. The pope's biblical analysis sheds new light on several experiences of our first parents: Adam's ability to express his subjectivity and freedom through his body; his longing for another being like himself; his joy at being united to another person, different and yet complementary. The union of Adam and Eve shows that the body has a "nuptial" meaning, pointing the way toward the family and other forms of community. The pope then goes on to discuss sin as bringing about a situation where the body is no longer subordinated to the spirit and therefore is unable to express the person as it should. Christ's redemption of humanity changes this; he makes it possible for men and women to be united in a permanent, loving union as God intended from the beginning.

Under this *Plan for Parishes*, the Office of Family Life will lay the groundwork for a comprehensive theology of the body initiative in the diocese. This will include evaluating and implementing programs for all ages. For our youth, religious education programs and courses in Catholic schools will be assessed to see how the theology of the body might be integrated into the material that is already being taught. Opportunities for chastity education, which will provide age-appropriate programming involving children and their parents, will also be explored. For adults, the Office needs to offer programming that demonstrates the comprehensive nature of Pope John Paul II's profound reflection on the human person as revealed in the person of Christ. This will allow participants to appreciate more fully the Church's teaching on marriage and family life, as well as its whole social doctrine.

3. Enrich and Develop Programs to Foster Authentic Christian Marriage

Once the truth and beauty of God's call to marriage and family life is understood, it must then be lived in its integrity. Even in today's society, the Church assures us that this is possible: "Jesus has not placed on spouses a burden impossible to bear, or too heavy – heavier than the Law of Moses. By coming to restore the original order of creation disturbed by sin, he himself gives the strength and grace to live marriage in the new dimension of the Reign of God" (CCC, no. 1615). Everyone must bear a portion of the responsibility to help married couples live out their vocation. This includes public authority, individual Christians, those schooled in the sciences, priests, family associations, and the spouses themselves (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 52 §§3-8).

This *Plan for Parishes* calls for the Office of Family Life to review the diocesan marriage and remarriage programs to ensure that they communicate the Church's teaching on marriage and family life in its fullness. Instruction offered by other dioceses and other organizations should be explored with a view to implementing them or integrating their most successful features into our programs. This will give couples in our parishes who are preparing for marriage access to the most effective formation possible. We also need to develop opportunities to provide continuing education for the mentor couples involved in our marriage programs.

In addition to forming our couples preparing for marriage, we also need to encourage and support those who are already married. In the past, parishes have sponsored various activities to celebrate marriage and to enhance spousal communication and intimacy. These efforts must continue. Under this *Plan for Parishes*, the Office of Family Life should implement a marriage enrichment program, which will be offered to couples at the area faith community or parish levels. It should also develop plans for an annual Mass (or Masses) with the bishop for married couples celebrating major wedding anniversaries.

4. Promote the Practice of Natural Family Planning Among Christian Couples

The *Catechism* reaffirms the constant teaching of the Church that recourse to artificial methods of contraception is objectively sinful. Quoting Pope Paul VI's encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*, it says that "each and every marriage act must remain open 'per se' to the transmission of life." The doctrine "is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act" (CCC, no. 2366; *Humanae Vitae*, nos. 11-12).

This does not mean that married couples are forbidden from spacing the births of their children. On the contrary, the regulation of births falls within their duty to exercise responsible parenthood, so long as it is done in a spirit of generosity and love (CCC, no. 2368). This can be accomplished by abstaining from the marital embrace during a woman's fertile periods. Again, the *Catechism* takes its teaching from *Humanae Vitae*:

Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality. These methods respect the bodies of the spouses, encourage tenderness between them, and favor the education of an authentic freedom. In contrast, "every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible" is intrinsically evil. (CCC, no. 2370; *Humanae Vitae*, 14, 16)

In other words, the nature of the conjugal act as established by God must be respected. Only then can the couple achieve "the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love" (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 51 §3). Perhaps even more compelling is Pope John Paul II's expression of this truth in the language of the body. In the act of conjugal love, husband and wife express their total self-gift to one another through their bodies. Contraception introduces into the act "an objectively contradictory language, namely, of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality" (*Familiaris Consortio*, no. 32 §4).

Natural Family Planning (NFP) encompasses a set of methods to discover a woman's signs of fertility so that married couples can achieve or avoid pregnancy. A priority of this *Plan for Parishes* is to increase awareness and use of NFP among married couples in our diocese, so that they can regulate the births of their children in conformity with God's loving plan. First off all, this means educating couples in the advantages of NFP – which are not only spiritual and moral, but psychological and physical as well. A well-rounded introduction to NFP must be a major component of diocesan marriage programs. Furthermore, in order to learn and practice these techniques successfully, couples need well qualified NFP teachers. An increase in the number of couples interested in practicing NFP will entail the need for more NFP instructors. Preferably, we will be able to cultivate instructors with expertise using different methods, so that couples will have a choice. In the end, a diocesan-wide approach to NFP will be most effective. This commitment will include continuing education for NFP instructors on an annual basis.

5. Energize the Faithful to Work for Laws Supporting Marriage as Intended by God

In the debate over the Minnesota Marriage Protection Amendment, some people questioned whether the Church should be involved in a political matter. To answer, we must remind ourselves what marriage is. In his apostolic exhortation *On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, Pope John Paul II writes that marriage is a “covenant of conjugal love freely and consciously chosen, whereby man and woman accept the intimate community of life and love willed by God himself” (*Familiaris Consortio*, no. 11). There is a special love required for marriage. It is different from the love between friends, or between parent and child, or between us and God. It is called marital love and is characterized by a man and a woman who give themselves to one another in faithfulness, permanence, and openness to the begetting and raising of children.

Our age seems preoccupied with maximizing the freedom and satisfaction of adults. In this climate, it is easy to forget that marriage, while fostering the good of the spouses, is also *for* children. Since they are made in the image of God and possess the intrinsic dignity of human persons, children have a right to be conceived through the total self-gift of the marital embrace. They also have a right to be nurtured and educated by a mother and a father who are husband and wife. At times, circumstances beyond the control of the spouses, such as death, cause these rights to remain unrealized. Yet the State must not encourage situations where these rights are neglected. Teaching on the welfare of marriage and the family, Vatican II taught, “Public authority should regard it as a sacred duty to recognize, protect, and promote their authentic nature, to shield public morality and to favor the prosperity of home life” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 52 §3).

Children are the future of our nation. Every nation that values its future must take care to ensure that marriage and families are protected. In strong families, the next generation will be brought up to be virtuous, responsible citizens. The need to foster the good of families as God created them has important consequences in law and policy. For example, divorce should not be made easy. The evil of adultery should not be ignored. Pornography, due to its close connection with infidelity, should be prohibited to the maximum extent possible. Unmarried couples and same-sex couples should not be allowed to adopt children.

Under this *Plan for Parishes*, the excellent work of the sort that began to promote the Marriage Protection Amendment must continue. In addition to educating the faithful on the nature of marriage and family life, we must also point out concrete ways of promoting them in our state and in our nation. The flourishing of marriage and family life depends very much on whether public authority recognizes and follows through on its duty to protect it. It is incumbent on all citizens in a democracy to ensure that it does so.

E. Catholic Charities: The Gift of Ourselves as a Diocese to Those in Need

The Second Vatican Council’s *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* says that “Christ was sent by the Father ‘to bring good news to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart’ (Lk 4:18), ‘to seek and to save what was lost’ (Lk 19:10). Similarly, the Church encompasses with love all who are afflicted with human suffering and in the poor and afflicted sees the image of its poor and suffering founder. It does all it can to relieve their need, and in them it strives to serve Christ” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 8). By attending to the needs of the poor and suffering, we utilize our gifts for the sake of others. This is one of the chief ways that we imitate Christ, the servant-king. In 2007, Catholic Charities was re-established in the Diocese of New Ulm to pursue this mission.

One of the stewardship goals under the diocesan priorities of the *Third Plan for Parishes* was to establish an annual diocesan appeal (p. 7). At the time it was drafted, then-Bishop John C. Nienstedt was concerned

that the counseling and mental health services provided by various public, private, and church-sponsored organizations in the region were declining. The idea that an annual appeal would provide the needed funding for the creation and ongoing support for a Catholic Charities program in the diocese received strong support among pastoral leaders. Proceeds from the first annual Diocesan Ministries Appeal (DMA) in 2006 permitted the diocese to lay the groundwork for a new department. In 2007, a Catholic Charities director was recruited, staff was hired, an advisory board was convened, policies were developed, and relationships with insurance companies were formalized.

Catholic Charities saw its first clients in November 2007. Counselors were made available and are now available at scheduled times in four offices strategically located throughout the diocese – in Willmar, Marshall, Hutchinson, and New Ulm. Throughout its short history, these locations have served clients well, ensuring access in most major population centers of the diocese. The DMA remains an indispensable source of funding for Catholic Charities services. As of the end of 2012, some 4,500 people have been served in response to crisis; about 650 individuals, couples, and families have received counseling services; and 6,100 people have enjoyed the benefit of hearing presentations or participating in workshops organized by Catholic Charities staff.

These are Catholic Charities' core services, as refined by their Advisory Committee and promoted in the parishes:

1. **Individual, Marriage, and Family Counseling** – Counselors address issues related to individual stress or family conflict, chemical dependency, communications breakdowns, domestic violence, parenting skills, and mental health needs. Mediation, group conflict resolution, and employee assistance counseling are also offered.
2. **Pregnancy and Adoption Counseling** – Pregnancy support services include assistance with future planning, finding resources, preparing for the birth of a child, and relationship counseling. Information on adoption and help in discerning an adoption plan are also offered, as well as resources for people interested in adopting a child.
3. **Crisis Response for Parishes and Communities** – Counselors and affiliated staff work with individuals, families, schools, and parishes to address needs, supply emergency resource materials, and/or develop emergency response services in the wake of a tragic death, accident, or natural disaster in or around the Diocese of New Ulm.
4. **Transition and Grief Services** – Counseling, support group referrals, volunteer outreach, and educational services are provided for individuals and families experiencing a loss from separation, death, or a similar tragedy.

In addition, Catholic Charities provides Project Rachel post-abortion counseling for those seeking healing, reconciliation, or spiritual direction following an abortion. They counsel and evaluate couples preparing for marriage and remarriage when difficulties are identified at the request of pastoral leaders, parish pastoral staff, or the diocesan marriage Tribunal. They make behavioral health presentations to parishes, schools, and communities. They provide spiritual direction and make referrals to others providing this service. Finally, they maintain collaborative relationships with other church and non-profit organizations offering specific services that Catholic Charities currently cannot afford to provide, so that clients' needs can be met in a timely way. Referrals are made regarding immigration services, financial counseling, and guardianship and conservator relationships.

Following the recommendation of Catholic Charities' advisors, the bishop has been clear about the organization's direction: They must stay focused on their core services. The advisory board meets with

the director and staff four times per year. Their spring planning meeting includes the bishop. It involves the approval of the budget for the upcoming fiscal year and consideration of adjustments in services. Changes that are approved by the bishop become part of the department's goals and initiatives in future years.

F. Maintaining Safe Environments for Children and Young People

Our obligation as a Church to protect children and young people and to prevent sexual abuse flows from the mission of Jesus Christ. As servant-king, Christ exercised dominion over his own body and used the goods of this world for the good of others. In seeing to the pastoral governance of the Church, the bishop and his priests have a special responsibility: They must make sure that the children and young people who come to worship, learn, and participate in various parish and diocesan programs can do so in a safe and secure environment. This responsibility is shared by religious and lay people who work for the Church and participate in their pastoral care.

In the preamble to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the bishops of the United States trace their commitment to preventing sexual abuse to the constant care that Jesus showed for the vulnerable. They quote the words from the prophet Isaiah, with which he inaugurated his ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord (Lk 4:18-19)." Again, they remind us that in Matthew's Gospel, the Lord tells his disciples that whenever they show mercy and compassion to the least ones, they show it to him (Mt 25:40).

The Diocese of New Ulm has undertaken many initiatives to implement the *Charter* since it was first promulgated in 2002. We have instituted policies and procedures to respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. The bishop has appointed Victim Assistance Coordinators to reach out to victims and their families, demonstrating a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. He has established a diocesan review board, which offers confidential advice regarding such allegations and the suitability of clerics for continued ministry. We have established clear standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and other Church workers who have contact with children and young people. We are committed to follow the norms of the *Charter*.

In our efforts to implement the *Charter*, we have also developed a comprehensive safe environment program to educate clergy, teachers, catechists, parents, and students. It has been extended to include mandatory participation by all diocesan and parish employees, and all volunteers having contact with children and young adults. This program helps these people to identify instances of sexual misconduct and instructs them on how to prevent this behavior.

Under this *Plan for Parishes*, we must continue to improve on this program, complying with the increasingly high standards set for us by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. We must also stay committed to offer help and healing to those who have been victims of sexual misconduct. The diocese's Office of Safe Environment is primarily responsible for making sure that these initiatives are carried out. However, it can only do so with the ongoing cooperation and assistance of the other diocesan offices and pastoral leaders. Pastors and pastoral administrators must continue to work for the success of the diocesan safe environment program in their parishes.

G. Care for God's Creation and the Dignity of Rural Life

The Diocese of New Ulm is one of the most rural dioceses in the United States. In the middle of the summer, field after field of corn, wheat, sugar beets, and soybeans stand in testimony to its rural character, as do the farms on which are raised hogs, turkeys, sheep, beef and dairy cattle, and even alpacas.

Fr. John McRaith, a priest from our diocese who later became bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky, was named executive director of The National Catholic Rural Life Conference (NCRLC) on January 1, 1972. Founded in 1923, this organization joined Catholics in a common effort to serve the rural Church, rural people, and their communities.

Fr. McRaith inspired many not to give up on the rural Church, insisting that food and land and other natural resources must be understood and treated as gifts from a loving Creator to meet the needs of all. In the mid-1970s, the NCRLC board of directors adopted major policy statements that reflected on land use, energy, and water.

In the late 1970s, Bishop Raymond A. Lucker collaborated with other bishops in the Midwest on a statement addressing land issues from a Catholic moral perspective. They were concerned that land ownership throughout America's agricultural heartland was becoming concentrated in fewer hands and that its management was being increasingly controlled by corporate interests. The resulting document, *Strangers and Guests: Toward Community in the Heartland*, provides a history and analysis of land issues, discusses the moral principles of sound land stewardship, and challenges the Church to seek a better future for rural life through prayer, preaching, and public witness. In a poignant passage, it describes the central role of the family farm:

The family farm has helped to form the heartland's heritage. It has occupied most of the land in this region, and therefore is the focal point for most discussions of land ownership or use. It has played a key role as a way of life that preserves and promotes such values as faith, hope, perseverance, generosity, trustworthiness, honesty, and concern for neighbor. It has helped promote harmony among rural people and between rural people and the land which provides their livelihood. It has helped foster concern for the other people who depend on its production for their very sustenance. It has inspired care of the land as a limited natural resource. On the family farm have been celebrated and affirmed many rural Americans' identity as a people and their contribution to the wellbeing of all peoples. The values which people have derived from their vocation as family farmers have helped promote the stability, harmony, and prosperity of rural communities. (no. 24)

The principles of land stewardship enumerated in the document are grounded in Sacred Scripture and in the teaching tradition of the Church. They are:

1. The land is God's.
2. People are God's stewards on the land.
3. The land's benefits are for everyone.
4. The land should be distributed equitably.
5. The land should be conserved and restored.
6. Land-use planning must consider social and environmental impacts.
7. Land use should be appropriate to land quality.
8. The land should provide a moderate livelihood.
9. The land's workers should be able to become the land's owners.
10. The land's mineral wealth should be shared.

All these principles, according to the statement, are applicable to the heartland (no. 50) and therefore to the Diocese of New Ulm. Explanations of each principle can be found in the document (nos. 51-77) and on the NCRLC's Web site (www.ncrlc.com).

Today, the Diocese of New Ulm continues to apply the teachings of the Church related to rural life. Borrowing a line from the mission statement of the NCRLC, the diocese applies the teachings of Jesus Christ to the social, economic, and spiritual aspects of rural America, encouraging the care of God's creation and a sound respect for the dignity of the human person.

In the homily at his inauguration Mass, our new Holy Father, Pope Francis, explained the far-reaching implications of our responsibility to care for creation. Drawing from the example of St. Joseph as a protector of Mary, Jesus, and the Church, the pope said that our vocation of being a "protector" means to protect

all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis and St. Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families

Speaking specifically about the care of resources, Pope Benedict has said: "In the current economic situation, the temptation for the more dynamic economies is that of chasing after advantageous alliances that, nevertheless, can have harmful effects for poorer states, prolonging situations of extreme mass poverty of men and women and using up the earth's natural resources, entrusted to man by God the Creator – as Genesis says – that he might cultivate and protect it (cf. 2:15)."

"Moreover," the pope continues,

despite the crisis, in countries that have long been industrialized, lifestyles marked by unsustainable consumption – which have damaging effects for the environment and the poor – still continue. It is necessary, then, to point in a truly unified way to a new balance between agriculture, industry, and services, so that development be sustainable, and no one go without bread and work, and so that air and water and the other primary resources be preserved as universal goods (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 27). (Pope Benedict XVI, Weekly Angelus Address, November 14, 2010)

In addition, Pope Benedict has highlighted the importance of agricultural life in the formation of families, which are the living cells of culture. He states:

In the rural world, the traditional family nucleus is endeavoring to promote agricultural production through the wise transmission by parents to their children not only of systems of cultivation or of the preservation and distribution of food, but also of lifestyles, principles of education, culture, the religious sense, and the conception of the sacredness of the person in all the stages of his or her existence. The rural family is not only a work model, but a model of living and a concrete expression of solidarity, in which the essential role of women is confirmed." (Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Attendees of the Thirty-Seventh Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, July 1, 2011)

Bringing these fundamental points of Catholic teaching together, Dr. Christopher Thompson of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, explains:

The Church has a long tradition, going back decades, which speaks about the importance of agriculture, especially its dignity. The farmer was seen to cooperate with God's creative order, as a . . . steward of the earth's resources. Animals were not mere things, and a farm was anything but a "factory." Instead, the farm was the ideal place to engage in the original vocation of the human person – to till and to keep the earth. The family farm, the Church argued, was the ideal circumstance in which to raise the next generation, because it united men and women, children and the aged, in the common and noble task of drawing forth the fruits of the earth for the good of man and the glory of God. ("NCRLC Board Member Presents at Vatican Conference: An Interview with Dr. Christopher Thompson," *Catholic Rural Life*, Fall 2011, as found on the NCRLC Web site)

The Diocese of New Ulm remains committed as always to the proper stewardship of the land and the dignity of rural life, especially on the family farm. It also promotes the protection of our environment, which includes not only our land, but also our surface and ground water and the air that we breathe. Accordingly, this *Plan for Parishes* calls upon the diocesan Offices of Ministries and Social Concerns to identify and develop resources on these topics for distribution to parishes. These resources should be presented or at least listed with links on the diocesan Web site. For their part, priests should preach and teach on these topics, so that the faithful come to a better appreciation of the great nobility of life that many of them still enjoy.

H. Stewardship: Making Good Use of the Things Entrusted to Us

The exercise of stewardship over creation and the material world is an exercise of the kingly office of Jesus. Jesus always used the things of this world for the benefit of others. For example, he multiplied the loaves and the fish to feed people, he changed water into wine for the benefit of those at the wedding feast, and so forth. When we imitate Christ by using material things for the benefit of others, we participate in his kingly office.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: "In the beginning, God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labor, and enjoy their fruits. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race" (no. 2402). No one has an absolute right to the goods of the earth, especially when others lack the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, and shelter.

A good principle to remember comes from the *Catechism*: "In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself. The ownership of any property makes its holder a steward of Providence, with the task of making it fruitful and communicating its benefits to others, first of all his family" (no. 2404). Everyone in the diocese is called to be aware of the true meaning of stewardship as stated in this principle.

Christ gives us further insight into the nature of stewardship in his parable of the talents (see Mt 25:14-30 and Lk 19:12-27). He compares the Kingdom of God to a man who goes away on a journey, leaving his wealth to be managed by three servants. Upon his return, he praises and rewards the two servants who invest their master's money wisely and produce a substantial return. However, he rebukes and punishes the servant who foolishly stores his money away and returns it without gain. In this parable, Christ teaches us that God expects us to render an account for the use of those resources that have been entrusted to our care. We use and develop them for our own good and share them for the good of others.

In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the United States bishops point out that the money in this parable does not stand just for our possessions. It represents all the goods entrusted to our care, since they are all gifts from God: “All temporal and spiritual goods are created by and come from God. That is true of everything human beings have: spiritual gifts like faith, hope, and love; talents of body and brain; cherished relationships with family and friends; material goods; the achievements of human genius and skill; the world itself” (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, p. 20). At the end of our earthly lives, God will require us to account for all the gifts we have been given. He will want to see that they have been used and cultivated for his glory and the benefit of others.

Since we are called upon to share not only our belongings (our “treasure”), but our time and talent as well, it seems that stewardship is all-encompassing. What kind of activity could we possibly engage in that does not involve our aptitudes, or at least some of our time? It appears that everything we do to imitate Christ implicates stewardship in some way. While there is truth to this observation, it is better to maintain the distinctions among Christ’s three offices and continue to view stewardship as a practice of the kingly office. This approach respects the essential character of the actions by which we imitate Christ. For example, singing in the choir at Mass without a doubt involves use of the choir members’ time and talent. Yet a chant or a hymn is properly regarded as a prayer, and praying is an act of worship. As such, this activity is more correctly viewed as a participation in Christ’s priestly office.

The exercise of stewardship is especially important in the lives of Christians because it cultivates gratitude, trust, and love. In their pastoral letter, the bishops explain that good stewardship begins with gratitude: “We are grateful for the gifts we have received and are eager to use them to show our love for God and for one another” (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, p. 42). Our thankfulness to God for the many blessings that he has given us leads us to want to give in return. Just as God has blessed us with what we have, we trust that he will also grant the increase through our use of them. Yet trusting or having confidence in God is already an act of love, for we always love those who we think will bring about our happiness. God first loved us first by giving us everything we have and are. Then he gave us Christ, through whom we can attain perfect happiness. We offer a fitting return to God by giving ourselves and all that we have back to God, just as Jesus did.

Stewardship, then, is a powerful way of understanding and living out Christian discipleship. What are some practical ways we can encourage this practice in the Diocese of New Ulm? First of all, an AFC or parish could establish a stewardship committee to guide its members to appreciate stewardship as a way of life and to develop the resources necessary to support the pursuit of Christ’s mission. Secondly, such a committee and/or members of the AFC/parish staff could implement a stewardship program; such guides are available from the diocesan Development Office. Thirdly, an AFC or parish could host a stewardship fair to make members aware of the many opportunities available for them to contribute their time, talent, and treasure. Fourthly, an AFC or parish could send representatives to attend a stewardship day held periodically on a regional level to discover best practices that might be applicable to their organization. Whatever avenues pastoral leaders decide to pursue, the diocesan Development Office stands ready to support them with consultation and resources.

CHAPTER 6. VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD AND CONSECRATED LIFE

Without a doubt the call to the ministerial priesthood or the consecrated life is a great good for the person who receives it. Yet God bestows these gifts for the benefit of the entire Church. Each vocation has two fundamental aspects: God's call and the disciple's response. The Church enters into this "dialogue" by assisting the disciple to discern and respond to God's gift. As members of the Church, we all share in the responsibility of promoting vocations.

Since we have already discussed the call to the consecrated life in Section One of this Plan, the first part of this chapter will focus primarily on fostering vocations to the ministerial priesthood. This discussion takes on particular urgency in view of our treatment of the growing shortage of priests in our diocese, as outlined in Section Five, Chapter Two.

A. The Universal Call to Foster Vocations to the Ministerial Priesthood

The call to the priesthood is a beautiful gift from God. In being configured to Christ, Head of the Church, the priest experiences extraordinary challenges in his life but also extraordinary joys (cf. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 11 §2). For the person who receives this call, it is a great good, a specific way of pursuing perfection in Christ. Yet it is also a gift to the whole Church, given so that she can accomplish her mission (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 41 §1).

The Second Vatican Council's *Decree on the Mission and Life of Priests* explains the essential ecclesial dimension of the priestly vocation: "Priests are made in the likeness of Christ the Priest by the Sacrament of Orders, so that they may, in collaboration with their bishops, work for the building up and care of the Church which is the whole Body of Christ, acting as ministers of him who is the Head" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 12). In his apostolic exhortation *On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day*, Pope John Paul II illuminates this teaching further: "Priestly ministry acquires its genuine meaning and attains to its fullest truth in serving and in fostering the growth of the Christian community and the common priesthood of the faithful" (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 37 §3).

In this letter, the pope explains that there are two fundamental aspects of a vocation, one on the side of the caller, the other on the side of the recipient:

The history of every priestly vocation, as indeed of every Christian vocation, is the history of an inexpressible dialogue between God and human beings, between the love of God who calls and the freedom of individuals who respond lovingly to him. These two indivisible aspects of vocation, God's gratuitous gift and the responsible freedom of human beings, are reflected in a splendid and very effective way in the brief words with which the evangelist Mark presents the calling of the Twelve: Jesus "went up into the hills, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him" (Mk 3:13). On the one hand, we have the completely free decision of Jesus; on the other, the "coming" of the Twelve, their "following" Jesus. (no. 36 §1)

The vocation to the priesthood – or any vocation, for that matter – reveals God's gracious love for the individual being called and at the same time the freedom of the person in responding to God's call and entrusting him- or herself to him (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 36 §5).

If a vocation is the function of a relationship between God and an individual, where does the Church come in? How does the Church understand her own role in fostering vocations? It starts with a reflection on the role of the apostle Andrew in bringing his brother Simon to Christ:

In her service to the priestly vocation and its development, that is, in the birth, discernment, and care of each vocation, the Church can look for her model to Andrew, one of the first two disciples who set out to follow Jesus. Andrew himself told his brother what had happened to him: “‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ)” (Jn 1:41). His account of this “discovery” opened the way to a meeting: “He brought him to Jesus” (Jn 1:42). There can be no doubt about the absolutely free initiative nor about the sovereign decision of Jesus. It is Jesus who calls Simon and gives him a new name: “Jesus looked at him, and said, ‘So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas’ (which means Peter)” (Jn 1:42). But Andrew also acted with initiative: He arranged his brother’s meeting with Jesus. (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 38 §2)

Following the example of Andrew, we as a Church must take the initiative in bringing people to Christ. First, we must recognize the priesthood for what it is: a great gift of God to an individual for the building up of the Church. Then we must do those things that will help eligible men consider whether they are being called. Of course we cannot do anything to increase the number of those called; that is up to God. However, we can act to increase awareness of the call, and this does help individuals to respond.

How, then, do we promote vocations as a Church? Just like anything we do as members of his Body, we must imitate Christ in his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king: “The Church, as a priestly, prophetic, and kingly people, is committed to foster and to serve the birth and maturing of priestly vocations through her prayer and sacramental life, by her proclamation of the Word and by education in the faith, [and] by her example and witness of charity” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 38 §3). Some concrete ways that vocations can be promoted in each area are:

1. *Priest*: In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, Pope John Paul II points to the centrality of the Eucharist in the life and ministry of priests as foundational to promoting vocations. “It is in the Eucharist that prayer for vocations is most closely united to the prayer of Christ the Eternal High Priest. At the same time, the diligence of priests in carrying out their Eucharistic ministry, together with the conscious, active, and fruitful participation of the faithful in the Eucharist, provides young men with a powerful example and incentive for responding generously to God’s call” (no. 31). As a priestly people, we also promote vocations by praying for them outside of Mass, and by uniting our sufferings with those of Christ’s for the intention of vocations (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 38 §§5-6).
2. *Prophet*: The Church’s mission is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all peoples, to invite them to experience his life and love, and to inspire them to greater holiness in union with him. This is the Church’s vocation, what it has been called to do by God. This vocation, in turn, is reflected in the vocation of every Christian. According to Pope John Paul II, the Word of God enlightens believers to appreciate life as a response to God’s call and leads them to embrace in faith the gift of a personal vocation (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 39 §1). In addition to instruction on vocations in general, the pope says that there must be particular catechesis on the value of the ministerial priesthood, an effort to dispel distorted ideas about it, and an invitation to those young people who demonstrate the necessary gifts and talents to consider it as a real possibility (no. 39 §2).
3. *King*: In his exhortation *On the Formation of Priests*, Pope John Paul II teaches that we first promote vocations in imitation of Christ the King when we encourage one another to live out our lives as his followers to the fullest: “The Church fulfills her mission when she guides every

member of the faithful to discover and live his or her own vocation in freedom and to bring it to fulfillment in charity” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 40 §1). For boys and young men, this involves cultivating in them a desire to follow Christ “in a total and attractive way.” It also involves encouraging them to take spiritual direction, and training them “to appreciate commitment, the meaning of free service, [and] the value of sacrifice and unconditional self-giving” (no. 40 §§2, 3, and 5). We should also not forget that “often it is the example of a priest’s fervent pastoral charity which the Lord uses to sow and to bring to fruition in a young man’s heart the seed of a priestly calling.” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 31)

The pastoral work of promoting vocations to the ministerial priesthood is first and foremost the responsibility of the bishop with the cooperation of his priests. Yet all the faithful are charged with fostering a “culture of vocations.” The Second Vatican Council’s *Decree on Priestly Training* says, “The duty of fostering vocations pertains to the whole Christian community, which should exercise it above all by a fully Christian life.” It especially exhorts “families which, animated by the spirit of faith and love and by the sense of duty, become a kind of initial seminary, and the parishes in whose rich life the young people take part” (*Optatam Totius*, no. 2 §1). Imbued with a spirit of self-giving and self-sacrifice, families can do much to inflame the spark of a vocation that God places in a young man’s soul. The parish, too, especially through its school, can inculcate the importance of a vocation as a valuable gift to a person, equipping him with an orientation toward his own fulfillment and serving the good of others.

B. Pastoral Priorities Regarding Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life

Vatican II mandated that “the entire pastoral activity of fostering vocations be methodically and coherently planned” (*Optatam Totius*, no. 2 §4). Pursuant to this directive, the Diocese of New Ulm has established an Office of Vocations, which coordinates the efforts of the bishop, priests, and lay faithful to encourage eligible men to consider a priestly vocation. This Office also coordinates the formation of seminarians. A director of Vocations Awareness is primarily responsible for promoting vocations to the consecrated life. The bishop, the director and associate director of the Office of Vocations, and the director of Vocations Awareness make up the diocesan Vocations Team.

At present, the Vocations Team and parishes coordinate the following initiatives and activities to promote vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life:

1. To fulfill Christ’s priestly mission:
 - a. **Petitions** – The Vocations Office has asked parishes to include petitions for vocations at every Mass and meeting.
 - b. **Holy Hours** – The Vocations Office has developed a resource for praying for vocations with adoration and Benediction, which is being used in some parishes.
 - c. **Traveling Holy Items** – Some parishes have items, such as a chalice, cross, icon, or basket, that are passed among families. The item comes with a set of prayers to promote vocations. While the family has the item, they are to pray for vocations more intensely.
2. To fulfill Christ’s prophetic mission:
 - a. **Young People’s Prayer Groups** – These have been established at several locations to gather for catechesis and *Lectio Divina*.
 - b. **Vocations Articles** – The Vocations Office and the Office of Communication strive to publish a vocations-themed article in several issues of *The Prairie Catholic* each year.

3. To fulfill Christ's kingly mission:
 - a. **Vocations Booth** – The Vocations Office has had a presence at the youth rallies and Council of Catholic Women gatherings, with a booth of prayer cards and other resources, in addition to being present to meet and greet.
 - b. **Vocation Awareness Days** – These have been held throughout the diocese. Members of the Vocations Team and others host the event for a school and religious education program in a particular parish. Since everyone is expected to attend, it raises the awareness of the goodness of discerning and presents healthy models of vocations.
 - c. **High School Vocations Trips** – Sophomores and juniors at Catholic high schools visit the college seminary (St. John Vianney College Seminary at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul) and motherhouses in the Twin Cities. All students are required to go, so no one gets singled out. They see firsthand that those who are discerning or responding to a vocation are normal people.
 - d. **Vocations Dinners** – Through Operation Andrew Dinners and Operation Miriam Dinners, young men and women, respectively, are invited to a meal hosted by the bishop. During these dinners, vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life are discussed.
 - e. **Discernment Retreats** – For those young men more intensely discerning, the Vocations Office has developed a discernment retreat where they gather for a day of prayer and interaction with the bishop and seminarians.
 - f. **Frassati Visits** – In conjunction with several vocations-themed events around the University of St. Thomas, young women and men are invited to attend a Theotokos or Team Vianney night respectively; a Cor Jesu Holy Hour with adoration, confessions, and music; and the Lifeline Mass at the NET center.
 - g. **Vianney Visits** – For the young men discerning entering seminary, the Vocations Office offers free transportation and assistance for them to attend a Vianney Visit at St. John Vianney College Seminary.
 - h. **Ongoing Communication** – The Vocations Office maintains communication with those expressing interest in discerning a call to the priesthood and assists them with the three-fold application process (diocese, seminary, and university).

As is evident from the list above, the diocese is already doing so much to foster vocations to the diocesan priesthood that it is difficult to see how we can do more. Yet it remains a top pastoral priority. To extend our efforts under this *Plan for Parishes*, we will also pursue the following:

1. **Pulpit Exchanges** – In the past, the director and assistant director of the Vocations Office have presided and/or preached on vocations at weekend Masses at parishes throughout the diocese. Because both have parish assignments with commitments on the weekend, this has ceased. This practice must be re-established, with the pastor or another priest at the parish exchanging duties with Vocations Office personnel for selected weekend Masses.
2. **Prayer and Fasting** – In the past, the bishop has encouraged prayer and fasting for vocations among the faithful. This practice needs to be resumed.
3. **Education About the Priest Shortage** – This *Plan for Parishes*, especially Section Five, Chapter Two, contains much information about the current numbers of priests in the diocese and the projected decline in these numbers over the next twenty-five years. Pastoral leaders, parish leaders, and diocesan department directors should review this analysis so that they can communicate it to others as needed. The diocese's Pastoral Planning Office will update the figures on a regular basis and make them available on the diocesan Web site.

4. **Recommitment to Current Activities** – Those parishes and/or schools that are not currently involved in the vocations activities offered by the Vocations Team need to make this a priority. The Vocations Team stands ready to assist them to determine which activities would be most effective in their circumstances.

Finally, we must also continue to recognize the importance of the work of our diocesan Office of Youth Ministry in fostering vocations to the ministerial priesthood and consecrated life. While the initiatives discussed thus far in this chapter are explicitly geared toward vocations, the efforts of those ministering to our youth and young adults are often more subtle. Nevertheless, they are crucial in inviting our young people to enter into the discernment process. Some of these activities are:

1. **Annual Youth Days** – The Office of Youth Ministry organizes and encourages participation in its annual Junior High Festival and Senior High Rally. These events always incorporate a vocations awareness theme, sometimes explicitly and always implicitly.
2. **Discipleship Camps** – Through the Youth Ministry Office, the diocese organizes and encourages attendance at its annual summer Discipleship Camps at the Center for Youth Ministry in Renville. Some of the young people participating in these events have discerned a vocation to priesthood and religious life. The programming provided has served to help.
3. **Diocesan Youth Council** – Each year the Youth Ministry Office invites high school youth to apply for a position on the Diocesan Youth Council. Significant personal and spiritual formation is provided to members. They also benefit from the opportunity to be of service to the diocesan Church. Some of the youth who have participated on the council are currently discerning a priestly or religious vocation.
4. **National Catholic Youth Conference** – The Office of Youth Ministry organizes a group of youth from the diocese to attend the biennial National Catholic Youth Conference. NCYC has a strong vocation culture.

CHAPTER 7. HISPANIC MINISTRY: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MUTUAL ENRICHMENT

The growing Hispanic/Latino presence in the Diocese of New Ulm is a blessing from God, and yet it presents challenges that call for creative pastoral responses. The diocese has a long history of serving the Hispanic community, which has now grown to over five percent of its total population. Hispanic ministry can be understood as the organized and ongoing response by the Church to welcome and accompany Hispanics in encountering and following Christ so that they may become full participants in the life of the Church and her evangelizing mission. While most ministries of the diocese focus on a single aspect of the Church's call to imitate Christ as priest, prophet, and king, Hispanic ministry must address all three. Its approach is therefore comprehensive, offering opportunities for worship, catechesis and evangelization, and the cultivation of charity.

A. Need for Hispanic Ministry in the Diocese

The Hispanic/Latino presence in the United States and in the Diocese of New Ulm is a blessing from God. It brings us great hope for the future but also presents challenges that require creative pastoral responses. As Pope John Paul II said in his apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America*,

In its history, America has experienced many immigrations, as waves of men and women came to its various regions in the hope of a better future. The phenomenon continues even today, especially with many people and families from Latin American countries who have moved to the northern parts of the continent, to the point where in some cases they constitute a substantial part of the population. They often bring with them a cultural and religious heritage which is rich in Christian elements. The Church is well aware of the problems created by this situation and is committed to spare no effort in developing her own pastoral strategy among these immigrant people, in order to help them settle in their new land and to foster a welcoming attitude among the local population, in the belief that a mutual openness will bring enrichment to all. (no. 65 §1)

The diocese has a long history of ministering to the Hispanic community. From its beginning until recently, it provided ministry primarily to Hispanic seasonal migrant workers. Due to the changes in agricultural production, there has been a steep decline of migrant workers. Because of job opportunities in certain industries, there has been a steady increase in Hispanic people who have now made western Minnesota their permanent home. According to the 2010 decennial census, there are approximately 15,000 Hispanics/Latinos living within the fifteen-county area of the diocese, which is over five percent of its total population. An April 2012 study conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center found that 62 percent of Hispanics in the nation consider themselves Catholic.

B. Current Diocesan Plan for Hispanic Ministry

In order to respond to the challenges associated with the ever-growing presence of the Hispanics/Latinos, as well as attend to their pastoral and sacramental needs, the *Diocesan Plan for Hispanic Ministry 2006-2013* was developed. This plan is a pastoral response to the reality and needs of the Hispanic people in their efforts to achieve integration and participation in the life of our Church and in building up the Kingdom of God.

The plan employs the methodology of a *Pastoral de Conjunto* (Communion in Mission) where all the elements of pastoral ministry, all its structures, and all of the activities of pastoral agents – both Hispanic and non-Hispanic – are coordinated with a common vision. The diocesan plan emphasizes the responsibility of the parish and area faith community to respond to the needs of their Hispanic parishioners, with the Office of Hispanic Ministry as a strong resource. In the spirit of *Pastoral de Conjunto*, all diocesan offices collaborate with the parish and AFC to work together for the good of the whole.

Hispanic ministry can be defined as the organized and ongoing response by the Church to welcome and accompany Hispanics in encountering and following the living Jesus Christ, so that they may become full participants in the life of the Church and her evangelizing mission. By committing herself to this ministry, the Church fulfills her mission among Hispanics. They feel welcomed, affirm their Catholic identity, develop a sense of belonging to the faith community, and, over time, achieve a sense of ownership and stewardship in the local Church. Hispanics achieve full ecclesial integration when there is a commitment to the method of *Pastoral de Conjunto*, and a pastor and his staff take ownership of and become involved with the Hispanic community. *Pastoral de Conjunto* is a co-responsible, collaborative approach to ministry involving coordination among pastoral agents working with a common vision and goals.

From the inception of Hispanic ministry, the principle of ecclesial integration, as compared to cultural assimilation, has been foundational. Ecclesial integration means that the Hispanic people are welcomed in our Church institutions at all levels. They are served in their language when possible, and their cultural values and religious traditions are respected. Parish and AFC programs and processes are constructed in such a way that all people have an opportunity to participate. The unity of the parish and AFC arises from its mission, not its uniformity of language, cultural background, or outward expressions of piety.

Out of this ecclesial integration comes a second principle from the *Plan for Hispanic Ministry*, which states that Hispanic ministry's goal is to build a parish or AFC that respects and celebrates its diversity as it celebrates its unity in accomplishing the mission of Jesus Christ.

The plan indicates that Hispanic ministry requires a wide range of sacramental and pastoral ministry programs and opportunities in which parishioners imitate Christ in carrying out the priestly, prophetic, and kingly aspects of his mission. This demands that sacramental participation, catechetical programs, evangelization opportunities, and service to and in the Church are available and accessible to Spanish-speaking Catholics. Suggested strategies for encouraging participation in these areas can be found in the diocesan plan.

C. Toward a New Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry

Over the last several decades, much progress has been made in the area of Hispanic ministry in the United States and in the Diocese of New Ulm. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs has developed a tool with steps that parishes and AFCs can take in conjunction with the diocese to further develop Hispanic ministry in a more comprehensive way. The tool offers a developmental sequence of three phases and nine steps that bring Hispanic Catholic from guests to hosts, from newcomers to stewards of the parish and AFC. The first three steps emphasize the need for Hispanics to strengthen their Catholic identity. The second set of steps focuses on Hispanics developing a sense of belonging to the faith community. The last three steps bring Hispanics into achieving a sense of ownership and active stewardship in the parish and AFC. An ongoing pastoral planning process makes Hispanic ministry more focused, systematic, deliberate, and collaborative.

There continues to be many challenges as the diocese moves into the future. They will require that present initiatives be expanded and new initiatives be taken in Hispanic ministry. Hispanics must continue to be encouraged and trained to take leadership roles in their community and in the Church as a whole.

Llamados a Servir (Called to Serve), the diocesan Hispanic lay formation program, has an important role to play in this development. There is ongoing planning to welcome and support Hispanic youth and young adults through *Pastoral Juvenil* (Youth and Young Adult Ministry). A comprehensive ministry that responds to their cultural context and lived experience is being developed. This is essential if we are to effectively address the area of vocations, especially those to the priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated life. These initiatives should find their place in the next *Diocesan Plan for Hispanic Ministry*, expected to be published in 2015.

Pastoral plans are also instrumental for sustained growth and effectiveness in Hispanic ministry at the AFC level. In order to ensure that the pastoral needs of the Hispanic population are met, it is essential that specific goals and objectives are set by the area pastoral councils and committees. These goals and objectives must reflect the ways in which we are called to imitate Christ in his threefold office of priest, prophet, and king.

CHAPTER 8. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: A VITAL PART OF THE PROPHETIC MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The first Plan for Catholic Schools was approved in 2007 by Archbishop John C. Nienstedt, who was then the apostolic administrator of the diocese. The Plan, which was implemented beginning in 2008, followed the principles of the Third Plan for Parishes as they applied to Catholic schools and their needs. These needs included planning for the future given the demographics of the school-age population, promoting collaboration and cooperation between the schools and their sponsoring parishes and area faith community, and supporting a broader vision of community. This chapter provides an update on the implementation of the Plan for Schools. While Catholic schools primarily fulfill Christ's prophetic mission in evangelizing and catechizing the young, they integrate components of his priestly and kingly offices as well.

A. Mission and Purpose of Catholic Schools

The *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) tells us,

The sacred duty and joy of each succeeding generation of Christian believers has been to hand on the deposit of faith that was first entrusted to the Apostles by Christ himself. We have received this gift, the deposit of faith – we have not conceived it. It is the heritage of the whole Church. It is our privilege and our responsibility to preserve the memory of Christ's words and the words themselves and to teach future generations of believers to carry out all that Christ commanded his Apostles. (NDC, no. 26)

The NDC and statements made by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops make it clear that Catholic schools are a vital part of the teaching mission of the Church. Once more the NDC states,

The Catholic school affords a particularly favorable setting for catechesis with its daily opportunity for proclaiming and living the gospel message; for learning and appreciating the teachings of our Church; for acquiring a deep understanding, reverence, and love for the liturgy; for building community; for prayer; for proper formation of conscience; for the development of virtue; and for participating in Christian service. In addition, Catholic schools strive to relate all of the sciences to salvation and sanctification. Students are shown how Jesus illumines all of life – science, mathematics, history, business, biology, and so forth. For these reasons, whenever possible, parents should send their children to a Catholic school. (NDC, no. 54.B.9d)

Catholic schools assist the bishop and priests of the diocese in carrying out the prophetic office of the Church by proclaiming and teaching of God's Word. The students receive daily religious instruction and additional insights into the gospel message through the study of various disciplines. Students proclaim God's word in their actions and in their interactions with each other, as well as with other groups of people. Moreover, the staff, parents, and entire parish community benefit in the ongoing formation of their faith where there is a vibrant Catholic school community.

Catholic schools assist the bishop and priests in carrying out the priestly office of the Church by celebrating the sacred mysteries of the Church as a school community within the larger parish community. A weekly Eucharistic celebration is a significant celebration in the life of the school. Other prayer services are also incorporated throughout the school year, especially during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament has returned to many of our Catholic schools.

Catholic schools assist the bishop and priests in carrying out of the kingly office of the Church by forming the consciences of their students and planting the seeds of virtue in their souls. A Christian code of conduct with high, but reasonable expectations is the hallmark of every Catholic school. Catholic schools also act as Christ's kingly people when they share his life in the larger community with various service and outreach projects.

B. Implementation of the Current Plan for Catholic Schools

The ten broad goals of the initial *Plan for Schools* were grounded in the concept of an area approach following the *Third Plan for Parishes*. Most of the goals are highlighted in the following paragraphs with a brief summary of the progress made over the past five years as well as challenges that must be met.

1. Area Catholic Schools

A pivotal goal of the current *Plan for Schools* is for all Catholic schools to become area Catholic schools (ACS). Schools are to explore ways of collaborating and recruiting within and beyond their area faith communities. School leaders have been meeting regionally (that is, within the three school regions defined in the *Plan for Schools*), providing the opportunity for collaboration and the basis for a movement towards the area concept. Successful collaborative initiatives include joint purchasing, staff development, sharing of administrative personnel, student lyceums, and field trip transportation. Areas for future consideration include curriculum writing, instructional resource purchases, handbook updating, common pay scales, and shared personnel. Schools of the diocese have always been decentralized, so collaboration has been slow. School leaders need to gradually, yet continually, strive to collaborate. The establishment and implementation of best business practices for parishes and schools will assist with improved collaboration. Area business managers would be helpful in facilitating collaboration efforts.

The ACS concept will be further explored and defined in the writing of the next plan. Each ACS will look different depending upon the number of buildings and the grade levels offered. An ACS does not necessarily mean one building or one site. It is possible that an ACS may even cross AFC boundaries. When one or more schools are located within an AFC, there needs to be movement toward a corporate system. There are several areas within the diocese that do not have Catholic schools; in the future, several of these areas may be able to support a school. Furthermore, a few existing schools may be able to support additional grade levels. Professionally lead feasibility studies would need to be completed prior to moving forward.

2. Schools Planning Committee

The *Plan* established a permanent diocesan Schools Planning Committee (SPC) that functions as a subcommittee of the Committee for Parishes. The committee provides the director of the diocesan Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) direction for the implementation of the *Plan* and goal revisions. This committee is only visionary and advisory to the director of the OCS; it has no authority of its own. It is important, as we move into the future, to consider changes to the membership of the SPC, that it might include business and non-parish-employed educational professionals.

3. Area Education Committees

Another goal of the *Plan* is for Area Education Committees to replace traditional education committees. Area Education Committees are to be representative of those parishes that support the school. Workshops and materials on best practices for committees have been offered. A variety of committee structures and committee effectiveness levels are present throughout the diocese. Some committees are not yet functioning effectively.

Research needs to be done to develop a more effective and consistent advisory and consensus model for these committees. The “womb to tomb” evangelization and catechesis committee model does not serve schools or the other programs effectively. In most locations, it has been found to be advantageous to have a school advisory committee. The area school committee concept will be a natural development as schools become area schools.

4. Catholic School Endowment Funds

The *Plan* called for the creation of Catholic school endowment funds for each ACS, which would provide scholarships to students who could not otherwise afford a Catholic school education. The director of the diocesan Office of Development works with schools requesting assistance with endowment funds. At least one school has moved forward in creating a new fund. Some of the previously existing endowments are providing an investment return for school operations or scholarships. Other funds continue to build principal prior to the disbursement of any funds.

Two endowments were created by the diocese within the past six years. The Archbishop Nienstedt Endowment supports student scholarships and The Bishop LeVoir Endowment supports the operation of schools. Both funds have been building principal. Also, a continuing effort is being made to lobby the Minnesota legislature to provide tax credits for corporate and individual donors choosing to contribute to foundations created to provide student scholarships.

5. Alternative Transportation for Students

Another goal established diocesan grants to help create alternative transportation systems for students who live outside of traditional busing routes. These grants have been made available by the diocese for the past five years. Two schools have been providing funded alternative transportation for students. The total amount of grants given out is currently less than 8 percent of the cost incurred by alternative transportation. More funding towards this goal will help, as more locations reach out with added services. Another facet of transportation funding support was educating principals on financial aid available from a student’s home district to out-of-district students if there is not a Catholic school choice in their home district.

6. Diocesan Marketing Strategy

A further goal describes the need for a diocesan marketing strategy to be developed to support the recruitment efforts of the Catholic schools. The director of the OCS shares and makes available marketing information with school leaders. Many workshops are available to assist in these efforts. Collaboration on this initiative must continue. Materials and ideas can and should be shared and disseminated freely, as the schools are not typically in competition with one another. A Web site for freely sharing resources has just been created and promoted.

7. True Cost – True Need Tuition Model

Another goal encourages all area Catholic schools to develop tuition guidelines that reflect the true cost of educating a student, while at the same time recognizing and supporting an individual family's ability to pay. A diocesan policy existed prior to the *Plan* with guidelines that recommended providing parents with information on the actual cost per student in relation to tuition (see Education – Catholic Schools 542.1). Principals were instructed by the director of the OCS to make this information available.

With schools having local control for setting tuition guidelines, there has been little-to-no success in moving to a true cost – true need tuition model. More education needs to be done with all school stakeholders to fully understand this tuition model, and then time needs to be given to progress towards this model. Tuition policies need to move towards giving scholarship funding and away from general parish subsidies. It does not preclude a parish from giving every student significant scholarship funding. The goal needs to be rewritten to clarify the intention and to provide for greater direction. If the state legislature was to pass voucher legislation, it would be important for the tuition to be set nearer the true cost of education.

8. Shared Financial Responsibility

The final goal of the *Plan* calls for guidelines to be written to assist Area Education Committees, Area Pastoral Councils, and parish Administrative Councils in establishing a policy that appropriately shares the burden of financing a school by all the parishes served by it. Efforts have been made at various local levels to do this, but they have had little success. Suggested changes have been discussed in regards to current diocesan policy (Education – Catholic Schools 513.1) regarding sharing the financial costs.

In 2011, Bishop John M. LeVoir initiated an annual diocesan second collection during Catholic Schools Week in an effort to give all the faithful of the diocese an opportunity to assist with the financing of Catholic schools within the diocese. Parishes without a school must continue to do more to support Catholic schools.

C. Benefit of Stronger Area Faith Communities for Catholic Schools

Area faith communities will be more effective with a one-pastor-per-AFC model, as discussed in Section I of this *Plan for Parishes*. AFCs with schools will be more effective once they have implemented the area school model, as discussed in the *Plan for Schools*, because this model will provide for greater viability of their schools. The hope for the future is to have a viable Catholic school choice in as many areas of the diocese as possible. The *Third Plan for Parishes* promoted the AFC as the pre-eminent collaborative organization by which the full complement of pastoral ministries was to be made available to the faithful. It follows, therefore, that a continued emphasis on the AFC will be advantageous for the continuation and enhancement of viable Catholic schools.

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops notes in its 2005 document *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, all parishes need to be responsible for supporting Catholic schools, including those without schools. Elevating the parish school to the status of an area Catholic school will strengthen the call for support to the entire Catholic community. Concerns are often heard about alumni support when consolidations or school name changes are being considered; however, experience in other areas of the country has shown that people do adapt and are still supportive of the Catholic school in place.

D. Updating the Current Plan for Schools

The director of the OCS seeks guidance and direction for proposed updates to the *Plan for Schools* document from the SPC and other sources. A general review and updating of the *Plan for Schools* has begun and will be completed following the promulgation of this *Plan for Parishes*, so as to incorporate its relevant principles. A new, revised *Plan for Schools* is anticipated in 2014.

The current *Plan for Schools* calls for setting annual goals that reflect innovations taking place at the national level and newly identified local initiatives. National changes impacting the annual goals have included the creation of national Catholic school standards (including standards regarding operational vitality) and a national depository for best marketing practices. A current national initiative is the development and dissemination of resources and guidelines to assist Catholic elementary and secondary schools in integrating elements of Catholic identity into curriculum and instruction.

Locally, schools are becoming aware of new immigrant populations in their communities and need guidance in reaching out to welcome them into the Catholic schools. Prayer and advocacy for Catholic schools is needed; a diocesan group for Catholic school advocacy is being initiated by the director of the OCS in the upcoming year. As these new initiatives are identified, they become incorporated into the specific annual goals called for by the current *Plan for Schools*. Many of these initiatives will also be considered for inclusion in the updated *Plan for Schools*.

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSION: LIVING HEROIC LIVES IN IMITATION OF CHRIST

Though the hardships that we face in this life are formidable, our reward in heaven will be great. By his cross, our Lord and Savior has made this supreme happiness possible for us. Now we must cooperate with his grace to become the people he has called us to be. Through our Baptism, we are all called to the heights of holiness – heights we may achieve if we strive earnestly to conform our lives to his. In this way, we will be his priests, prophets, and kings, heroically fulfilling his mission in the Church and in the world. Just as Christ offered himself completely on the cross to save us, so we must die to ourselves to allow his salvation to work in us. If we live in him, so also will we be glorified in him.

A. The Pearl of Great Price

Being a follower of Christ is not easy. We should not expect it to be. In this life, those things with the greatest value require the greatest effort. Christ himself teaches that “the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it” (Mt 13:45-46). The Kingdom of Heaven should not be just one of our many goals in this life; it should be our chief goal – worthy of all our efforts. St. Paul expresses this same idea by comparing our lives to the discipline of an athlete: “Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one” (1 Cor 9:24-25).

While our toils on this earth may be difficult, the reward held in store for us will be great. In fact, it will surpass our wildest dreams. The *Catechism* says that “heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness” (no. 1024). Scripture tells us that we cannot even begin to understand how happy we will be when we get there: “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor 2:9, as quoted in CCC, no. 1027). We do know that we will see God as he is, in all his glory, and that we will be with Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels, and the blessed communion of the saints (see CCC, nos. 1024-1028).

In God’s plan, Christ made it possible for us to be with him in heaven. Through his suffering, Death, and Resurrection, he purchased eternal life for us when we had turned away from him. This gives great hope to us who have faith in him, even amidst all the difficulties of life.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet 1:3-7)

All our trials add up to a hard battle. We must fight against the temptations of the devil, the negative influences of the sins of others, and our own inclination to evil resulting from original sin (see CCC, nos. 407-409). In a word, we must wage war against sin. This is the drama of each human life and the drama of the whole of human history.

A monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of man. The battle was joined from the very origins of the world and will continue until the last day, as the Lord has attested. Caught in this conflict, man is obliged to wrestle constantly if he is to cling to what is good, nor can he achieve his own integrity without great efforts and the help of God's grace. (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 37 §2)

B. A Call to Heroism, a Call to Life

Many people think that victory over sin in their lives is impossible. They believe that Christ's appeal in the Sermon on the Mount – “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” – can only be achieved by special people, perhaps just by priests and consecrated persons. Yet nothing can be further from the truth. Following the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II says:

This ideal of perfection must not be misunderstood as if it involved some kind of extraordinary existence, possible only for a few “uncommon heroes” of holiness. The ways of holiness are many, according to the vocation of each individual. I thank the Lord that in these years he has enabled me to beatify and canonize a large number of Christians, and among them many lay people who attained holiness in the most ordinary circumstances of life. The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this *high standard of ordinary Christian living*: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction. (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 31 §3)

Life in Christ is a life of heroism; anyone can be a hero. To commit oneself to a life of Christian heroism is nothing other than to embark on the path to sainthood. In our diocese, we need heroes to help bring our worship of God in the celebration of the Eucharist into full conformity with the directives of the Council. We need heroes committed to learning the truth about Christ and his Church, and to proclaim it in its fullness through the witness of their lives and the words of their mouth. We need heroes to defend the dignity of the human person, to testify to the image of God in all people, especially the poor and vulnerable. We need heroes firmly committed to their marriages, husbands and wives who are willing to offer themselves totally to their spouses and make sacrifices for the true good of their children. Finally, we need heroes who, in response to God's call, are willing to make the great sacrifice of their entire lives, so that they can serve the Church as priests and consecrated religious.

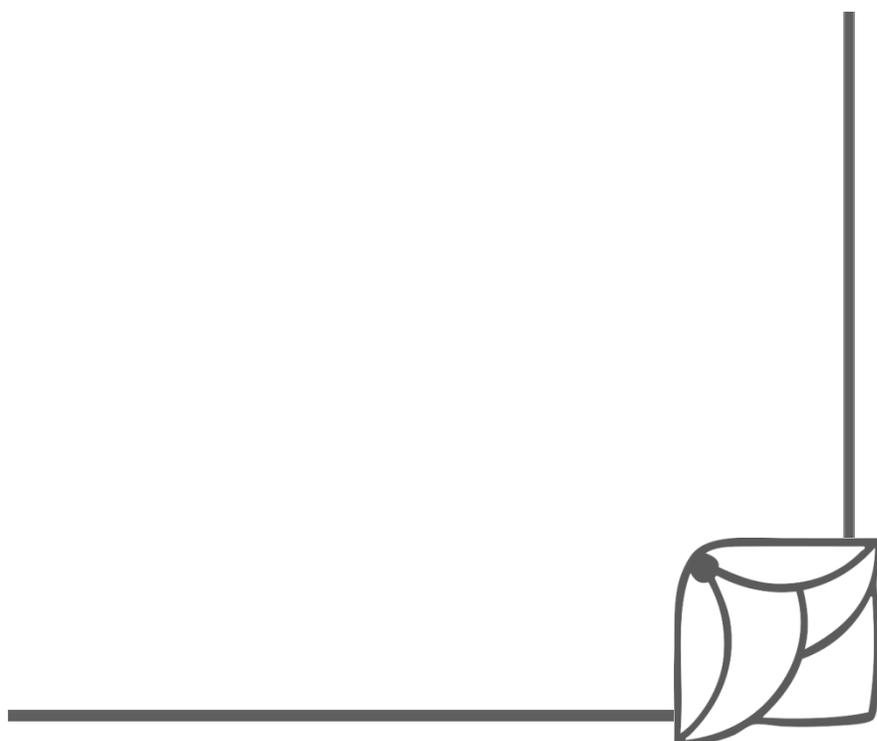
Are these challenges too difficult to be met? Are these lives too sacrificial? Let us always remember that in the struggles we endure and in the hardships we face, we are simply imitating Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is how we work out our salvation.

All the members ought to be molded in the likeness of him, until Christ be formed in them. For this reason we, who have been made to conform with him, who have died with him and risen with him, are taken up into the mysteries of his life, until we will reign together with him. On earth, still as pilgrims in a strange land, tracing in trial and in oppression the paths he trod, we are made one with his sufferings like the Body is one with the Head, suffering with him, that with him we may be glorified (Rom 8:17). (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 7 §5)

He has already fought these battles and won. He stands ready to help us. Our sacrifices and sufferings will be profitable if we unite them to his. Since Christ has already risen from the dead and has been glorified in his Resurrection, the victory in some sense is already ours. Yet we must die to ourselves – let go of our sins, our attachments, our own ways of looking at the world – and put on Christ. If we live in him, we will also be glorified in him. As Scripture says,

If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.
(Col 3:1-4)

SECTION III
People
of the Diocese



CHAPTER 1. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE DIOCESE

The population of the Diocese of New Ulm has been stable for the last seventy years. While its birth rate exceeds its death rate, a substantial percentage of its people – especially the young – leave the area in search of greater economic opportunity elsewhere. An examination of recent population trends among its counties and municipalities reveals shifts in the population. In general, counties and cities on the eastern side of the diocese are growing and areas on the western side are shrinking.

A. Stability of the General Population

Over the course of its fifty-plus-year history, the general population of the Diocese of New Ulm has been remarkably stable. The 2010 U.S. Census reports that there were 1.9 percent fewer people in the fifteen counties that make up the Diocese of New Ulm than there were in 2000. However, the population of the diocese is up 2.2 percent from its 1990 level. Together, these figures mean that in the past decade, the diocese as a whole has lost some, but not most, of its population gains from the 1990s.

Figure 3.1 charts the population of the combined fifteen counties that make up the Diocese of New Ulm from 1900 to 2010, according to the decennial U.S. Census. These counties gained about 47,000 people in the period from 1900 to 1940, and have remained stable in the seventy years since then. The latest U.S. Census figure of 284,768 for 2010 is only about 2,600 people more than the 1940 figure. In the intervening years, the population fluctuated from a high of just over 291,000 in 1980 to a low of about 278,500 in 1990.

By contrast, the population in the state of Minnesota grew by over 540,000 people between 1990 and 2000, from 4,375,099 to 4,919,492, for a 12.4 percent gain. From 2000 to 2010, it continued growing to reach a total of 5,303,925 people, a gain of 7.8 percent. In the 1990s, no county in the diocese outpaced the statewide growth rate, while in the 2000s, only one did: Nicollet County.

If current trends continue, Minnesota will continue to grow and the population of the Diocese of New Ulm will remain fairly stable. While most counties in the diocese will continue to experience declines, these losses will be offset by gains in others.

B. Demographic Distinctions Among Counties

Since different counties in the diocese have diverse demographic characteristics, it is worth taking a closer look at them. The population of the diocese is not evenly distributed. Some counties account for much more of the population than others. Furthermore, some counties are experiencing substantial growth, and others are experiencing significant declines.

The study “Outmigration As an Economic Indicator: A Case Study of Southwest Minnesota,” published by the Southwest Regional Development Commission in 2007, observes that beginning in the 1970s, “counties closer to the Twin Cities metropolitan area on the eastern side of the region generally grew, while those closer to the Dakotas on the western side of the region generally lost population” (p. 2).

This observation is certainly valid for the fifteen counties of the diocese, which constitute roughly the northern half of the study area. The report adds that following a period of more severe decline across the area in the 1980s, “the familiar pattern of the 1970s reappeared in the 1990s – growth in the east and contraction in the west, with some locally significant variations” (p. 3).

A map of the counties and incorporated municipalities in the Diocese of New Ulm can be found in Figure 3.2. Figure 3.3 tracks the general population of the Diocese of New Ulm at the county level from the turn of the twentieth century to 2010. This data is plotted on the line graph in Figure 3.4. Since 1970, three counties – Kandiyohi, McLeod, and Nicollet – have shown strong upward trends. These three counties respectively are now the most populous in the diocese. In the last twenty years, two other counties – Lyon and Meeker – have posted more modest gains.

In 1970, Brown County, home to the see city of New Ulm, was the diocese’s second-most populous county. By 2010, it had dropped to fourth place, almost even with Lyon. During this time, the population of Sibley County appears to be roughly stable. The diocese’s other counties – Redwood, Renville, Chippewa, Yellow Medicine, Swift, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, and Big Stone – have been in steady decline since its founding in 1957 and show no signs of change.

C. Household Income and Poverty Among Counties

In addition to population size and growth, demographic characteristics related to wealth are worthy of note. Significant differences exist among the diocese’s fifteen counties in household income and poverty levels. In general, the counties on the eastern side of the diocese enjoy higher median household incomes than those on the western side. This is no doubt due to their higher populations, which are concentrated in larger municipalities where more commerce occurs and more wealth is generated. Counties with higher poverty levels, by contrast, are more evenly dispersed throughout the diocese.

The most recent five-year estimates from the United States Census Bureau’s American Community Survey reveal that the four counties on the eastern side of the diocese have the highest median household incomes. Nicollet County tops the list with \$59,877, followed by McLeod, Sibley, and Meeker counties. These figures are shown in Figure 3.5 and displayed in graphical format in Figure 3.6. On the other hand, the three counties with the lowest median household incomes – Swift, Big Stone, and Chippewa – are all on the western side.

Figure 3.5 also shows the percentage of each county’s households that falls into each of twelve income ranges. This information is laid out graphically in Figure 3.7. Poorer counties have larger percentages in lower income categories; wealthier ones have larger percentages toward the top. It is interesting to note that while the median household income for the diocese as a whole lags behind that of Minnesota by only about \$1,700, the percentage of all diocesan households in the top four income ranges (those making \$100,000 and above) is much lower than the corresponding state figure: 13.6 percent versus 23.3 percent.

The U.S. Census Bureau calculates its poverty thresholds according to the number of people living in a household, whether the householder has reached 65 years of age, and whether some are children related to the householder. For 2011, the poverty threshold for a single person under 65 living alone was \$11,484. For two people living in the same household where the householder was under 65, it was \$14,567.

Using these numbers, Figure 3.8 shows estimates of the percentage of people in each county of the diocese living below the poverty level. Yellow Medicine County has the highest percentage of people below poverty level at 13.8 percent, while McLeod County has the lowest percentage at 7.5 percent. The percentages are also broken down into sex and age groups. Across counties, women consistently make up a higher proportion of poor as compared to men. Slightly less than a third of the diocese’s poor population is children.

D. Municipalities in the Diocese

Like the diocese's counties, its incorporated municipalities show significant demographic variations. Figure 3.9 lists fifty-three cities and towns that experienced an increase in population between 1990 and 2010 in the order of their growth percentage. Interestingly, the greatest growth did not always occur in expected areas. Five out of the top ten towns in terms of growth are located in counties with only modest population increases, and one out of the ten – Walnut Grove – is located in Redwood County, a county with a declining population. However, those cities over 10,000 people experiencing the greatest increases – North Mankato, Hutchinson, and St. Peter – are predictably located in counties where the greatest growth is occurring at the county level.

By way of contrast, Figure 3.10 lists seventy-three incorporated municipalities in the diocese that underwent a population decline or had a stable population during the same twenty years. Here again, the large towns posting the greatest losses – Madison, Bird Island, and Ortonville – are predictably located in counties that are contracting overall. The diocese's fastest growing county during the period – Nicollet – did not have a single city or town on the list.

The two lists taken together provide an exhaustive account of the incorporated municipalities in the diocese. The U.S. Census does not break out the population figures of unincorporated towns, such as Leavenworth or Wilno, from their townships. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to compare the available municipality data with county data, as has been done in Figure 3.11. This table shows that in the period between 1990 and 2010, the population growth in the diocese's cities and towns has generally outpaced that of counties by a considerable margin (8.5 percent to 2.2 percent). However, in the two counties experiencing the greatest rate of population loss, the decline in cities and towns was greater than that of the county as a whole. At the end of the twenty-year period, a slightly higher percentage of the people in the diocese lived in incorporated municipalities as compared to unincorporated towns and rural areas.

E. The Diocese as Non-Metropolitan

The Diocese of New Ulm is unique among Minnesota dioceses in that none of its counties are classified as part of a metropolitan area by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. The Office classifies five counties – Brown, Kandiyohi, Lyon, McLeod, and Nicollet – as micropolitan areas. The micropolitan category defines counties that include at least one city with a population of 10,000 to 49,999 plus surrounding counties from which a large number of people commute to these cities. These cities generally represent important centers of trade and commerce in rural areas.

The lack of a large city in or close to the diocese goes a long way to explain why it has a difficult time maintaining its population. While the birth rate is considerably higher than the death rate, the area loses a portion of its population due to outmigration on an ongoing basis. People – especially young people – leave in search of economic opportunity. They find it in larger cities, which have more available jobs. As the “Outmigration” study points out, the loss of people looking for jobs explains why the unemployment rate in the area is not generally higher than the rest of the state (p. 9).

F. The Diocese as Agricultural

The “Outmigration” document calls commercial agriculture “a major economic driver” in the study area, “inter-related with agricultural processing industries such as food manufacturing, meat packing, and increasingly ethanol and bio-diesel production” (p. 2). It reports that the food processing and manufacturing sectors of the economy have suffered statewide since 2001, leading to substantial outmigration from southwest Minnesota (p. 14-15).

Nevertheless, we should be cautious in characterizing the diocese’s economy as primarily agricultural. Information available from the United States Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service indicates that the diocese is not nearly as dependent on farming as it once was. The ERS employs a method called Economic Typology, which classifies counties according to their dominant economic sector. In 1950, a county was considered farming-dependent according to this classification system if at least 20 percent of income in the county was derived from agriculture. At that time, every county in the diocese met this criterion.

For the ERS’s 2004 typology report, a county is considered to be farming-dependent if either 15 percent or more of average annual labor and proprietors’ earnings derived from farming from 1998 to 2000 or 15 percent or more of employed residents worked in farm occupations in 2000. According to these criteria, only three counties in the diocese are considered farming-dependent: Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, and Renville. By contrast, four counties are considered to be manufacturing-dependent: Brown, Lyon, McLeod, and Nicollet. This means that 25 percent or more of average annual labor and proprietors’ earnings were derived from the manufacturing sector from 1998 to 2000. The other eight counties in the diocese were considered non-specialized for 1998-2000; they did not have a dominant sector.

The ERS’s June 2005 report, “The 20th Century Transformation of U.S. Agriculture and Farm Policy,” chronicles the evolution of the role of farming in the nation’s economy with the following chart (p. 2):

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|---|--|
| 1900 | 41 percent of workforce employed in agriculture |
| 1930 | 21.5 percent of workforce employed in agriculture Agricultural GDP as a share of total GDP, 7.7 percent |
| 1945 | 16 percent of the total labor force employed in agriculture Agricultural GDP as a share of total GDP, 6.8 percent |
| 1970 | 4 percent of employed labor force worked in agriculture Agricultural GDP as a share of total GDP, 2.3 percent |
| 2000/02 | 1.9 percent of employed labor force worked in agriculture (2000) Agricultural GDP as a share of total GDP (2002), 0.7 percent |
| Source: Compiled by Economic Research Service, USDA. Share of workforce employed in agriculture, for 1900-1970, Historical Statistics of the United States; for 2000, calculated using data from Census of Population; agricultural GDP as part of total GDP, calculated using data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. | |

The report identifies a number of factors behind this great transformation. At the top of the list are technological innovations: “Following World War II, technological developments occurred at an extraordinarily rapid pace. Advances in mechanization and increasing availability of chemical inputs led to ever-increasing economies of scale that spurred rapid growth in average farm size, accompanied by an equally rapid decline in the number of farms and in the farm and rural populations” (p. 6).

Data from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Economic Analysis shows that a higher percentage of Minnesota’s labor force – 2.6 percent, or about 89,000 people statewide – worked in agriculture as of 2010. The same conclusion, however, is evident as from the chart above: The diocese, as well as other rural areas of Minnesota, has already lost the vast majority of its farm workers due to innovations in the agricultural sector. There are few people left working in this sector. Therefore, we should not anticipate much additional erosion of our population because people can no longer find jobs on the farm.

CHAPTER 2. POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR THE DIOCESE

The population of the Diocese of New Ulm is projected to remain stable for the next thirty years. In almost all of the diocese's fifteen counties, population trends already established are projected to continue. McLeod and Nicollet counties – already among the most populous in the diocese – will see substantial gains over the next thirty years. Meeker and Lyon counties will experience more modest increases. The populations of Kandiyohi and Sibley counties will decline very slightly, with others seeing larger declines. Projections published by the Minnesota State Demographic Center in 2012 indicate that the diocese should shrink by 0.2 percent overall by 2040, a loss of about 500 people.

A. Population Projections by County

Every five years, the Minnesota State Demographic Center (MSDC) publishes projections for the population of each of the state's counties over the next thirty years. These projections also include demographic characteristics for these populations, such as age, sex, and race. Projections published after the decennial U.S. Census – such as those published in 2012 – are based especially on data from that census. Those published in intervening years are based on estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau.

It is important to understand the distinction that demographers make between estimates and projections. Population estimates give information on the present and past population. They rely on statistical methods and administrative records to provide reasonable approximations of populations. This is necessary, for example, between census years. Projections, on the other hand, tell about the population at future dates. They chart plausible courses of future population changes based on past census data (and estimates) and on assumptions about future births, deaths, and migration.

The authors of “Outmigration” note that projections by the MSDC in 2002 were too optimistic about population growth in Minnesota (p. 3). These projections were based in part on the growth experienced even in many rural areas during the 1990s. While this study calls the MSDC's March 2007 projections “pessimistic” (p. 4), these projections still overestimated the 2010 population by significant margins. Comparing them to the 2010 U.S. Census figures, the MSDC overestimated the state population by over 140,000, or 2.7 percent, and the diocesan population by about 4,000, or 1.3 percent. The primary reason for the gaps appears to be the negative impact on birth rates of the recent recession, an event which state demographers had no way of predicting.

The MSDC released its latest population projections for the state in October 2012. As expected, these latest figures paint a more somber picture of the diocese's future population than the 2007 report. In 2007, the MSDC predicted that the diocese's population would grow by 5.8 percent between 2005 and 2035. Taking into account a smaller-than-estimated population in the 2010 census, the 2012 projections foretell a population decline of 0.2 percent for the diocese between 2010 and 2040.

Using data from the MSDC's 2012 report, Figure 3.12 provides a county-by-county look at the projected population of the Diocese of New Ulm to 2040. Figures are provided for every five years. The MSDC anticipates that in 2040, the diocese will be home to 284,238 people, about 500 less than currently live within its boundaries. By comparison, the state is projected to grow 23.3 percent over the same period. It is projected to have 6,537,710 people by 2040.

Figure 3.13 plots the data from Figure 3.12 on a line graph. Appearing at the top of the graph is a group consisting of the diocese's three most populous counties, those with populations above 30,000 as of 2010. Two of these counties – McLeod, and Nicollet – will maintain impressive rates of growth through the thirty-year period. The population of Kandiyohi – the third county in this top group – is projected to peak

in about 2025 and then decline slightly through the remainder of the period. The MSDC anticipates that late in the 2030s, McLeod will overtake Kandiyohi as the diocese's most populous county.

During the period, Meeker and Lyon counties will also register considerable growth. These two counties are part of a middle tier of counties in the diocese – those having between 20,000 and 30,000 people. A third county in this group, Brown County, is projected to lose about 8 percent of its population between 2010 and 2040.

Nine counties in the diocese comprise the lowest tier in Figure 3.13 – those having populations of less than 20,000 people. All these counties are projected to incur declines over the period. Sibley County will experience the smallest loss at just under 2 percent. Redwood and Yellow Medicine counties are projected to lose less than 10 percent of their populations, while Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, and Swift counties are anticipated to post losses between 10 and 20 percent. Big Stone, Lincoln, and Renville counties are projected to incur the biggest losses at over 20 percent through the period.

B. An Aging Population

A June 8, 2007, media release from the MSDC heralded the arrival of the aging baby boomers. “A giant aging wave will overtake Minnesota in the coming decade, according to new projections” released by the MSDC, it said. “During the coming decade, the number of Minnesotans ages 55 to 69 is projected to grow by 239,000, accounting for almost half of the total population growth.”

The media release went on to describe how the aging trend at the state level would extend beyond 2015 for two more decades. “Between 2005 and 2035, the population over age 65 will grow by almost 770,000, or 125 percent. The population under 65 will increase only 10 percent during the same period,” it said.

The MDSC's 2012 projections reveal a trend for the 2010-2040 period that is just as dramatic. Between 2010 and 2040, the population over age 65 is projected to grow by almost 840,000, or 122 percent. The population under 65 will increase less than 9 percent for the same period.

These projections are illustrated in Figure 3.14. The graph breaks down the general population into four large age groups, including a 65-plus segment. Between 2010 and 2040, the line representing this group rises dramatically, until it is between the two lines for the 25-to-44-year-old group and the 45-to-64-year-old group.

Limiting the data to our own fifteen counties, Figure 3.15 provides a similar graph for the Diocese of New Ulm. Here the rise in the line for the 65-plus segment is even sharper until after 2035. While the percentage increase between 2010 and 2040 is only 58 percent, the line crosses the two lines for the 25-to-44-year-old group and the 45-to-64-year-old group between 2020 and 2025, and then rises significantly above them. Next to the young, the diocese's 65-plus population will make up the largest segment of the population within fifteen years.

Figures 3.16 and 3.17 show the percentage contributions of each large age group over the course of the projection period for Minnesota and the Diocese of New Ulm, respectively. Already in 2010, the diocese has a significantly older population than the state as a whole, with 16.9 percent of its people over 65 as opposed to the state's 12.9 percent. This is expected to continue throughout the period, while the percentages of those over 65 will increase greatly on both levels. By 2040, those Minnesotans over 65 are projected to be 23.2 percent of the state population. On the diocesan level, those over 65 are projected to make up 26.8 percent of the population.

Thus, the aging of the baby boomers will have a tremendous effect on the state, and arguably an even bigger effect on the diocese. This is because we already have an older population. We tend to be older

because we lose a large portion of our young people through outmigration. Figure 3.18 illustrates this fact by breaking down the age groups further into five-year segments and plotting three MSDC projection years along with the 2010 census figures. It is easy to see the “wave” in the lines representing the baby boomers gradually work its way down through successive ten-year periods. Also noteworthy is the “baby boomlet”: a large triangular wave in the 2020 projection occurring twenty-five years in front of the baby boomer peak. Finally, outmigration is readily evident in the graph, especially among people in their teens and twenties. Comparing each of the first three lines with its successor, one finds a substantial decline from the 15-to-19 age group to the 25-to-29 age group.

CHAPTER 3. THE HISPANIC POPULATION AND RACIAL COMPOSITION OF THE DIOCESE

Like the state of Minnesota as a whole, the Diocese of New Ulm has witnessed a dramatic increase in its Hispanic/Latino population over the last two decades. As of 2010, Hispanics made up 5.3 percent of the total population of the diocese. Because of their higher fertility rates, this population will continue to increase significantly. However, the 180 percent increase that the Minnesota State Demographic Center projected Hispanics to achieve by 2035 may well be too high. One reason is that within the past year, the number of migrants entering the country from Mexico has come to a standstill. As of 2010, the non-white minority population of the diocese (which includes some Hispanics) stood at 5.5 percent. African Americans (and especially Somalis), American Indians, and Asians made up large portions of this group.

A. Large Increase Among Hispanics

A “Hispanic” person, according to the U.S. Census, is someone of Hispanic origin. Hispanics are those people who indicated in the census that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Hispanic origin. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. What unites them is not their ethnicity, but their roots in Spanish-speaking countries. The government uses the word “Hispanic” synonymously with “Latino.” This *Plan for Parishes* uses “Hispanic” to refer to these people, consistent with the name of the diocesan office overseeing their pastoral care.

In the last twenty years, the state of Minnesota and the Diocese of New Ulm have witnessed an explosion in their Hispanic populations. As Figure 3.19 shows, the Hispanic population of the diocese grew almost five-fold (468 percent) – from about 3,200 in 1990 to almost 15,000 in 2010. In 2010, Hispanics made up 5.3 percent of the general population of the diocese, slightly above the state’s 4.7 percent. These figures, however, were still far below the corresponding numbers for the United States. On a national level, the number of Hispanics grew from 9.0 percent of the population in 1990 to 16.3 percent in 2010.

Figure 3.19 also breaks down the numbers of Hispanics in the diocese by county, and sorts these counties by their Hispanic percentage. Kandiyohi County has the largest percentage of Hispanics, with 11.2 percent. It is followed by Sibley County with 7.2 percent, Renville County with 6.6 percent, and Lyon County with 6.0 percent. Kandiyohi County is home to the greatest number of Hispanics by far, with over 4,700 people. It is followed by McLeod County with over 1,800 Hispanics and Lyon County with over 1,500.

Figure 3.20, which lists all incorporated municipalities in the diocese with at least fifty Hispanics, gives us further insight as to where they reside. Over 85 percent of Kandiyohi County’s Hispanics, or about 4,100, reside in Willmar. Over two-thirds of Lyon County’s Hispanics, or about 1,060, live in Marshall. Gaylord has the highest percentage of Hispanics (23 percent) of cities and towns in the diocese with a population over 1,000.

Eight of the top ten municipalities listed in Figure 3.20 have Hispanic ministry, and six have a Sunday liturgy in Spanish. Municipalities among the top ten that currently do not have Hispanic ministry are St. Peter and North Mankato.

B. Hispanic Population Projections

In January 2005, the MSDC released revised population projections by race and Hispanic origin for the years 2005 to 2035 for the state of Minnesota. In its summary of results, it projected major differences in the growth of the white population and that of the Hispanic population statewide: “Because the white population is older on average, experiences little or no in-migration, and has a slightly lower fertility rate, it is not projected to show much growth,” it said. “Overall, the white population is projected to grow nine percent over 30 years, compared to 112 percent for the total minority population. The proportion of the population that is white alone, not Latino, is projected to fall from 86 percent in 2005 to 75 percent in 2035” (p. 1).

By contrast, “the Latino population is projected to rise rapidly, growing from an estimated 196,300 in 2005 to 324,400 in 2015 and 551,600 in 2035. All regions of the state are expected to see increases. About two-thirds of the total Latino population is projected to live in the seven-county Twin Cities area by 2035,” it concluded.

Unfortunately, this study does not break down the data to the county level, so it is impossible to know exactly how these projections are expected to impact the Diocese of New Ulm.

There are also reasons to think that the projections offered in this study may be high. First of all, like the MSDC’s population projections discussed in the previous chapter, it might have overestimated fertility rates among Hispanics by not accounting for the recent recession. Secondly, a major component of the growth among Hispanics is in-migration, and about two-thirds of the Hispanics in the state are Mexican. Within the last year, net migration from Mexico has fallen to zero.

An April 2012 Pew Hispanic Center study attributes the standstill to several factors, including “the weakened U.S. job and housing construction markets, heightened border enforcement, a rise in deportations, the growing dangers associated with illegal border crossings, the long-term decline in Mexico’s birth rates, and broader economic conditions in Mexico” (“Net Migration from Mexico Falls to Zero – and Perhaps Less,” paragraph 2). As is evident from these considerations, there are many factors that influence the growth or decline of the Hispanic population. Any major shifts will change the population projections.

C. Racial Composition of the Diocese

White people constitute the diocese’s largest racial group at 94.5 percent of the general population, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. At 5.5 percent, the diocese’s non-white population is similar in size to its Hispanic population. (Since some Hispanics self-report as white and others do not, we do not know exactly how many Hispanics are in this group.) Figure 3.21 shows the composition of this group on the diocesan level and at the county level. The non-white population contains large components of African Americans, American Indians, and Asians.

Redwood County leads all counties in the non-white percentage of its population, with almost 11 percent. This is largely attributable to the American Indians living on the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation (or Mdewankanton Tribal Reservation) and a substantial number of Hmong people living in the Walnut Grove area. Lyon, Kandiyohi, and Nicollet counties also post large numbers of non-white people, especially on account of their sizeable African American populations. These people are predominantly Somalis, who have immigrated to Minnesota over the last twenty years.

CHAPTER 4. PARISH POPULATION AND MASS ATTENDANCE TRENDS

After being stable at about 70,000 people for the first forty-five years of its history, the Catholic population of the Diocese of New Ulm has experienced a significant decline in the last decade. Since 2002, it has lost just over 10,000 people. The biggest declines percentage-wise have occurred among its two youngest age groups. The losses in terms of parishioners and households have been felt in almost every parish in the diocese. The percentage of Catholics attending weekly Sunday Mass has also dropped almost 10 percent during the period. The decline in the numbers of Catholics in the diocese has occurred simultaneously with a strong upsurge in the number of people who are not recognized as being affiliated with any religion.

A. Historical Stability and Recent Decline of the Diocese's Catholic Population

Like its general population, the registered Catholic population of the Diocese of New Ulm has been fairly stable from its inception through the turn of the twenty-first century. Figure 3.23 shows that it has hovered around 70,000 through the forty-five year period. Differences between its high and low fluctuations have amounted to 10 percent or less.

The most recent ten year period, however, reveals an adverse trend. The number of Catholics in the diocese has been falling, from 70,406 in 2002 to 60,391 in 2012 – the most recent year in which figures are available from the diocese's annual parish self study.

Since this most recent period represents a departure from the long-term trend, it is worth further investigation. Figure 3.23 shows the breakdown of the Catholic population into age groups, as reported by the parishes in their annual self study and compiled by the diocese. Between the years of 2002 and 2012, the diocese did not experience any loss in the 70-plus age group; the number of people in this group remained almost exactly the same. A small loss of about 2,500 people was incurred in the broad 30-69 age group, or 7.8 percent.

Bigger percentage losses were realized among the younger age groups. The 18-29 age group lost about 1,370 people, or 13.5 percent. Much worse, the 0-5 age group lost about 1,290 people, or 30 percent of the group. Finally, the K-12 age group lost 4,800 people – a whopping 31.5 percent of that population.

B. Current Households and Parishioners of Parishes

The *Third Plan for Parishes* provided a map detailing the numbers of households and parishioners for each parish of the diocese for the self study year that ended in 2002 (p. 5). Figure 3.24 provides an updated version of that map for 2012. Generally, the parishioner figure is twice to three times the household figure for each parish. Holy Redeemer Parish in Marshall is the single largest parish in the diocese with 3,483 people, followed by St. Mary's in Willmar, the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New Ulm, St. Mary's in Sleepy Eye, and St. Anastasia in Hutchinson.

While this map conveys important data about the relative sizes of parishes, it is also important to keep in mind how our parishes compare to parishes across the nation. According to a recent national survey, the average number of registered households in U.S. parishes is 1,168, with a median of 761 (see "The Changing Face of U.S. Catholic Parishes," Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2011, p. 1). In the Diocese of New Ulm, the average number of registered households for the same year was 350, with a median of 190. Nationally, the number of parishes with 200 or fewer households was 15 percent of the

total in 2010 (“The Changing Face,” p. 1). In our diocese, these parishes accounted for slightly over half the total (51 percent) in the same year.

Perhaps more telling of the decline in Catholics in our diocese is Figure 3.25, which accounts for the percentage losses in parishioners and households for each parish between 2002 and 2012. Most parishes incurred double-digit losses in at least one of the two measures over the period. Most parishes in rapidly growing municipalities, such as Green Isle, Winsted, Walnut Grove, Darwin, and North Mankato, did not seem to benefit from the influx of new residents.

Almost all parishes experiencing substantial growth through the period were the recipients of parishioners of parishes that were closed or transitioned to oratories under the *Third Plan*. For example, St. John’s–Assumption Parish in Faxon Township took in many of the parishioners from the Oratory of St. Thomas in Jessenland, while St. Joseph’s in Lamberton was the destination parish for parishioners from the Oratory of St. Thomas in Sanborn.

C. Recent Mass Attendance Patterns

Simultaneous with the decline of the diocese’s overall Catholic population over the last decade is the decrease in the number of Catholics attending weekly Sunday liturgy. Figure 3.26 shows a parallel between the two trends during the period. While the total number of Catholics has declined about 10,440 between 2000 and 2012, the average number of weekly Mass goers has dropped by about 10,680, according to figures collected from parishes in the annual self study.

When expressed in terms of percentages of the total Catholic population, the shrinking numbers of people in the pews appear more troubling. Figure 3.27 tracks this change, showing that average Sunday Mass participation has declined from 47.2 percent in 2000 to 37.7 percent in 2012. The Diocese of New Ulm’s Mass participation figure is now at the national average of 38 percent, as determined in the recent national survey (“The Changing Face,” p. 1).

D. Catholic and Non-Affiliated Populations

The percentage of Catholics in the total U.S. population is commonly understood to be about 25 percent. The latest American Religious Identification Survey, which was conducted in 2008, supports this assumption; it sets the figure at 25.1 percent. The survey reports that there has been little change in the percentage of Catholics since 1990. Other Christian religious groups dropped nine percentage points during the same period, from 60 percent in 1990 to 50.9 percent in 2008. Most noteworthy was the percentage of those claiming no religious preference (or to be atheist or agnostic) in the survey, up from 8.2 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2008 (p. 3).

The experience of the Diocese of New Ulm over the same period is similar. The recently released 2010 U.S. Religion Census shows that the percentage of Catholics to the total population of the diocese has declined from 24.8 percent in 1990 to 24.4 percent in 2000, and then further to 22.6 percent in 2010. These results are presented in Figure 3.28. (The number of Catholics reported in the census differs slightly from the diocesan total for 2010 as represented in Figures 3.22 and 3.23 because parishes reported their numbers directly to the census, and may have reported slightly adjusted figures to the diocese.) The biggest decline, as we have discussed, has taken place over the most recent decade.

Over the last two decades, there has been a dramatic rise in the percentage of people who are not affiliated with any church on the diocesan level. These people, who made up 15.9 percent of the total in the 1990 census, constituted 24.6 percent of the total in 2010. In fact, this group is now bigger than the Catholic group, with a difference of over 5,000 people.

Figures 3.29 and 3.30 are based on the data in Figure 3.28. Figure 3.29 is a three-dimensional bar graph showing how the percentage of Catholics has changed from 1980 to 2010 on a county level. The county with the highest percentage of Catholics in 2010 was Brown County, with 41.6 percent. It was followed by Lyon County, whose Catholic share of the population has eroded significantly during the 2000s – from 34.5 percent to 28.8 percent. Other counties on the graph, proceeding from back to front, had progressively lower percentages of Catholics in 2010.

Figure 3.30 is a similar three-dimensional bar graph showing how the percentage of non-church-affiliated people has changed from 1980 to 2010 on the county level. As of 2010, the most secular county was Nicollet County, with 45.9 percent of its population claiming no religious affiliation. It was followed by Lyon County with 35.1 percent and Sibley County with 31.3 percent. Again, the other counties on the graph, proceeding from back to front, had progressively lower percentages of unaffiliated people in 2010. It is interesting to note that aside from Brown County, the counties on the western side of the diocese have the smallest share of unaffiliated people.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

While the diocese's rate of natural increase (that is, its birth rate minus its death rate) is considerably less than that of the state, the diocese is still experiencing a natural increase in its population over time. Were it not for outmigration, its long-term growth would be assured. One could say much the same thing for the Catholic population of the diocese, for its "baptismal rate" exceeds its "funeral rate." However, the Catholic population is susceptible to more than just the outmigration of the general population. It also loses people through a loss of faith. The diocese lost an estimated 8,700 people for this reason between 2000 and 2010. Only with a strong recommitment to the fundamentals of our faith will we be able to reverse the tide of secularism and thrive in the future.

A. The Present and Future of the State and Diocese

Demographers use a simple strategy to project the population of an area in any new time period. They take the population in the current time period, add the expected number of births, and subtract the expected number of deaths. Then they add in the expected number of migrants flowing into the area from outside, and subtract the number of migrants leaving the area. They call the amount of in-migration less the amount of outmigration the "net migration" for the area. This is also called "net in-migration" if in-migration exceeds outmigration, and "net outmigration" if the opposite occurs.

With this formula in mind, the prospects for the state of Minnesota in the years to come look very positive. Figures 3.31 and 3.32 show that Minnesota's birth rate (the number of births per thousand people) has consistently exceeded its death rate over the last decade. In 2010, its birth rate was 12.9 and its death rate was 7.3 for a rate of natural increase of 5.6 – a decent number in spite of the recession.

The Minnesota State Demographic Center expects this trend to continue. According to their most recent study, "Minnesota's population is projected to grow to 5,772,258 by 2020 and 6,537,710 by 2040. These population gains will be driven by both natural increase – more births than deaths – and by net in-migration – more people moving in than moving out" ("Minnesota Population Projections 2015-2040," October 2012, p. 2).

The MSDC also expects this growth to be uneven: "The Twin Cities suburbs and the Rochester and St. Cloud regions are all expected to see substantial growth over the next thirty years. The lakes area of north central Minnesota is also projected to have a considerable increase. Slow growth or decline is projected in much of western Minnesota and in the core counties of the Twin Cities (Hennepin and Ramsey Counties)" (p. 2).

How, then, will the fifteen counties that make up the Diocese of New Ulm fare? Figure 3.31 shows that the birth rate in the diocese over the past decade lagged slightly behind that of the state, on average by just over a point. Figure 3.32 shows that the death rate for the diocese surpasses that of the state by a considerable margin, generally by over two points. For example, in 2010 the diocese's birth rate was 11.9 and its death rate was 9.7, for a rate of natural increase of 2.2, 3.4 points lower than that of the state. The difference undoubtedly lies in the fact that the diocese's population is older.

Even a very modest rate of natural increase is enough to keep the population growing, provided people do not leave the area. However, the counties that make up the diocese have been beset with net outmigration for many years, and this trend is expected to continue. As stated in the "Outmigration" study, "The majority of counties in southwest Minnesota have experienced continuous, ongoing population loss over the last thirty years. A large component of this population loss is outmigration" (p. 1). Young people are

especially inclined to leave the area, searching for better economic opportunity elsewhere. Consequently, despite the probability that its modest rate of natural increase will continue for some time, the diocese will struggle to maintain its current population.

B. The Future of the Diocese of New Ulm's Catholic Population

While the diocese's general population may well decline slightly in the future, the prospects of its Catholic population are even less assured. This is already clear from Figures 3.31 and 3.32. Figure 3.31 includes a diocesan "baptismal rate," the number of (infant and child) baptisms per 1,000 Catholics in the diocese. It is analogous to the birth rate, insofar as through baptism, a person is initiated into the life of Christ and becomes a member of his Church. Just over ten years ago, this rate was above the birth rates for the state and the diocese. By 2010, it had fallen under the state birth rate and was very close to the diocesan birth rate. All three rates declined over the period, although the downturn in the diocesan birth rate was minimal.

Figure 3.32 presents a diocesan "funeral rate," in addition to the state and diocesan death rates. Back in 1999, the funeral rate was almost the same as the diocesan death rate. This seems logical: If Catholics approximate the general population demographically, then one would expect that they would pass away at the same rate as the general population. Over the course of the decade, however, the funeral rate has climbed higher than the diocesan death rate. In 2010, it was about two points higher. This suggests that the Catholic population is aging faster than the general population of the diocese. It is consistent with the findings of our earlier age-group analysis of the Catholic population (see Figure 3.23).

As it now stands, the baptismal rate for the diocese hardly surpasses the funeral rate; there is barely a point between them. This rate of increase in the Catholic population is inadequate compensation for the effects of outmigration. For Catholics, this outmigration takes two forms. First of all, like every subgroup, Catholics in the diocese are susceptible to the phenomenon that more people leave the area than enter. Based on figures provided in the "Outmigration" study (see especially p. 15), it is estimated that about 1,500 Catholics migrated out of the area between 2000 and 2010. By comparison, the diocese's aggregate total for natural increase (that is, baptisms less funerals) over the same time period was about 2,050.

These figures indicate that the Catholic population should have increased a modest 550 people between 2000 and 2010. Adding them to the 1,040-or-so people who entered into full communion with the Church through RCIA during the period, and we should have an increase of about 1,600. Yet, according to numbers from the annual parish self study, the diocese lost about 7,100 (see Figure 3.23). What explains the difference? A second type of outmigration, which is specifically Catholic: people who are no longer practicing their faith. The erosion of the Catholic population in the last decade together with the increasing number of people in the diocese who do not affiliate with any religion (Figures 3.28 and 3.30) points to the conclusion that many people in the latter group are former Catholics.

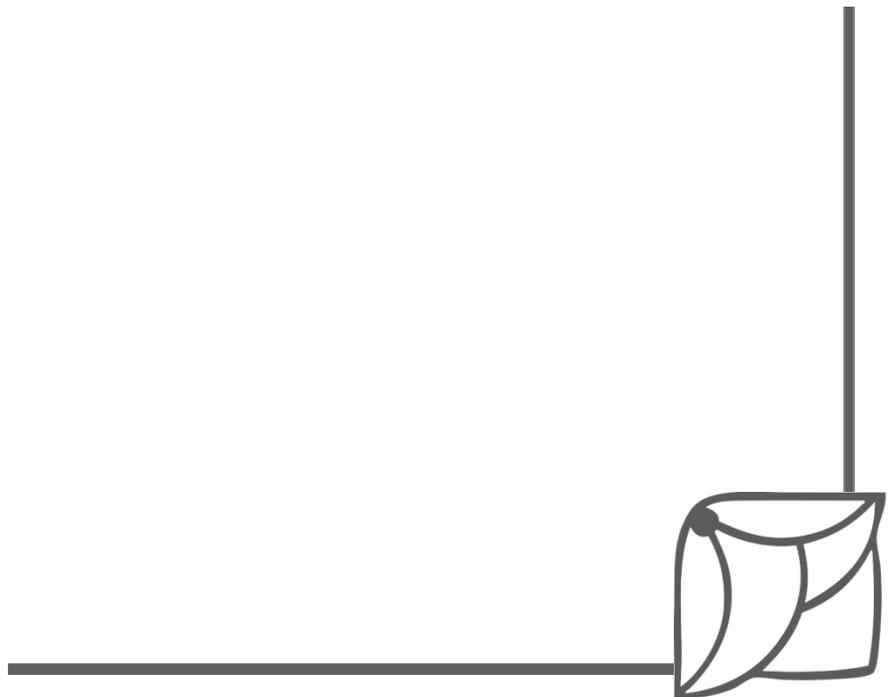
In our discussion above, we noted that weekly Sunday Mass attendance in the diocese has declined from 47.2 percent of the population in 2000 to 37.7 percent in 2012 (Figure 3.27). Figure 3.33 provides a more in-depth view of sacramental participation in the diocese over the same period. Appreciable declines are evident in every sacramental celebration tracked by the parish self study, with the biggest numerical losses being incurred in First Communion and Confirmations.

Figure 3.34 presents the same data, this time as rates to adjust for the decreasing Catholic population over the period. Now the funeral rate appears roughly stable over the period; there are no more funerals per thousand Catholics in 2012 than there were in 2004. The other sacraments still indicate downward trends. This tells us that Catholics' interest in the sacramental life of their Church is waning across the board.

Most disturbing are the considerable declines in the sacraments of initiation, for they represent the future of our Church.

While the present predicament of the diocese is rather sobering, it can also be the occasion for optimism through a new-found dedication to the faith. In every age, Jesus Christ places the future of his Church in the hands of his faithful people; what becomes of the diocese is largely a matter of the decisions we make. Will we respond to his grace and choose those things that will make us happy and holy? With a renewed commitment to the Church's teaching on the importance of marriage and family life, we can again have children in sufficient numbers to sustain our Church. With a renewed commitment to learning about our faith and sharing it with others, we can become the evangelizing Church that Christ calls us to be. The fact that 70,000-or-so people do not ascribe to any religion in our diocese (Figure 3.28) tells us that the mission fields of our Church are right outside our doors – and they will produce a great harvest if we are willing to share the treasure that we possess.

SECTION IV
Parish
Organization



CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW OF DIOCESAN ORGANIZATION

DIOCESE

- A portion of the People of God entrusted to a bishop for him to shepherd in collaboration with his priests. The bishop gathers this portion of the People of God in the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 369).
- A particular Church in which the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative (c. 369)
- Limited, as a rule, to a definite territory so that it includes all the faithful living in that territory
- Is divided into distinct parts, or parishes (c. 374 §1)

REGION

- A group of neighboring parishes that have been joined together by the bishop to foster pastoral care through common action (c. 374 §2)
- Is often called a vicariate forane or a deanery in other dioceses
- There are six regions in the diocese; every parish belongs to a region.

AREA FAITH COMMUNITY

- Organized within a specific geographic area, which takes into account population centers, school districts, shopping patterns, and important community services such as health care
- Comprised of two or more parishes, all of which can gain substantial advantages by offering a more comprehensive set of pastoral services for their parishioners by being part of the group
- Advances the mission of the Church in an area based on the needs and resources of its constituent parishes
- Entrusted to the care of a single pastor, preferably, or of a few pastoral leaders
- Has an Area Pastoral Council and subcommittees
- Shares the cost of area personnel, ministries, and pastoral programs by a proportionate assessment

PARISH

- A certain community of Christ's faithful within the diocese (c. 515 §1), determined by a specific geographic area. All of the diocese's parishes are territorial.
- Advances the mission of the Church in collaboration with other parishes in its area faith community
- Is in the care of one or more priests, one of which is pastor, or a pastoral administrator, whose pastoral care is directed by a priest with the powers and faculties of a pastor
- Has membership on the Area Pastoral Council and committees
- Has an active Administrative Council
- Can have more than one church building, but only one primary church, called the "parish church"

CHURCH BUILDING

- The most common sacred place designated for divine worship of the faithful (c. 1214)
- Is dedicated or blessed by the diocesan bishop, who maintains authority and oversight over it
- Has a title, which does not change after it has been dedicated (c. 1218)
- Has a public character, in that the faithful, whether parishioners or not, have the right of entry for the exercise of divine worship (c. 1214)
- Is entrusted for the good of souls to a specific parish, which can have one or more church buildings

- Can be closed on the grounds that it is no longer financially feasible to maintain it. Such a decision requires consultation with the diocesan Committee on Parishes and the Priests' Council, and a decree by the bishop.

ORATORY

- A type of sacred place similar to, but distinguished from, a church building in Church law. Unlike a parish, it is not a community of Christ's faithful; it does not have territorial boundaries (c. 1223).
- A place for divine worship designated by the bishop for the benefit of some community or group of the faithful, such as a religious congregation, university students, or the residents of a nursing home
- Differs from a church building primarily because all the faithful have the right to enter a church, whereas the right of access to an oratory is limited to the specific community for which it was established
- Parishes whose church buildings were to be converted to oratories under the *Third Plan for Parishes*, but did not complete this process for whatever reason, will not be expected to do so under this *Plan for Parishes*.

MERGED ("CLOSED") PARISH

- Is assigned a designated or destination parish in a decree of merger
- Its territory is conjoined with that of a designated parish, forming a larger parish geographically.
- The civil corporation is dissolved. Property, as well as financial assets and obligations, are transferred to the designated parish.
- All its operations are integrated into the larger whole.
- The designated parish administers and maintains the records of the merged parish and, where applicable, the cemetery and the cemetery funds.
- The church building remains open and available for worship, unless otherwise stated in another decree dealing with its closure.
- Reductions in the number of Masses offered at the church are determined by the pastor or pastoral leaders with the approval of the bishop.
- In exceptional circumstances, the territory and the property of a merged parish could be divided into two or more parts, with each part then being transferred to a different designated parish.

CHAPTER 2. THE AREA FAITH COMMUNITY

Introduced in the Third Plan for Parishes, the area faith community model represented a new and innovative way of organizing parishes. In the spirit of communio, parishes were asked to cultivate stronger bonds of cooperation amongst each other. Effective collaboration would bring about a greater flourishing of their various ministries for the benefit of the Catholic faithful and others in the area. More than simply a cluster, the area faith community is designed to be the primary functional and consultative organization by which pastoral care would be carried out for its constituent parishes. It facilitates pastoral governance of several parishes by a single pastor.

A. The Area Faith Community

An area faith community is a group of two or more parishes based on geography and the sizes of its constituent parishes. Geographically, the parishes must have contiguous territorial boundaries. Often there will be a single large town within the area faith community, where people go to shop, attend school, receive their health care, and take advantage of government services. The area faith community model recognizes that we have become a highly mobile society; people will drive considerable distances for things that are important to them. At the same time, they also value convenience. Other things being equal, it is better for Masses and other church events to be scheduled in places where people are going to be anyway.

All parishes stand to gain from participation in area faith communities. By pooling the talents, efforts, and resources of parishioners, AFCs can offer a more comprehensive set of pastoral services than individual parishes, no matter what their size. Yet AFCs are especially important for small parishes. These parishes are so small that they cannot provide comprehensive pastoral care for their parishioners without some outside help.

Now-retired Bishop John J. McRaith of the Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky, has pointed out that small, rural parishes have accepted something less than adequate ministry, sometimes for generations, because of a shortage of priests or lack of trained staff. He envisioned collaboration among similar parishes as the solution (see John J. McRaith, "Adopting Structures Within the Particular Church of the Twenty-First Century," *CLSA Proceedings* 56 (1994), pp. 25-26; Bishop McRaith was originally a priest of the Diocese of New Ulm).

Area faith communities with several small parishes can combine their parish staffs, volunteers, and other resources to provide ministries that were difficult if not impossible to provide before. An RCIA program, social outreach initiatives, and good religious education, to name a few examples, come within reach. For area faith communities with one or more larger parishes, providing comprehensive pastoral ministry becomes even easier. Even if they are comparatively self-sufficient, larger parishes should recognize the importance of working with their smaller counterparts to give all Catholics in an area the opportunity to thrive.

As of 2012, seventy-two of the Diocese of New Ulm's seventy-six parishes work collaboratively in twenty-three area faith communities. Typically, all the parishes in an AFC are entrusted to the care of a single pastor. This will become more and more common as the number of priests who can fill the role of pastor declines. Alternately, there can be two or more pastors, or pastors together with one or more pastoral administrators, within an AFC. Though they are appointed to specific parishes, these pastoral leaders work together, sharing staff and resources to maximize the effectiveness of area ministries.

B. Profile of the Area Faith Community

1. **Membership** – Members of each area faith community remain members of one of the collaborating parishes. They may attend Mass at any parish and make their envelope contributions in any parish's collection.
2. **Pastoral Leadership** – Typically, one priest is assigned by the bishop to be pastor of all the parishes in an area faith community. Alternately, there can be a team of pastoral leaders who have been appointed by the bishop. The bishop may also appoint senior associates, other parochial vicars, and deacons to serve with the pastor. The pastor, in turn, appoints pastoral associates, business managers, school principals, directors of liturgy, directors of religious education, and others to serve the AFC or specific parishes.
3. **Civil Corporation** – Each parish retains its separate civil corporation. All financial assets and liabilities remain separate. Oversight is provided by the pastor/pastoral administrator.
4. **Trustees and Corporate Board** – Each parish has its own trustees and corporate board made up of the bishop, vicar general, pastor/pastoral administrator, and two lay trustees.
5. **Parish Administrative Council** – Each parish has an Administrative Council, understood in Church law as the Finance Council. The Administrative Council is accountable to and advisory to the pastor/pastoral administrator. The Administrative Council meets regularly (see Administrative Council Guidelines in the Appendix).
6. **Area Pastoral Council** – Pastoral planning for area ministries is conducted by pastoral leaders, in collaboration with the Area Pastoral Council. The Council should consist of the area pastoral leaders and representatives from each of the parishes. The Area Pastoral Council meets regularly (see Area Pastoral Council Guidelines in the Appendix).
7. **Proportionate Assessment** – Pastoral leaders, in collaboration with the Area Pastoral Council, determine a proportionate assessment for each parish to provide revenues for shared expenses that are necessary for effective pastoral ministry in the area, such as personnel, ministries, programs, and resources (see Area Assessment Guidelines in the Appendix).
8. **Area Committees** – Committees of the Area Pastoral Council report to that group. They should be comprised of representatives from each parish. The committees should meet regularly (see Area Pastoral Council Committees in the Appendix).
9. **Cemeteries** – Parish cemetery committees report to their respective Administrative Council.
10. **Other Parish Organizations** – Organizations such as the Council of Catholic Women can determine for themselves whether to meet at the parish level or as an area group.
11. **Sunday Liturgies** – The pastor or pastoral leaders should determine the daily, weekly, and seasonal Sunday liturgy schedules in consultation with the Area Worship Committee, the Area Pastoral Council, and parish Administrative Councils.
12. **Shared Liturgical Celebrations** – If possible, Holy Days, the Triduum, and other special celebrations and rituals should be held at a common location or locations. Provided that there is adequate seating capacity, these celebrations may be rotated.

13. **Area Faith Community Bulletin** – The area faith community is encouraged to publish a common bulletin. Individual parish information or flyers can be added or inserted.
14. **Name of Area Faith Community** – Most area faith communities in the diocese now have official titles, because they have been officially established. Those still lacking names should complete the area faith community planning process by developing ministerial action plans. They can then submit a list of recommended names to the bishop in accordance with the diocesan “Names for Area Faith Communities Guidelines” so that he can select one and the AFC can receive official recognition.
15. **Other Ministerial Personnel** – Any new or existing staff positions on the parish level, such as director of religious education, youth minister, business manager, and so forth, should continue to be evaluated to determine how these staff members could become involved in the area ministries.
16. **Ministries** – Each area faith community should assess how the mission of the diocesan Church is being witnessed to and whether a full range of high-quality ministerial activity is available to the area. The chapter of this plan on the “Identity and Mission of the Diocese of New Ulm,” as well as the section on the diocesan pastoral vision, should provide the basis for this assessment. AFCs should review their plans annually and update them as necessary or recommended. Typically, new AFC plans should be drafted for review by the Committee on Parishes every five years. AFCs are encouraged to use pastoral planning and related diocesan resources in the development of AFC plans.

CHAPTER 3. THE PARISH

A parish is a specific community of the Christian faithful established within a diocese. Its pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor, who shepherds it under the authority of the diocesan bishop. All the parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm are territorial; they have specific geographical boundaries, even though people from outside those boundaries can become members by registering. In imitation of Christ, Head of the Church, the pastor fulfills his offices of teaching, sanctifying, and governing his flock in the parish, with the assistance of other priests, deacons, and lay people. Through the actions of parish members, the mission of the Church becomes the mission of the parish – to extend Christ’s salvation and love to everyone in the world.

A. What is a Parish?

The *Code of Canon Law* defines the parish as “a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular Church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop” (c. 515 §1). This definition has four elements: (1) the community of Christ’s faithful; (2) the stability of that community as part of a diocese; (3) the pastor, who is entrusted with the pastoral care of the community; and (4) the diocesan bishop, under whose authority the pastoral care is exercised. The pastor who shepherds a parish must be a validly ordained priest (c. 521 §1).

After repeating this definition, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* goes on to say that the parish is “the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ’s saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love” (no. 2179).

The Second Vatican Council teaches that the Eucharist must be at the forefront of a pastor’s care for his flock and the focus of parish life: “In discharging their duty of sanctifying their people, pastors should see to it that the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is the center and culmination of the whole life of the Christian community. They should labor without stint that the faithful are nourished with spiritual food through the devout and frequent reception of the sacraments and through intelligent and active participation in the liturgy” (*Christus Dominus*, no. 30 §2).

It goes without saying that the parish provides the first experience of Church for the vast majority of Catholics. Throughout their lives, it is the fundamental face of the Church, the locus for almost every significant ecclesiastical experience throughout a Catholic’s life, from Baptism to First Communion to Confirmation and Marriage. Even after death, the spiritual life of a Catholic is still tied to the parish in the celebration of a funeral, as well as in Mass intentions for them and in other public prayers for the final repose of the souls of the faithful departed.

The parish is one of the primary places in which the faithful are to live out their baptismal call to imitate Christ. Vatican II’s *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* says, “As sharers in the role of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, the laity have their work cut out for them in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary within the Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness” (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 10). The ministerial calling of the priest achieves its full perfection with the help of the laity. The document goes on to say, “As far as

possible, the laity ought to provide helpful collaboration for every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by their local parish” (no. 10).

B. The Parish as Territorial

According to canon law, all parishes are either territorial or personal:

As a general rule a parish is to be territorial, that is, one which includes the Christian faithful of a certain territory. When it is expedient, however, personal parishes are to be established determined by reason of the rite, language, or nationality of the Christian faithful of some territory, or even for some other reasons. (c. 518)

Territorial parishes, then, encompass all those who live within specific boundaries, which can be marked out on a map. All of the parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm are currently territorial. Personal parishes are exceptions to the general rule. They are established to facilitate the pastoral care of certain groups, such as Hispanics or university students.

The idea that parishes are territorial might seem odd, due to the practice of registration in the Church in America. If a parish is territorial, one becomes a member of that parish by having a domicile or quasi-domicile within its boundaries (cc. 102 §3, 107 §1). It is not really a matter of signing up or attending the liturgical celebrations of a parish, even on a regular basis. It might seem that registration would be more important for personal parishes, whose boundaries are only limited by other personal parishes of the same sort or by the territory of the diocese. In these cases, pastors might only know whom they are serving through membership rolls.

One could make the case that registering fosters the mission of the territorial parish as well. Pastors who can identify those who are interested in receiving pastoral care or in volunteering can more easily communicate with them. Nonetheless, canon law does not speak of registration. In the United States, parishes have generally adopted registration. Parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm count their membership in this way and report the number of parishioners and households they have to the diocese in their annual self study.

In embracing the practice of registration, American Catholics must be careful to avoid a Protestant understanding that a congregation is made up only of those who sign up (see Cardinal Francis E. George, OMI, “The Parish in the Mission of the Church,” in *Chicago Studies* 46 (Spring 2007): p. 39). The Catholic Church counts as its members every person who has been baptized and has thus been configured to Christ. Furthermore, in all of its parishes, the Church is essentially evangelical: She seeks to communicate Christ’s love to everyone, and especially through those great signs of Christ’s love we call the sacraments.

C. The Pastor of the Parish

According to canon law, there is a proportion or “fittingness” between the parish and the priest who is appointed to shepherd it:

The pastor (*parochus*, or parish priest) is the proper pastor (*pastor*, or shepherd) of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the functions of teaching,

sanctifying, and governing, also with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful, according to the norm of law. (c. 519)

The pastor is the shepherd of the faithful in the parish. Even though other priests, deacons, and lay people assist him in various aspects of ministry, he is ultimately responsible for their pastoral care. Having been ordained to the ministerial priesthood and assigned to his parish, he acts on behalf of Christ, Head of the Church, in his offices of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, so that his parishioners can live out more perfectly their own baptismal call to holiness (see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1581).

In commenting on the definition of parish provided in canon 515 §1, Cardinal Francis E. George of Chicago emphasizes two elements: (1) the community of Christ's faithful, which constitutes the parish, and (2) the parish priest, to whom the pastoral care of the community is entrusted. "The essential relationship in the parish is between the faithful and the priest, who provides them with pastoral care under the bishop's authority," he says. "Priest and people are the constituents of a parish. Other ministries must support and foster that indispensable relationship" (George, p. 39).

Canon law affirms that the normal situation is to have a pastor assigned to a single parish: "A pastor is to have the parochial care of only one parish; nevertheless, because of a lack of priest or other circumstances, the care of several neighboring parishes can be entrusted to the same pastor" (c. 526 §1). The exception in this canon makes possible the single-pastor model of the area faith community, as called for in this *Plan for Parishes*.

One might object here that in encouraging the diocese to move toward one pastor for all the parishes in an area faith community, the current *Plan for Parishes* turns this exception into a rule. Isn't this an abuse of canon law? To this question, we must respond that having a single pastor shepherd multiple parishes is canonically preferable to other ways of dealing with a shortage of priests. For only priests, by reason of the sacred power they receive at ordination, can be pastors of parishes (see *Instruction on Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Nonordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, Practical Provisions, Article 4).

D. The Mission of the Parish

In order to understand the nature of the parish better, we have to understand its purpose. Cardinal George explains that the mission of the parish is the same as the mission of the Church, which "is to share the gifts of Christ as widely as possible. It was Christ's will that everyone whom he died to save – which is everyone – should enjoy all the gifts that his Death and Resurrection gained for the world" (George, p. 26).

In the parish these gifts are bestowed, first and foremost, through the pastor acting as Christ, Head of the Church. Through him and those who collaborate with him, the Church fulfills her mission "to teach the apostolic doctrine and call people to conversion; to sanctify through the Eucharist, the sacraments, and a life of prayer; and to gather all believers into one community of common life rooted in Christ's truth and love" (George, p. 41). In this way, the parish makes Christ present and active in the world.

It is important to emphasize here that the diocese is not simply a collection of parishes; rather, the parish draws its very existence from the diocese. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, "Because it is impossible for the bishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his Church, he cannot do other than establish lesser groupings of the faithful. Among these the parishes, set up locally under a

pastor who takes the place of the bishop, are the most important: for in some manner they represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 42).

So the parish does not stand on its own. It is part of a larger reality, the diocese, or local Church. As will be explained later in this section, the parish is dependent on the diocese in an important way, since the bishop alone can decide to create, suppress, or notably alter parishes (c. 515 §2). In fact, canon law obliges the bishop to divide his diocese into distinct parts, or parishes (c. 374 §1), though it gives no indication of how many. Being a part, the parish bears witness to the whole from which it is brought into being as a specific community of Christ’s faithful people.

Cardinal George also makes the point that the diocese has a certain priority over the parish because it has all the gifts that Christ wants his people to enjoy. Through the actions of the bishop, all seven sacraments are celebrated in it (including Confirmation and Holy Orders), and the community is governed in apostolic succession and in communion with the Holy See (George, p. 25). Therefore, the diocese more fully carries out the mission of the Church. This is the case even though the parish, from a practical point of view, is indispensable for achieving that mission.

CHAPTER 4. THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCH BUILDING

The word “church” can designate either a group of people or a building. As a group of people, it means an assembly called together for a religious purpose, which thus belongs to God. We use “church” to designate the religious assembly on the parish level, the diocese (a “particular” Church), and the whole community of believers in communion with the Holy See (the “universal” Church). Church buildings, on the other hand, are the most common type of sacred places. They are physical locations that are set aside for divine worship and dedicated to the liturgy.

A. What Do We Mean by “Church”?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains why we call ourselves the “Church” in our profession of faith:

The word “Church” (Latin *ecclesia*, from the Greek *ek-ka-lein*, to “call out of”) means a convocation or an assembly. It designates the assemblies of the people, usually for a religious purpose. *Ekklesia* is used frequently in the Greek Old Testament for the assembly of the Chosen People before God, above all for their assembly on Mount Sinai where Israel received the Law and was established by God as his holy people. By calling itself “Church,” the first community of Christian believers recognized itself as heir to that assembly. In the Church, God is “calling together” his people from all the ends of the earth. The equivalent Greek term *Kyriake*, from which the English word Church and the German *Kirche* are derived, means “what belongs to the Lord.” (no. 751)

Three elements, then, are fundamental to our understanding of Church: (1) the assembly of the people, who are called together; (2) the religious purpose for which they are called together; and (3) the belongingness of that assembly to the Lord, especially because it is him who calls his people together – as on Mount Sinai.

The next paragraph in the *Catechism* explains that the word “church” signifies different, but related, Christian communities on three levels:

In Christian usage, the word “church” designates the liturgical assembly, but also the local community, or the whole universal community of believers. These three meanings are inseparable. “The Church” is the people that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic, assembly. She draws her life from the Word and the body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ’s Body. (no. 752)

The word “church” can mean the liturgical assembly at the parish level – the community of Christian faithful gathered around their pastor for the Eucharistic sacrifice. It also designates the local Christian community, or diocese. These local congregations of the faithful are called Churches in the New Testament, “for in their locality, these are a new people called by God, in the Holy Spirit and in much fullness” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 26). Finally, the word “church” applies to “the whole universal community of believers,” the entire Catholic Church in communion with the Church of Rome. This is the “catholic” or “universal” Church in which Christ is present and which is sent by him on a mission to extend his salvation to the whole human race (CCC, nos. 830-831). The diocese is called a “particular” Church because “the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative” in

the local Christian community, “in communion of faith and sacraments with their bishop ordained in apostolic succession” (*Christus Dominus*, no. 11; CCC, no. 833).

The same word used to signify Christian communities on different levels is also extended to the place where they worship. According to the Navarre commentary on canon law, “The Latin name *ecclesia* was adopted in the first centuries of Christianity. It initially referred to the community of the faithful and later to the place itself where they gathered to listen to the divine Word, to celebrate the Eucharist, and to receive the sacraments” (*Code of Canon Law Annotated*, commentary on c. 1214, p. 1808). The extended meaning of the word retains its former sense of religious purpose and belongingness to God: A church building is set aside for divine worship, and therefore it belongs to God.

B. The Church Building in Canon Law

When the word “church” signifies the church building, canon law defines it this way:

By the term church is understood a sacred building designated for divine worship to which the faithful have the right of entry for the exercise, especially the public exercise, of divine worship. (c. 1214)

The church building falls into the genus of sacred places. A sacred place, according to canon law, is “designated for divine worship or for the burial of the faithful by a dedication or a blessing which the liturgical books prescribe for this purpose” (c. 1205). Sacred places are physical places or locations set aside for worship and dedicated to the liturgy. They include not only church buildings, but oratories, private chapels, and shrines.

A church building is different from these other sacred places in that “the faithful have the right of entry for the exercise . . . of divine worship.” All the Christian faithful have the right to go to a church. Other sacred places are reserved for certain groups of people. Oratories, for example, are reserved for that community or group of people for which they have been established, such as a religious community, residents of a nursing home, or university students. Others may have access to it only with the permission of the authority who oversees it (c. 1223). Similarly, private chapels are intended for the use of one or more physical persons, for whom they are established (c. 1226).

Churches and other sacred places are special. Unlike a gymnasium or a social hall that may occasionally be used for divine worship, these buildings have been permanently withdrawn from secular use. According to Father Nicholas Schöch,

A church is at the same time a building for divine worship and for the assembly of the community, a visible sign of Christian identity, a home for the faithful, a building of art and history. According to canon law, only those buildings are called “*ecclesiae*” which have been *permanently set aside for divine worship* and are accessible to the faithful, especially for the celebration of the Eucharist as the highest form of Christian liturgy. (Nicholas Schöch, OFM, “Relegation of Churches to Profane Use (C. 1222, §2): Reasons and Procedure,” in *The Jurist* 67 (2007): p. 485; emphasis added)

Churches become sacred places either through the solemn rite of dedication using chrism or through the rite of blessing. Both rites are contained in the *Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar*. One of these rites is to be conducted as soon as possible after the construction of the building has been completed (c. 1217 §1). Each church is also to have its own name or title, which cannot be changed once it has been dedicated (c. 1218).

C. The Church Building and the Parish

The distinction between the church and the parish can be confusing. We often refer to the parish by calling it a church: The parish of St. Mary's is "St. Mary's Church." This could be because we have the assembly of the Christian community of that parish in mind. It might also be because in our experience, each parish has one and only one church building. As explained above, we have extended the meaning of our word for the assembly of the faithful worshipping at a certain place to the place itself.

It is very important to distinguish between the two, especially when "church" means the building. A parish can exist without a church. For example, when a tornado destroyed the church belonging to St. Peter's Parish in St. Peter in 1998, the congregation was without a church of their own until they could build a new one. Not all churches are associated with parishes, either. A religious community could have a church primarily for use by its own members. Non-parish churches can also be found at shrines, to which members of the faithful make pilgrimage for special reasons of piety (c. 1230).

We usually find that the name of the parish and the name of the church are the same. People know what we are talking about whether we say the "Parish of St. Joseph" or the "Church of St. Joseph." However, it is possible for the parish and the church to have different names. This could happen because church buildings ordinarily retain the titles they have been given. In the event that a new parish is formed from two or more parishes, the new community might be given a new name. Then, for example, we could speak of the "Church of St. Joseph at the Parish of Christ the King."

CHAPTER 5. THE SMALL PARISH

To account for the differences among parishes that are important in pastoral planning, the diocese has developed a Parish Vitality Index. The components of this index were taken from the criteria used to identify small parishes and oratories in the Third Plan for Parishes. All parishes will now receive a PVI score. Under the current plan, those parishes whose scores fall into the lowest twenty-five percent of all parishes in the diocese are considered small parishes. This plan calls on pastoral leaders, parish leaders, and parishioners at these small parishes especially to enter into a dialogue with each other and with diocesan planning personnel to discern the future of the parish.

A. The Parish Vitality Index

The *Third Plan for Parishes* designated thirteen parishes as “small parishes,” in addition to the ten that it designated as oratories. Small parishes were given their name simply out of a desire to “recognize the differences which exist among parishes because of their size” (p. 17). Unlike oratories, no change in parish structure or operations was envisioned for small parishes. Since the current plan substantially reduces the role of the oratory, its focus shifts to the small parish for considering important modifications in pastoral services.

In determining which parishes should be designated small parishes and which should be designated oratories, the *Third Plan* took into account various factors. These factors included parish size in terms of households and parishioners, professional staff size, enrollment in the religious education program, and some aspects of the parish budget. In the fall of 2011, the Committee on Parishes reviewed these criteria closely. They decided to incorporate them into an index, much like the School Viability Index that had been developed for schools in the most recent *Plan for Catholic Schools*. This index could then apply to all the parishes in the diocese.

The current plan’s new Parish Vitality Index communicates the fact that certain characteristics are vital to a parish organization. In other words, they are “essential to the existence or continuance of” the parish (*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, 4th ed., s.v. “vital”). They contribute to the power of the institution to endure or survive (*Webster’s Dictionary*, s.v. “vitality”). These component characteristics, with their corresponding maximum values, are the following:

1. **Households** – The number of households in the parish, divided by 50. Maximum points: 20.
2. **Parishioners** – The number of parishioners in the parish, divided by 100. Maximum points: 20.
3. **Sacramental Life** – The total number of (1) Baptisms, (2) people entering into full communion with the Catholic Church through the RCIA program, (3) Confirmations, and (4) weddings in the parish, divided by five. Maximum points: 16.
4. **Professional FTE** – The total full-time equivalency of all pastoral leader positions plus the full-time equivalency of all other professional parish staff positions, multiplied by two. Maximum points: 12.
5. **Youth Ages 0-18** – The total number of youth in the parish from birth up to age 18, divided by 50. Maximum points: 10.

6. **Religious Education** – The total number of youth receiving religious education in or from the parish, divided by 50. This includes students in Catholic schools and religious education programs, and those receiving instruction at home. For Catholic schools and religious education programs, those students from the parish attending in other parishes are counted, as well as those students from other parishes attending in the parish. Maximum points: 10.
7. **Parish Revenues** – The total amount of parish revenue, divided by 100,000. This includes Sunday offertory, Diocesan Ministry Appeal collections in excess of the parish goal, special collections, Universal Church collections, and all other sources of revenue. In future years, capital campaign contributions for the parish will also be included here. Maximum points: 4.
8. **Parish Savings** – The total amount of parish savings, divided by 150,000. This includes cash, checking accounts, savings accounts, certificates of deposit, and all investment accounts including endowment funds. Maximum points: 4.
9. **Maintenance and Utilities** – Forty percent minus the average percentage of total expenses that the parish spent on maintenance and utilities over the last five years, multiplied by 20. Maximum points: 4.

By adding up the maximum values, one can see that the highest score a parish can achieve is 100 points. In general, the index places the greatest emphasis on the population of the parish (households, parishioners, youth), followed by sacraments and programming. Financial considerations receive the least weight.

B. Understanding the PVI

Each parish's overall PVI score is shown on Figure 4.1. The scores were calculated based on numbers for each component submitted by each parish in the annual 2012 self study and in their annual 2012 financial reports. Figure 4.2 displays these same scores on a map of the diocese. When looking at the figures, please keep the following points in mind about the PVI:

1. **A Comparative Index** – In quantifying certain key characteristics of parishes and summing up the individual scores, the index provides a means of comparing one parish with other parishes. There is no minimum score that a parish must attain in order to “pass,” or below which it should necessarily cease to be a parish. However, pastoral leaders and pastoral planning personnel will increasingly employ these scores to recommend which parishes need to have conversations about their futures.
2. **Use of the One-Hundred-Point Scale** – The purpose of adopting a total possible score of 100 points was *not* to say that any parish below, say, 60 points, “flunks” the test. On the contrary, we found it necessary to make enough points available overall so that meaningful differences among parishes in the various categories could be measured and compared.
3. **Use of Formulas for Vitality Criteria** – The PVI is calculated in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet using data from the diocese's annual self study and parishes' annual financial reports. Simple formulas make these calculations easy to implement. They also permit results in fractions of a point. This is favorable to parishes that do not achieve the maximum point total in some of the categories. Fractions of a point in multiple categories added together contribute to higher total scores.

4. **Principles for the Inclusion of Criteria** – In almost all instances, the Committee on Parishes took the criteria that constitute the components of the index from the criteria for small parishes and oratories in the *Third Plan for Parishes*. They have been weighted according to analysis and discussion of several charts applying these criteria to the diocese’s twenty-eight smallest parishes. It is particularly important to note here possible criteria that are not currently part of the index: vocations, average Mass attendance (either as the number of people or a percentage of total parishioners), church seating capacity, and driving distance to the nearest church.
5. **Interpreting Total Scores** – Perhaps the most illuminating aspect of the index is that it allows us group parishes by their total scores, providing a better understanding of their relative sizes. Almost two-thirds of our parishes have scores of 30 or below, demonstrating just how small most of our parishes really are. Of these, eight are below 10 and twenty nine more are between 10 and 20. By contrast, nine parishes scored in the 80s and 90s. Another four scored in the 60s, with an additional seven scoring in the 40s and 50s.

C. What is a Small Parish?

For purposes of this current *Plan for Parishes*, a small parish is one of those parishes in the leftmost column of Figure 4.1. These twenty-five percent of the diocese’s parishes (nineteen parishes out of seventy-six) have the lowest scores on the PVI.

This plan calls on pastoral leaders, parish leaders, and parishioners at these small parishes especially to enter into a dialogue with each other and with diocesan planning personnel to discern the future of the parish. In many instances, the parish will ultimately be merged with a neighboring parish. That is to say, if current demographic and financial trends at the parish continue, a merger will be the anticipated result. This does not necessarily mean that the associated church building will close or that a weekend Mass will no longer be celebrated in that church.

Other parishes are not immune from these discussions, either. The second column in Figure 4.1 lists another nineteen parishes that are within about six points of the top score among the lowest twenty-five percent. These parishes would also have good reason to reflect collectively on their futures. While larger parishes rank higher in terms of their vitality, they could easily become the destination parish for a merged parish. By assessing the number of weekend Masses they really need and identifying parish programs that could be raised to the level of the AFC, they can provide a valuable service in furthering the goals of pastoral planning.

The discernment at the small parish will occur primarily through a number of discussions between pastoral leaders and the faithful. At key points, diocesan planning personnel will make presentations to the parish administrative council and to parishioners, providing information that will further the conversation. In this process, it will be critically important to bear in mind not only the desires of parishioners, but also the needs of the diocese. For more details on this process, please see the chapter on Consultation and Implementation in Section 5.

D. Why Small Parishes are More Subject to Modification

Typically, parishioners in small parishes are more connected with each other than those in larger parishes. There is a greater tendency to participate in the life of the parish, to volunteer for various ministries, and to support the parish financially. Oftentimes, the relationships forged among the families in small parishes go back generations. A strong sense of community pervades their gathering for worship, fellowship, and

service. The strong relationships that unite the community help explain why altering the parish is so painful for so many parishioners.

On the other hand, large parishes typically have more people attend their Masses and larger worship spaces. The very fact that they have more members is often because they are located in a bigger population center. With more people to draw from, they are more likely to recruit well-qualified people for various ministries, such as their directors of music and religious education. Since they have more financial resources, they are more likely to use employees as opposed to volunteers to carry out the work of the Church. The numbers of those who actively participate in the life of the parish are as high as or higher than that of a typical small parish. Yet a higher percentage of people don't participate at all.

People sometimes make the argument that small parishes are just as viable as larger ones because their membership is more committed and active. Therefore, their claim to priests in the context of a decline in the number of priests is just as strong as that of larger parishes. This, however, cannot be the case. If a smaller parish has a lower seating capacity, having Mass celebrated there as opposed to a larger parish would result in more Masses having to be said. Furthermore, if the small parish is located outside a population center, having Mass celebrated there as opposed to a larger parish would require that a greater number of people travel a greater distance.

Regrettably, in the context of a decline in the number of priests, it is inescapable that the planning process will adversely affect the worship habits and the faith experience of some people, at least initially. Understandably, the bishop, diocesan planning personnel, and pastoral leaders want to minimize the unfavorable impact of the decisions they have to make. This almost inevitably means that they will choose smaller parishes over larger ones for important modifications.

CHAPTER 6. OPTIONS FOR SMALL PARISHES

While all parishes in the diocese will see changes as the number of priests declines, small parishes are especially subject to major modifications. For some, Mass might only be celebrated at their church every other weekend. Other small parishes might be combined with another parish or parishes in the area. In a parish merger, the church building of a merged parish becomes the property of its designated or destination parish. Typically, these buildings remain open for divine worship and other religious activities. A church building should only be closed when it becomes unusable, when the funds cannot be found to keep it in use, or when a combination of factors arise that together demonstrate the great importance of closing it.

A. Introduction

Change is seldom easy. It can be difficult when it involves a faith community that we hold very dear, such as our parish. It can be especially difficult when it involves a church building that has become so familiar and important in our lives over so many years. Both are often intimately tied to one's town, one's family, and their respective histories. Perhaps one's grandparents were among the founding members of the parish. Perhaps it was through parish events that a person met a spouse or best friend. Perhaps the church building is where mom and dad got married, or where their funeral Mass was celebrated. Perhaps the parish and its church are the center of life for a rural community, which has already witnessed the closure of so many other institutions.

The process of discernment that small parishes are to undertake first involves a prayerful examination of their pastoral activities. How are we being nourished by the Word of God, the Eucharist, and the other sacraments? How are we communicating the life of Christ to others? Are we living out our Christian vocation to imitate Christ in his offices of priest, prophet, and king as we should through participation in the parish? Is our parish as vibrant as it once was? Can we reasonably expect it to have our current level of activity in the future, given the area's demographic trends? (For more on demographic trends in the diocese, please see Section 3 of this plan, and especially Chapter 2 on Population Projections.)

Many of the shortfalls that small parishes experience in their pastoral services can be met by the area faith community. Indeed, this is what the area faith community is for. However, there comes a point when this collaboration is not enough. The declining numbers of individual members, households, and youth in the parish could well mean the loss of some of a priest's services – including for Sunday Mass. The declining number of priests and the expectation that they should celebrate only a limited number of Sunday Masses on a weekend (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 905 §2) entail that certain small parishes will only be able to celebrate Mass at their church every other weekend. The limited availability of a priest may translate into further reductions in the sacraments and other pastoral activities. (For more on the declining numbers of priests, please see the second chapter of Section 5 of this *Plan*; for more on the number of weekend Masses that priests can celebrate, see Chapter 4 of that section.)

Since the parish is fundamentally a Eucharistic community, a Sunday liturgy should not be celebrated less than every other weekend. When a parish's demographic indicators have declined to the point that it cannot justify a priest even for a Mass every other weekend, further change is in order. This change will consist of a merger. The parish will be united with another parish or parishes in the area. In many cases, the parish in the area that will serve as the designated or receiving parish will be obvious. Parish leaders of a small parish can also recommend the designated parish that they prefer. However, the ultimate decision rests with the bishop.

Once the merger has taken place, the church building of the merged parish becomes the property of the designated parish. The receiving parish is responsible for its ongoing upkeep, perhaps with the help of proceeds from a designated fund set up for this purpose. The parish is expected to commit the resources to the building, even if it could get by without it. Worship, catechesis, and outreach efforts can continue at the site as before. There may come a time, however, when the unified parish can no longer afford to maintain two or more church buildings. At that time, it could petition the diocese to have one of its church buildings torn down or relegated to secular use.

The options for altering a parish through a merger or in some other way and the options for closing a church building are spelled out in the *Code of Canon Law*. The procedures involved in each are similar but must be kept separate, even though in many dioceses the decisions to merge a parish and to close a church building are made together. In each case, the bishop must hear those who have rights in the matter, consult with the presbyteral council (the Priests' Council in the Diocese of New Ulm), and issue a decree explaining his decision. If the bishop makes one decision on a parish merger and another decision on the closing of a church, these should be expressed in two separate decrees.

B. The Merger: Uniting Two or More Parishes

The *Code of Canon Law* states that the diocesan bishop alone has the responsibility for creating, closing, and making important modifications to parishes: "It is only for the diocesan bishop to erect, suppress, or alter parishes" (c. 515 §2). One important way that he can alter a parish is to unite it with another. This can happen in two ways:

1. **Consolidation** – In this type of union, two or more parishes are joined in a way that each loses its own identity and a new parish, with its own unique legal identity, is constituted in their stead. The designated parish is a new entity with a new name. For example, St. Jerome Parish and St. Philomena Parish combine to form Good Shepherd Parish. St. Jerome's and St. Philomena's cease to exist as formal entities. However, if St. Jerome Parish has a church dedicated to St. Jerome, the church retains its title. It becomes St. Jerome Church at Good Shepherd Parish.
2. **Amalgamation** – In this type of union, one or more parishes are absorbed or assimilated into another parish. This destination or designated parish retains its identity and name, while the merging parishes lose their legal identities. For example, St. Joseph Parish is amalgamated into St. Michael Parish. Following the merger, St. Joseph's no longer enjoys existence as a separate parish. However, if its church was dedicated to St. Joseph, it retains its title and becomes St. Joseph Church at St. Michael Parish.

Clearly, both these types of union go beyond what is called for in a cluster or area faith community. When a parish becomes a part of an area faith community, it retains its own identity. It shares many pastoral initiatives and activities with the larger group, while maintaining a set of operations that pertains specifically to the parish. In a union or merger, all its operations are integrated into the larger whole. Its church building and cemetery will be maintained, and perhaps there will still be an annual festival associated with the church. All these things, however, will be carried out under the auspices of the designated parish.

It should be noted that the terminology employed here is somewhat arbitrary; different commentators on canon law will use different terms for different types of unions. In particular, the word "merge" in English first means "to lose or cause to lose identity by being absorbed, swallowed up, or combined." However, its second meaning is "to join together; unite, combine" (*Webster's New World College Dictionary*, 4th ed., s.v. "merge"). Due to its capacity to signify combining in general, we will use "merge"

synonymously with “unite” and “join.” A merger, then, signifies any sort of union, while an amalgamation specifically signifies that type of merger where one entity is absorbed into another, whose identity is preserved throughout the change.

When considering a parish or parishes in their area for merger, the pastor and other pastoral leaders should discern which type of union would be best in their particular circumstances. There may be good reasons for choosing one type over the other. As noted above, the opportunity for a larger, receiving parish to retain its name and identity is an important consideration. This favors the amalgamation. Another consideration is fairness. If the parishes being united are all of similar size, perhaps a union should be considered that treats all parishes equally. This approach would favor the consolidation.

Canon 121 in the *Code of Canon Law* applies to consolidations of juridic persons, including parishes. A juridic person in canon law is an artificial person constituted by a competent ecclesiastical authority (such as a diocesan bishop) for some apostolic purpose in the Church. Juridic persons are subjects of rights and obligations corresponding to their nature in canon law. For example, they can own property and enter into contracts. In this way, they are analogous to corporations in American law, which as legal persons are the subjects of rights and obligations. Besides parishes, examples of juridic persons under canon law include dioceses, episcopal conferences, institutes of consecrated life, associations of the faithful, and seminaries.

A 2006 letter from the head of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Clergy to the president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops clarified that canon 121 also applies to amalgamations. In either type of merger, the goods and patrimonial rights of the merged parish are assumed by the designated parish. Any obligations, financial or otherwise, are assumed as well. Accordingly, the designated parish receives the territory, church building, cemetery, and financial assets of the merged parish. While the parishioners of the merged parish are encouraged to begin attending the designated parish, they are free to register at the parish of their choosing. These choices do not affect the destination of the assets of the merged parish.

C. Profile of a Merger

A merger among parishes can occur for several reasons. Sometimes, through a prayerful reflection about their parish’s current level of pastoral activity and its expected future, parish leaders and parishioners will come to the conclusion that the parish is no longer sustainable. At other times, the lack of priests in the diocese entails that some small parishes will no longer enjoy even a biweekly Sunday Mass, with no reasonable prospects that the situation will be remedied in the future. At still other times, a combination of these factors will lead pastoral leaders and the faithful to the conclusion that a merger is in order. Whatever the situation, concern for the salvation of souls should always be the overriding factor (*Christus Dominus*, no. 32).

While this profile focuses on the canonical and operational aspects of a merger, we cannot forget the importance of the community aspect. Just because the merger is legal and people understand how to execute a new set of procedures does not mean that everyone will be content with the new organization. The connections that people have to their old parish have been forged over many years; it will take time for these relationships to grow in new directions. Sensitivity to the difficulties that parishioners have with change and a concerted effort to involve them in the process will do much to help them embrace a new experience of parish life.

A merger or union of parishes in the diocese will have the following characteristics:

1. **Procedure** – The bishop ultimately makes the decision to merge a parish. Before he does so, he will consult with the pastor (or other pastoral leader) of the parish. These leaders will have already discussed the matter with parish staff, leadership, and parishioners. At some point, diocesan pastoral planning personnel will talk with the staff and lay leaders in the parish, and perhaps parishioners too. These groups will be given the opportunity to voice their opinions. If there are any parties whose rights could be injured by the decision, these people will also be heard (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 50). Finally, the bishop will also consult the Priests' Council about the move (c. 515 §2). If, having collected all the necessary information and consulted all the appropriate people, the bishop decides to move forward with the merger, he will issue a decree. Issued in written form, this decree establishes his decision in law and provides at least summarily the reasons he has for it (c. 51). For more information about how this process will unfold in a typical merger, please see Chapter 4 on Consultation and Implementation in Section 5.
2. **Designated Parish** – Wherever possible, parishes will be merged with others in their own area faith community. Since all the parishes in the diocese are territorial, all the territory of the designated parish that results from the merger should be contiguous. Consideration should also be given to the geographical proximity of the churches of the parishes to be merged and the relationships that already exist between the parish communities. Finally, preference for a designated parish should be given to a parish with a large seating capacity to accommodate major liturgical celebrations, such as the Easter Triduum and the Sacrament of Confirmation.
3. **Church Building** – In a merger, the church building becomes the property of the designated parish. The designated parish receives the assets of the merged parish and the obligation for the ongoing care of its church building. The pastor is encouraged to set up a fund specifically for the maintenance of the building, which will invite donations especially from former parishioners of the merged parish. This fund could be established with the remaining savings from the merged parish. The pastor could also establish a subcommittee of the administrative council to look after the upkeep of the building.
4. **Cemetery** – Cemetery funds are to be transferred to the designated parish and retained in a separate account for its care. Like the church building, the operation and maintenance of the cemetery becomes the responsibility of the designated parish. The pastor is ultimately responsible for making sure that the proper administrative structures are established to see to its proper care.
5. **Celebration of Sacraments** – Weekend Masses at the church building of the merged parish can continue as previously, provided the pastor of the designated parish finds the schedule acceptable. Masses on at least one weekday and on feast days proper to the church building should still be celebrated. Special Masses and other sacraments are to be treated as follows:
 - a. **Baptisms** – Canon law states that an adult is to be baptized in his or her parish church and an infant in the parish church of the parents unless there is good reason to do otherwise (c. 857). Adult baptisms will ordinarily occur in the church of the parish within the area where the Easter Vigil is celebrated. For a good reason, the pastor may permit infant baptisms in the church building of a merged parish. These buildings may retain their baptismal fonts for this purpose.
 - b. **Confirmation** – The diocesan bishop ordinarily confers this sacrament upon youth. Confirmation is usually a celebration of the area faith community; area pastoral leaders determine its place in consultation with the Bishop's Office. Adult confirmations will ordinarily occur at the Easter Vigil in one of the churches within the area. However, they can also take place at other times. Canon law does not prohibit a church building other than a parish church to be used for Confirmation.

- c. **First Communion** – The Eucharist should be celebrated in a sacred place, unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise (c. 932). Accordingly, pastors may determine at which church or churches in their parishes the celebration of First Communion will take place.
 - d. **Funerals** – Funerals can be celebrated in the church building of a merged parish with the consent of the pastor. Canon law states that funerals should generally be celebrated in the parish church of the deceased (c. 1177 §1). However, they or those persons in charge of their funeral arrangements can request that the funeral take place in another church (c. 1177 §2).
 - e. **Weddings** – Weddings are permitted in the church building of a merged parish with the permission of the pastor or the bishop. Canon law states that weddings should generally be celebrated in the parish church of one of the spouses when the marriage is between Catholics or between a Catholic party and a non-Catholic baptized party. (c. 1118). However, the couple can request that the ceremony take place in another church.
6. **Other Uses for the Church** – All forms of divine worship, including the Liturgy of the Hours, devotions, and other forms of communal and private worship are encouraged in the church building. Other activities and programs may be conducted in the building as determined by the pastor in consultation with the Administrative Council and other pastoral leaders in the area faith community.
 7. **Title of the Church** – Canon 1218 states that the title of a church cannot be changed once the church has been dedicated. Such a change could only occur for grave reasons and with an indult of the Apostolic See. If a church has only been blessed, the diocesan bishop can change its title for a grave reason, after carefully considering all the circumstances. The titles of parishes almost always follow the titles of their churches. However, there are no norms in canon law for the names of parishes. If a consolidation involves all the parishes in an area faith community, the new parish could take the name of the AFC.
 8. **Civil Corporation** – The civil corporation of the merged parish is dissolved. In civil law as well as canon law, the assets and liabilities of the merged parish are inherited by the designated parish.
 9. **Finances** – The accounts associated with the maintenance of the church building and the cemetery of the merged parish are part of the accounting system of the designated parish. Provisions for these items are part of the designated parish’s annual budget. There is no separate Administrative Council to look after those things previously belonging to the merged parish.
 10. **Administrative Council** – The Administrative Council of the designated parish should be expanded or reconstituted to include membership from each former parish. While pastoral leaders can decide how best to do this in their particular circumstances, the most straightforward way would be to implement a proportional representation, according to the membership of each parish before the merger. This arrangement should stay in place for several years, until pastoral leaders determine that it is no longer necessary.
 11. **Endowments** – Endowment funds may be established to provide for the ongoing care of a merged parish’s church building. Gifts or bequests should be made with the condition that, if the church building becomes impractical to sustain financially, any remaining monies could (1) be applied to the final disposition of the building, or (2) revert to the general fund of the designated parish.

D. Dividing a Parish

One would expect the division of a parish into two or more parishes to be the result of expansion. For example, in 1911 Bishop John Ireland of the then-Diocese of St. Paul determined that Holy Trinity Parish (the future cathedral) in New Ulm had grown too large. He established the Church of St. Mary as an offshoot for Catholics on the city's south side.

However, the division of a parish can also take place as a prelude to a number of mergers. In that case, the territory of the parish is reallocated among pre-existing or newly created parishes, depending on the type of merger. Pursuant to canon 122, a share of the patrimony and obligations of the parish to be divided would be allocated to the designated parishes in proportion to the territory that they receive or the pastoral responsibilities they assume.

In the current circumstances of the Diocese of New Ulm, such a scenario is possible, albeit unlikely. The chief question would be what to do with the divided parish's church building. If the building had been destroyed by natural disaster or relegated to secular use, the division would be more straightforward; the proportion could be a function of the number of parishioners joining two or more neighboring parishes. If the church building is still functional, a greater proportion of the patrimony should be allocated to the designated parish that receives its territory and will assume its care.

E. Closing the Church

One of the characteristics that typifies good church architecture is permanence. A church building is a "House of God," a sacred place designed to further the mission of Jesus Christ. This mission to establish his Kingdom on earth is carried on from one generation to the next, until the end of time. The *Dedication of a Church and an Altar* states that "Because the church is a visible building, it stands as a special sign of the pilgrim Church on earth and reflects the Church dwelling in heaven." It adds, "When a church is erected as a building destined solely and permanently for assembling the People of God and for carrying out sacred functions, it is fitting that it be dedicated to God with a solemn rite, in accordance with the ancient custom of the Church" (Chapter 2, no. 2).

The permanence of church buildings arises from their physical attributes. Church buildings tend to have a firm foundation, a well designed structure, and a significant mass, and they are typically composed of very durable building materials. Paradigmatic of this tendency are the great, awe-inspiring, gothic cathedrals of Europe, many of which were constructed in the Middle Ages and are still in use today. Even the churches in the Diocese of New Ulm, though much lesser in size and scope, were intended by their builders to last for generations.

The sense of permanence attached to church buildings – and especially their aptitude to signify the Church universal – provides an insight into why canon law takes closing them so seriously:

If a church cannot be used in any way for divine worship and there is no possibility of repairing it, the diocesan bishop can relegate it to profane but not sordid use. (c. 1222 §1)

Where other grave causes suggest that a church no longer be used for divine worship, the diocesan bishop, after having heard the presbyteral council, can relegate it to profane but not sordid use, with the consent of those who legitimately claim rights for themselves in the church and provided that the good of souls suffers no detriment thereby. (c. 1222 §2)

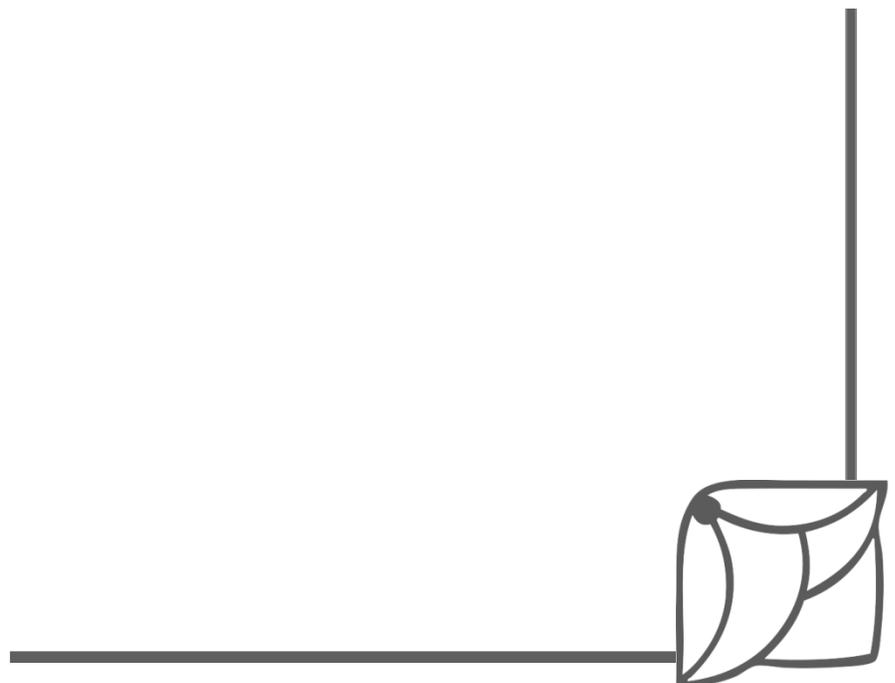
The case for closing a church building must be stronger than that for merging a parish. To merge a parish, the diocesan bishop needs a “just cause” or “good reason.” He must always have in mind the good of souls; his decision cannot be arbitrary. To close a church building, he needs a “grave cause” or serious reason. This is usually a set of circumstances that add up to the church being unsustainable. The fact that a parish has been merged and the new parish does not really need the church building is in itself not sufficient. Neither is a shortage of priests or a dwindling number of the faithful to worship in the facility.

A declining number of parishioners can play an important role in the closure of a church, insofar as the building depends on them to support financially its ongoing repair and maintenance. A lack of financial means to preserve a church that is falling into disrepair is perhaps the most frequent reason for wanting to close it. If a parish community cannot provide this support without seriously compromising its ministries and funds cannot be raised from other sources, it creates a good case for closing a building that is not the parish church.

The technical language for “closing a church” in canon law is “relegating it to profane but not sordid use.” What does this mean? A profane or secular use would be some use other than sacred worship. A former church building could be used as a library, a recreational center, or even a convenience store. At the same time, a religious group other than a Catholic parish could purchase the building for their own worship services. Sordid or unbecoming use involves activities that would cause a violation of Catholic faith and morals. A church building, for example, could not be sold with the suspicion that the new owners were going to convert it into an adult bookstore.

As with the merger of parishes, the competent ecclesiastical authority for relegating a church to secular use is the diocesan bishop. If the church has been damaged to such an extent that it is physically or financially impossible to repair it, he may issue a decree immediately. If not, he must consult the presbyteral council. He must also obtain the consent of the pastor of the church, and anyone else who could claim a right in the church. This could happen, for example, if a person other than the parish owned the land, or if a major donor made a contribution on condition that the church would continue to be used as a sacred place for some period of time.

SECTION V
Pastoral
Leadership



CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW OF PASTORAL LEADERSHIP IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW ULM

Pastoral leaders in the Diocese of New Ulm are appointed by the bishop in consultation with the Priest Personnel Board. In the appointment of permanent deacons, the bishop also consults the bishop's delegate for the Permanent Diaconate and the director of the Permanent Diaconate. Unlike pastoral leaders, parish leaders (excluding deacons) are appointed by pastors and other pastoral leaders. Parish leaders are discussed in Chapter 5 of this section.

PASTOR

- An ordained priest to whom is entrusted the pastoral care of one or more parishes as their own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 515)
- Fulfills Christ's prophetic mission by making provision that the Word of God is proclaimed to those living in the parish in its entirety (c. 528 §1)
- Fulfills Christ's sanctifying mission by ensuring that the Holy Eucharist is the center of the parish assembly and that the faithful are nourished through the celebration of the other sacraments (c. 528 §2)
- Fulfills Christ's mission of pastoral governance by striving to know the faithful, visiting them, helping the sick, seeking out the poor, and fostering growth in the Christian life of families (c. 529)
- Becomes a "pastor of an area faith community" by being appointed as pastor to each of the parishes within that area. This is necessary because the area faith community is not an entity recognized in canon law.

PAROCHIAL ADMINISTRATOR

- An ordained priest to whom the bishop entrusts the pastoral care of one or more parishes when the parish becomes vacant or when the pastor is prevented from exercising his pastoral function due to ill health or some other reason (c. 539)
- Has the same rights and duties as a pastor unless the diocesan bishop establishes otherwise (c. 540 §1)
- Unlike a pastor, does not enjoy stability in office. His appointment is temporary by nature.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR (PAROCHIAL VICAR)

- Is assigned by the diocesan bishop to serve in one or more parishes
- Is a co-worker with the pastor, sharing in the care of souls in the parish (c. 545)
- Exercises pastoral ministry by common counsel and effort with the pastor and under his authority (c. 545)
- Senior associate pastors ("senior priests") generally have been a pastor at some time in the past. They may be priests who work in specialized ministry, are nearing retirement, or have recently transferred into the diocese.
- Other parochial vicars are newly ordained and younger associates ("recently ordained associates"). They need to be mentored by experienced pastors before assuming a pastor's role themselves.

INTERNATIONAL PRIEST

- A priest from outside the United States who has been assigned by his bishop to work in the Diocese of New Ulm on a temporary basis

- Is assigned by the diocesan bishop to one or more parishes with the approval of the bishop in his home diocese
- Can be a pastor or parochial vicar. However, to distinguish them from priests from the diocese, this *Plan for Parishes* will refer to them primarily as international priests.

MISSIONARY PRIEST

- A priest from the diocese who has been assigned to a mission outside the diocese
- As of July 2012, the diocese has a single missionary priest, who is assigned as interim pastor of the parish of San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala.
- The diocese plans to transfer the oversight of the Parish of San Lucas to the Diocese of Sololà-Chimaltenango. It will continue to have a special relationship with San Lucas, providing financial assistance and opportunities for mission trips.

RETIRED PRIEST

- Has served faithfully and should be allowed to enjoy retirement from the demands of full-time ministry
- Is not assigned to a specific parish
- If health permits, may be available for sacramental ministry at his discretion

PERMANENT DEACON

- Is particularly suited to help the bishop and pastors carry out works of pastoral governance insofar as he is configured to Christ the Servant
- Is usually, but not always, assigned to ministry in his home parish
- May be appointed to serve the diocese directly in various capacities
- Is a member of the clergy, but not a pastoral leader according to the diocese's understanding of the term. Deacons share with pastoral leaders the fact that they are appointed to ministry by the bishop.

PASTORAL ADMINISTRATOR

- Entrusted by the bishop to participate in the day-to-day pastoral and administrative care of a parish, in accord with canon law (c. 517 §2), when there is a shortage of priests
- Works under the supervision of a priest appointed by the bishop, who directs and oversees the care of the parish. In the past, pastoral administrators have received direction from a single priest serving as the supervisor of pastoral administrators. Under the current *Plan*, a pastor in the same area faith community will increasingly take on the responsibility of providing that oversight.

PASTORAL LEADER

- A pastor, associate pastor, or pastoral administrator, according to the Diocese of New Ulm's understanding of the term
- Distinct from a "parish leader," who is (1) someone appointed by a pastoral leader to serve in parish ministry, whether on a paid or volunteer basis; and/or (2) a member of a committee of a parish or area faith community. For more on parish leaders, see Chapter 5 of this section.
- Deacons are pastoral leaders only if they serve as pastoral administrators; otherwise, they are considered parish leaders, even though they are appointed by the bishop.

CHAPTER 2. OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE PRIESTS

It is projected that the number of active priests in the diocese will decline from forty-four in 2012 to thirty-three by 2022. Of this number, twenty-three will serve as pastors, four will be senior associates, and another four will be recently ordained associates. The projection assumes that the number of international priests serving in the diocese will not change from the two whom we have currently. The projected loss of a quarter of our priests in the next ten years underscores the need for all members of the diocese to promote and to pray for vocations.

A. The Diocese of New Ulm Priest Projection Model

Developing accurate projections of the number of priests available for work in the diocese in the future is one of the most important tasks in pastoral planning. It is a formidable task because numbers of priests depend on the decisions of individual men – decisions to respond to a vocation or to retire from active ministry, for example. Whether and when these decisions will occur are difficult to quantify. Nonetheless, if we are to get a glimpse of what our future will look like as a diocese, we must try.

Likely the best predictor of the future is the past. Diocesan pastoral planners therefore developed a priest projection model based on the diocese's past experience with its priests. The first step was to compile a database of the approximately 120 priests who either retired from or died in active ministry for the Diocese of New Ulm since its inception. For each priest, we calculated the age at which his days of active ministry were completed. From this data, we were able to calculate the percentage of priests in each of thirteen five-year age groups who, having served until the minimum age in the group, would still be engaged in active ministry five years later. For example, the percentage of priests in the group of 120 who, having served to age 60, would continue to serve past their sixty-fifth birthday was 83 percent. The percentage of priests who, having served to age 70, would serve past their seventy-fifth birthday was 35 percent.

To predict the future number of priests in the diocese, the model needs to take into account not only priests passing away or retiring from active ministry, but also priests beginning ministry. For this we calculated a recent ordination rate based on the number of men ordained to the priesthood in the recent past. Again, we assumed that the future will be much like the past. In the last twenty years (that is, for the ordination classes of 1993 to 2012), thirteen men have been ordained to the diocesan priesthood and remained in service for five years or more. This amounts to a rate of 6.5 priests every ten years.

To determine how new priests will ultimately be affected by our retirement percentages, we also needed to make an assumption about the age of a new priest when he is ordained. The average age of all forty-two diocesan priests (excluding the two international priests) in active ministry as of July 2, 2012, on their ordination date is 28.5. However, the average age of the most recent thirteen ordained men is a bit shy of 31. We therefore decided to use 31 as our assumed ordination age. By comparison, the median age of men ordained to the priesthood nationally in 2012 is 31, with an average age of 34.6 (see *The Class of 2012: Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood*, Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, April 2012).

By applying our rules (or mathematical principles) about priests passing away or retiring to a list of our currently active priests' ages, and by adding in new priests at our assumed rate, the model is able to predict the number of priests that the diocese will have in the next five years. By taking these results and reapplying our rules, it can then project out another five years. Continuing these iterations three more times, it is able to project the number of active priests in the diocese out to 2037.

B. What the Model Tells Us

The results generated by the model appear in Figure 5.1. At the current ordination rate, the number of diocesan priests (again, excluding the two international priests) is projected to decline by eight, from forty-two in 2012 to thirty-four in 2017. The number then slides to thirty-one in 2022, twenty-eight in 2027, twenty-seven in 2032, and twenty-six in 2037.

Some people will not be convinced that the historical, twenty-year ordination rate is a good predictor of the future ordination rate. For whatever reason, they might believe that the future rate will be somewhat higher or somewhat lower. So, for the sake of completeness, we also ran the model with a higher rate of ordination (eight ordinations every ten years) and a lower rate (five ordinations every ten years). At the higher rate, the number of diocesan priests is projected to decline to thirty-five in 2017 and to thirty-two in 2022, and then remain stable at thirty beginning in 2027. At the lower rate, the number is projected to decline to thirty-three in 2017, with subsequent declines to twenty-nine in 2022, twenty-five in 2027, twenty-four in 2032, and twenty-two in 2037.

No matter what ordination rate is used, the model projects that the number of active diocesan priests will decline to at most thirty at some point in the projection period. At the current rate, this will occur in the year 2024. At the higher, more optimistic rate, this will not occur until 2027. At the lower, more pessimistic rate, this will occur in 2021. In other words, the diocese needs to begin preparing now for a future with at least 30 percent less diocesan priests than it has now. It is not a question of whether this will occur, it is only a question of when.

C. Age Distribution and Pastoral Roles of Fewer Priests

Figure 5.2 shows the breakdown of the number of diocesan priests into five-year age groups at different five-year intervals projected by the model using the current ordination rate. Currently, the diocese has seven active diocesan priests over the age of 70 and thirteen over the age of 65. When the seven priests between the ages of 60 and 65 are added, the total accounts for almost half of our active diocesan priests. Over the next ten years, the greatest share of the decline in diocesan priests (from forty-two in 2012 to thirty-one in 2022) will come from these age groups. The model projects that by 2022, there will only be four priests over the age of 70 in active pastoral ministry, five over the age of 65, and nine over the age of 60.

This decline will take an especially hard toll on the number of diocesan priests who function as pastors, as Figure 5.3 demonstrates. As of mid-year 2012, the diocese has thirty-two pastors, six senior associates, four recently ordained associates, and two international priests (who currently do not have the assignment of pastor, but could have in the future). Projecting into the future, the model assumes that (1) the percentage of senior priests to total active diocesan priests remains constant at current levels (one-seventh of the population) and (2) those priests under the age of 35 will be recently ordained associates. Given these assumptions, the model predicts that twenty-three diocesan priests will be pastors in 2022. It is possible that this number could be augmented by one or two, depending on the qualifications and experience of our international priests. The model assumes that the number of these priests will remain constant at two.

For those who believe that the future ordination rate will be higher than the current one, Figure 5.4 shows the breakdown of the number of diocesan priests into five-year age groups at different five-year intervals projected by the model using the higher, more optimistic ordination rate. The major differences between this figure and Figure 5.2 come in the last three five-year periods of the projection, when priests in the younger age groups increasingly fill the ranks of the presbyterate and keep the total number of diocesan priests from falling below thirty. Figure 5.5 projects the pastoral roles that these priests will have, again at

the high rate of ordination. Beginning in 2027 and going forward, the number of pastors remains constant at twenty-two, the number of senior associates stays at four, and the number of recently ordained associates also stays at four.

For those who believe that the future ordination rate will be lower than the current one, Figure 5.6 shows the breakdown of the number of diocesan priests into five-year age groups at different five-year intervals projected by the model using the lower, more pessimistic ordination rate. While there are still a few new priests represented in each projection year, their numbers are not enough to balance out a higher number of older priests ordained years earlier. More priests are in the older age groups than in the younger ones, a situation very similar to the current one. Figure 5.7 shows the negative impact of the low ordination rate on pastoral roles. By the end of the twenty-five-year projection period, the diocese is down to seventeen pastors, with only three senior associates and two recently ordained associates.

D. Strengths and Limitations of the Model

Though our priest projection model is somewhat limited in that it only reflects the experience of a small diocese with 120 retired and deceased priests, it produces results that are very consistent with dioceses across the nation. For example, our model calculates a median retirement age of 70.1 years for diocesan priests and an average of 69.5 years. The latter figure corresponds closely to the national average priest retirement age of 70 years (see “A National Compilation and Analysis of Retired Diocesan Priests Pension and Benefit Plans as Reported in the Survey of ‘The Laborer Is Worthy of His Hire’,” National Association of Church Personnel Administrators, 2008).

Like all models, our priest projection model excludes certain factors. These factors were determined to have a negative impact on its predictive capacity or would complicate it without substantial benefit. For example, the model does not take into account priests in the history of the diocese that left the ministry after a few short years following ordination; they were excluded from our historical database. In the years following the Second Vatican Council, this was a fairly common phenomenon in our diocese, as it was across the nation. Needless to say, it happens rarely in the Church today.

Correspondingly, in determining a current ordination rate, we also excluded a single new priest from the last twenty years who left the ministry within five years of his ordination. Thus, instead of the fourteen priests ordained for the diocese in the last twenty years, our model works with thirteen, or an ordination rate of 6.5 priests every ten years.

E. Updates to the Model

The Diocese of New Ulm priest projection model is contained in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the dates of birth, ordination, retirement, and death for each past and present diocesan priest (insofar as they apply). As priests continue to be ordained, retire, or die, this spreadsheet can be updated, effectively adjusting the assumptions of the model. Using this same model, pastoral planners can then make new projections about future numbers of diocesan priests. For example, if our ordination rate goes up, so will the number of priests predicted by the model, even if no other variables change.

CHAPTER 3. PASTORAL LEADER ALLOCATION

The priest projection model projects that the number of pastors in the diocese will decline from thirty-two in July 2012 to twenty-three by 2022. If this occurs, the number of area faith communities, quasi-AFCs, and independent parishes will have to shrink over the same period, from twenty-six to at most twenty-three, to accommodate this new reality. Pastoral leaders and diocesan planning personnel are already working on ways to make this happen. By 2022, the diocese will also likely have ten other priests – associate pastors and international priests. These priests will likely be assigned to parishes in much the same proportion as they are today. This, of course, assumes that the many factors affecting the assignment of priests do not change much.

A. Allocation of Pastoral Leaders to Area Faith Communities

To see how a future with fewer priests will impact the Diocese of New Ulm, it is not enough to develop a mathematical projection of the decline. We must also make an assessment of how these lower numbers will impact the diocese in its various structures – its regions, area faith communities, and parishes. There are six regions in the Diocese of New Ulm. Each has from three to five area faith communities. Figure 5.8 lists these area faith communities by region. Each AFC has from two to five constituent parishes, which are also listed.

Under the *Third Plan for Parishes*, each AFC was to develop a five-year action plan detailing its goals and objectives in four foundational areas of ministry: word, worship, service, and stewardship. Once the Committee on Parishes approved this plan, AFC leaders could then request that the bishop select a name for their AFC from a list of submitted recommendations. Area faith community names are usually titles of Christ or names of saints. Once the bishop names an AFC, it becomes officially established.

Figure 5.8 shows that some AFCs are still being referenced according to the names of their constituent parishes and have no date for being established. This means that they have not yet drawn up their five-year plans or received approval for them. It is very important for the success of pastoral ministry in these areas that this work of the *Third Plan* be completed as we begin to implement the *Fourth Plan*.

Area faith communities differ greatly according to their size and the pastoral needs of their constituent parishes. Figure 5.9 shows how the pastoral leaders (priests and pastoral administrators) and permanent deacons are currently distributed among AFCs. Every AFC has at least one pastor, although in one case this pastor is shared by parishes in two AFCs. As of July 2012, the diocese has thirty-one priests in the role of pastor, which constitutes roughly three-quarters of priests serving in parishes. With forty-two priests and eight pastoral administrators, the diocese has fifty pastoral leaders working in parishes. They are aided in their work by fifteen permanent deacons, eleven of whom were ordained in April 2012.

As noted at the bottom of the table, the diocese has three active priests that are not currently serving in parishes. Two of them could perhaps be available for parish work. One is assigned to the Pastoral Center; the second will be completing his academic studies during the 2012-2013 school year. The third priest from the diocese is a missionary priest; he is serving as the interim pastor of the diocese's mission parish in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala.

Figure 5.10 shows the allocation of pastoral leaders and permanent deacons as of July 2012 (the data from Figure 5.9) in the form of a map. This map can be compared to the map of Proposed 2008 Pastoral Leader Allocation in the *Third Plan* (page 23). As of 2012, the diocese still has about ten percent more priests than the number predicted by the *Third Plan* for 2008 (thirty-eight). The difference is explained by a number of our priests who are putting off retirement to continue generously serving the diocese. The

proposed 2008 allocation also had a much higher number of pastoral administrators than we now have (twenty-one versus eight). The responsibilities that pastoral administrators carry out are still being done in parishes that do not have them, but by other parish leaders under the direction of a local pastor.

B. Projected Allocation of Pastors by 2022

The map from the *Third Plan* also shows the diocese with twenty-one area faith communities, compared to the twenty-three it has as of July 2012. What explains the difference? First of all, the parishes in Faxon Township and Henderson had been expected to be combined with those currently in the AFC of Ss. Michael, Mary, and Brendan in Region 1 to form a single AFC. Furthermore, the parishes currently in the AFC that includes Nassau, Ortonville, and Rosen had been expected to be combined with those in Graceville and Beardsley in Region 4.

Within the past year, there have been discussions involving pastoral leaders, diocesan pastoral planning personnel, and/or the Committee on Parishes to determine whether these AFC mergers might still better serve the faithful of the diocese. Discussions at the AFC level have also taken place regarding a possible future merger of the Good Shepherd AFC (Litchfield and Manannah) and the Seeker of Souls AFC (Darwin and Forest City) in Region 6.

These discussions are very important, and the diocese encourages them to continue. As Figure 5.3 indicates, if our current ordination rate continues over the next ten years, the diocese will have only twenty-three pastors by the year 2022. If these three mergers of AFCs occur – or three other mergers of the same sort – the diocese is projected to have exactly the number of pastors required to shepherd twenty-one AFCs and two independent parishes. This assumes, of course, that a pastor will shepherd a single AFC and not multiple AFCs.

Figure 5.3 also shows that the diocese is projected to have ten other priests by 2022: four senior associates, four recently ordained associates, and two international priests. Neither of these international priests is assumed to be a pastor, although this, of course, is possible. Figure 5.11 provides an indication of how these priests might be assigned on a regional level, assuming that the mergers described above take place. As of July 2022, each region in the diocese is projected to have four pastors with the exception of Region 5, which will have three. The pastors are each assigned to an AFC. Senior and recently ordained associates, as well as international priests, are assigned in such a way that no region suffers the loss of more than two priests. Only one priest was subtracted from Region 3, and even this was extremely difficult given its current configuration.

While the projection outlined in Figure 5.11 appears feasible, one can already see that there will be formidable challenges to implementing it. One big challenge will be the role of the vicar general in serving parishes. As of July 2012, the vicar general's time is allotted 60 percent to the Pastoral Center and 40 percent as pastor of a parish in the Holy Cross AFC (New Ulm). By 2022, every pastor is projected to shepherd all the parishes in an AFC. Is it realistic to think that the pastor of the Holy Cross AFC (or some other AFC within easy driving distance of New Ulm) can also take on the responsibilities of vicar general? Alternately, is it realistic to think that the senior associate in the Holy Cross AFC (or some other nearby AFC) could also serve as vicar general?

As Figure 5.3 projects the pastoral roles of available priests in five-year periods out from 2022, the situation appears even more daunting. The number of pastors is expected to decline to twenty-one in 2027, and ultimately to nineteen in 2037. If a pastor should provide pastoral governance for no more than a single AFC, the number of AFCs needs to be adjusted downward even more to accommodate the lower number of pastors. Most of our regions, then, will have to reconfigure their AFCs between ten and twenty years from now to reduce the number that they have by one.

C. Factors Affecting the Allocation of Priests

As the *Fourth Plan for Parishes* is implemented, pastors will be assigned to parishes according to their area faith communities. More and more AFCs will have a single pastor until there will be no or hardly any exceptions. But what about associate pastors? Is there any way of knowing with confidence whether a parish or an AFC will have more than one priest ten years from now?

The simplest answer to this question would be to say that AFCs and parishes are expected to lose priests roughly in proportion to their decline on the diocesan level. If the diocese is expected to lose a quarter of its priests in the next ten years, and an AFC has four priests, it will likely lose one of them. Beyond that, it is difficult to make predictions. Many considerations are involved in the pastoral assignments of priests in the diocese. The list includes:

1. **Area Catholic Population** – Generally, the higher an area’s Catholic population, the greater its need for additional priests. Figure 5.12 computes the total number of parishioners and households in each AFC, and sorts the results by the number of parishioners per priest. Also given is the number of parishioners per pastoral leader, which includes pastoral administrators.
2. **Sacramental Responsibility** – While positively correlated with an area’s Catholic population, the hours that priests must spend tending to their sacramental duties can vary even in different areas that are the same size. Priests in some areas are expected to say more Masses; others may have a more elderly population and thus be responsible for more funerals. Again, the higher an area’s sacramental load, the greater its need for additional priests. Please see the next part of this chapter for further discussion on this topic.
3. **Hispanic Catholic Population** – Priests with Spanish language skills and/or experience working with the Hispanic community are more likely to be assigned in areas where a Hispanic ministry center is located.
4. **Proximity to New Ulm** – The Catholic Pastoral Center is located in New Ulm. Currently, eight priests (excluding the bishop) work there in various capacities. Their positions on the diocesan staff require that they be present at the Pastoral Center to various extents, ranging from less than once a month to four days a week. Depending on their assignments, these priests need to serve parishes and AFCs that are close enough to the Pastoral Center to make driving time reasonable.
5. **Talents and Abilities of Priests** – Some priests are young and energetic. Others are older, with a wisdom that comes from many years of experience. Some work well with other priests; others work better by themselves. Some have an aptitude for administrative work; others see the need to delegate more. All these characteristics of priests, and many more, may come into play when determining how to address the needs of a particular area at a given point in time.
6. **Preferences of Priests** – Some priests like assignments in the more rural, outlying areas of the diocese; others prefer to be closer to metropolitan areas. Some like to work in larger parishes; others prefer smaller ones. Some like to be involved in Catholic schools; others prefer not to be. Over the course of time, the director of Priest Personnel and the Priest Personnel Board try to learn the various preferences of priests so that they receive suitable assignments.

As is evident from the list above, there are many factors that the bishop and the Priest Personnel Board must consider when weighing a potential assignment. These factors can vary considerably over time. For example, a shift in the Catholic population might make an area eligible for an additional priest, or perhaps one less. A change in an area’s age demographics might have similar results. An increase or decrease in an area’s Hispanic population may affect the services of a Spanish-speaking priest. For these reasons, it is best that this *Plan for Parishes* refrain from specific projections on how fewer associate pastors and

international priests will impact individual areas and parishes.

D. Sacramental Responsibility Analysis

Teamworks International, an organizational consulting firm based in Minnesota, has helped a number of dioceses in the upper Midwest with pastoral planning issues. Recently, they developed a “sacramental loading analysis” for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. This analysis allows parishes in the archdiocese to estimate and compare the amount of time that their priests spend on key sacraments annually. This methodology, in a simplified form, can also be applied to the Diocese of New Ulm.

Through an informal survey of several priests in the archdiocese, Teamworks estimated that a priest takes the following amounts of time on average to perform these sacraments:

- Weddings – 13 hours each
- Funerals – 12 hours each
- Baptisms – 2 hours each
- Weekend Masses – 3 hours each

These sacraments are particularly important in assessing priests’ workload because they either cannot or customarily do not delegate preparing for and performing them to others in the parish. By contrast, educators in a parish’s school or religious education program usually take care of most of the preparation for the sacraments of First Penance and Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Furthermore, these sacraments are easily quantified and the diocese collects data on them through its annual parish self study.

(Other sacraments may well be relevant to this analysis, but pose difficulties of one sort or another. While the diocese does collect figures on the number of times the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is performed at each parish, the time it takes varies widely from parish to parish. For example, communal celebrations take much less time per recipient than individual anointings. Weekday Masses and school Masses would also be relevant, but the diocese does not currently collect these figures. Based on the feedback it receives, the diocese is willing to expand this analysis to include other sacraments in the next *Plan for Parishes*.)

By multiplying these figures by the number of occurrences of each sacrament in each parish annually, we can get a good idea of how sacramentally demanding parishes are with respect to each other. To get a fair estimate for weekend Masses, the number above was multiplied first by the number of weekend Masses in a parish, and then by fifty-six. This accounts for the number of weeks in a year, plus a few additional holy days of obligation that do not usually occur on Sunday (such as Christmas, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary).

The results of this analysis for the Diocese of New Ulm appear in Figure 5.13. The table shows a wide disparity in sacramental responsibility from parish to parish. The parish with the highest number, Holy Redeemer in Marshall, has over ten times the sacramental demands in terms of time as the lowest parish, St. John-Assumption in Faxon Township. If a priest is expected to work a customary forty-hour week (and we know that this is a low estimate in many cases), the parishes at the top of the list need more than one priest if the pastor is not expected to spend most of his time with these sacraments. On the other end of the spectrum, a priest could be appointed to three or even four parishes in the last column of the table and still not occupy half his time with the sacramental demands of those parishes.

Figure 5.14 shows the results of the same analysis on the AFC level. The hours occupied with the four sacraments are computed for each AFC. This number is then divided by the number of priests working in

the AFC to generate the current number of sacramental hours per priest. The table is then sorted on this basis. Currently, the average priest in the diocese spends 41 percent of a year consisting of fifty-two forty-hour weeks (849 hours divided by 2,080 hours) attending to his responsibilities with these four sacraments.

Figures 5.15 through 5.20 show the church sizes and Mass attendance figures for every parish in the diocese by region. (For more information on how to read these maps, please see the next part of this chapter.) They reveal numerous opportunities where parishes can reduce the number of Masses they have, saving priests valuable time and effort. Figure 5.14 shows the potential reduction in hours if every parish (1) with more than one Mass and (2) whose Masses on average fill less than half the church would scale back its schedule by a single Mass – assuming, of course, that the Mass to be dropped is not a Spanish Mass. This modest reduction, if embraced diocese-wide, would save the average priest a hundred hours per year.

There are some other ways that the sacramental responsibilities of priests could be alleviated, notably by involving deacons more in the parishes where they are assigned. In addition to giving the homily at Sunday liturgies, deacons can preside at Baptisms and witness marriage vows. They can also play a bigger role in preparing the faithful to receive these sacraments. Deacons and their pastors should discuss these opportunities to discern the right course of action for their individual parishes.

E. Regional Church Sizes and Mass Attendance Maps

To facilitate the exploration of options for parishes and area faith communities related to the number of Masses, the current *Plan for Parishes* includes six maps, one for each region of the Diocese of New Ulm. These maps are presented in Figures 5.15 through 5.20. For every parish (identified by community) in each region, the maps show for the year indicated:

1. The number of weekend Masses being celebrated
2. The seating capacity of the church
3. The average weekly Mass attendance across all the Masses celebrated

A parish with a single weekend Mass is depicted by a single box with a cross on it, representing the church. The number to the top left of the box is the seating capacity of the church according to diocesan records. The number to the bottom left is the average weekly Mass attendance throughout the year (excluding Christmas and Easter) from the annual parish self study.

A parish with multiple weekend Masses is depicted with a box for each of its Masses, reflecting the number of times it has an opportunity to fill up the church. Here again, the number to the top left of the row of boxes is the seating capacity of the church according to diocesan records. In these instances, however, the number to the bottom *right* is the average weekly Mass attendance for all weekend Masses throughout the year (excluding Christmas and Easter) from the year's self study. The number to the bottom left is the average weekend Mass attendance for a single Mass (in other words, the bottom right number divided by the total number of Masses). Correspondingly, the number to the top right is the seating capacity of the church for all Masses (in other words, the top left number multiplied by the number of Masses).

In a few cases, a box representing a Mass at a parish is formed with a dashed line rather than a solid line. This indicates that the Mass is in Spanish.

The dots inside each box provide a fair representation of the average number of Mass attendees, with each dot representing ten Mass-goers. Note that this number is an *average* for all Masses; it is the same for all

the boxes representing different weekend Masses at a single parish. This is because the diocese's annual survey of parishes does not collect data on individual weekend Masses such that attendance at one Mass can be compared to that of another at a different time.

Taken together, the data provided on the maps point to areas where pastoral services might be reduced in the future. Parishes with multiple Masses might not need so many Masses. Areas with a reduction of three or more Masses might be able to do without one of the priests currently serving it. Additionally, parishes with a single Mass may have so few people attending that they should celebrate a weekend Mass every other weekend or less in fairness to a greater number of Catholics who might need Mass said elsewhere in the diocese.

CHAPTER 4. CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Two major sets of strategies are designed to cope with the declining number of priests in the diocese. The first deals directly with the amount of work a priest must do. In this category are lowering the number of Masses he must say and delegating certain administrative tasks to other people. A second set also addresses the amount of work a priest must do, but indirectly, by changing the structures of the organizations that he oversees. In this category are creating and reconfiguring area faith communities, merging parishes, and closing churches. Whatever strategy is being considered, consultation and collaboration are crucial to bringing it about successfully.

A. Considerations and Consultation Regarding the Number of Masses

The maximum number of Masses that a priest can celebrate on a weekend is specified in canon law. Canon 905 §2 states that a priest can celebrate no more than three liturgies on a given Sunday or holy day of obligation. He can say no more than two Masses on the other days, including Saturdays. Exceptions in individual cases require the permission of the bishop or the vicar general. The bishop cannot give general permission for additional Masses without an indult from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (see the *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, page 1102).

According to canon law, a day is the period of twenty-four continuous hours that begins at midnight (c. 202 §1). Therefore, the three Masses that a priest can say on a Sunday must take place within that twenty-four hour period. The vigil Mass for Sundays and holy days counts as Mass celebrated on the previous day. This is the case even though the liturgical day for Sundays and solemnities begins with vespers on the previous day. Consequently, a priest who has already celebrated a morning Mass and a wedding on a Saturday cannot celebrate a vigil Mass for the following Sunday without permission from the bishop or the vicar general. In the Diocese of New Ulm, such permission is freely granted for good pastoral reasons.

The Church also discourages parishes from celebrating multiple Masses attended by small numbers of people on the Lord's Day. The magisterial document *Eucharisticum Mysterium* says, "As regards the time and number of Masses to be celebrated in parishes, the good of the parish community should be kept in mind and the number of Masses should not be so multiplied as to weaken the effectiveness of the pastoral effort; for example: if through the great number of Masses, only small groups of the faithful were to come to each of the Masses in a church that can hold a great number of people. Another example would be if, for the same reason, the priests were so overburdened by their work as to make it difficult for them to fulfill their ministry adequately" (no. 26).

Therefore, parishes and area faith communities should examine their weekend Mass attendance to ensure that their churches are, at a minimum, reasonably full when a Sunday liturgy is celebrated. In some cases, Mass schedules may need to be adjusted. To aid in this reflection, the diocese's Pastoral Planning Office has developed a Church Sizes and Mass Attendance Map for each region. The latest maps for 2011 can be found in Figures 5.15 through 5.20.

Each parish and AFC should re-evaluate their Mass schedules on a regular basis, taking into account changes in the number of available priests and the number of the faithful. While larger parishes might eventually lose a Sunday liturgy through this process, smaller parishes might not even be able to celebrate a Sunday liturgy every weekend. Pastoral leaders contemplating having Mass less than once a week in a parish should confer with the bishop to seek his approval. They should also discuss this change with the faithful well in advance, making sure parishioners understand the reasons for the change and giving them an opportunity to share their feedback.

B. Consultation on Parish Mergers and Church Closings

At some point, most area faith communities will no longer be able to function well simply by reducing the number of their Masses and integrating the operations and activities of its constituent parishes. The loss of a priest or the loss of a significant portion of the population in one or more of its parishes will likely be responsible for the situation. This is when changes to the structure of their organizations may come into play. Parish mergers and church closings are serious undertakings, especially because they affect the lives of the faithful in important ways.

The following procedure describes how the process of a typical parish merger or church closing might take place in the Diocese of New Ulm:

1. **Initial Consultation** – The pastoral leader(s) of an AFC that might function better with organizational changes to one or more of its parishes have an initial conversation with diocesan pastoral planning personnel. This conversation can be initiated by either side. The reasons why a change is being suggested are reviewed, and the possibilities for change are explored.
2. **Discussion with AFC and Parish Leaders** – Based on the outcome of the initial consultation, pastoral leaders discuss the need and options for change with the Area Pastoral Council of the AFC and the Administrative Councils of the parishes that would be affected. In addition to these parish leaders, the discussions could also extend to the parishioners of these parishes.
3. **Meetings with Diocesan Planning Personnel** – Pastoral planning personnel from the diocese will meet with the Area Pastoral Council, parish Administrative Councils, and/or parish groups. Information about the declining number of priests will be shared, along with the anticipated impact of this decline on the entire diocese. It will also be important to discuss in detail why the change is being considered and what the change does and does not entail. Area leaders, parish leaders, and parishioners will have the opportunity to talk about how they believe they will be affected by the change. Pastoral planning personnel will also make inquiries about the parish and church, gathering information on such things as demographics, finances, pastoral practices, the physical state of facilities, and legal rights. Feedback from these meetings and the information gathered are shared with the bishop and the Committee on Parishes. These things are intended to satisfy the requirements of Canon 50, by which the bishop “is to seek out the necessary information and proofs” about the change, “and, insofar as possible, to hear those whose rights can be injured.”
4. **Follow-Up Discussions** – Following the meetings with diocesan planning personnel, pastoral leaders should again meet with parish leaders and the faithful to be affected by the change. The primary purpose of these discussions, which can be more or less formal, is to give parishioners an opportunity to share their thoughts, concerns, and feelings. Whenever a major change takes place in parish life, people need to reflect on the way things were, what they valued in the past, and how they are coping with the expected loss, before that loss can be accepted. Some people have described the closing of their church like a death in the family. In these conversations, pastoral leaders might need to tactfully underscore the need for change to take place, even though it may be painful. If there is any question or confusion about what is to take place, diocesan planning personnel can be invited back. These discussions can go on for several months.
5. **Written Proposal** – When pastoral leaders believe they have reached the point of diminishing returns in fostering acceptance for the change, they will contact diocesan planning personnel to move the process forward. With the help of the pastoral leaders, the planning office will then prepare a written document detailing the nature of the change being considered, the reasons why the change is necessary, and a brief history of the discussion about the change at the area and

parish levels. The proposal should also suggest a date for implementation. If a parish is to be merged with another and its church is to be closed at the same time, these changes should be written up in two separate proposals, with separate reasons given for each. After being reviewed by pastoral leaders, this proposal is then submitted to the bishop and to the Committee on Parishes.

6. **Consideration by the Priests' Council** – If the bishop and the Committee on Parishes have no objection to the change, it should then be considered by the diocese's Priests' Council. The basis for their discussion will be the written proposal. Depending on the circumstances, they may request that pastoral leaders and/or diocesan planning personnel attend their meeting to answer any important questions. A detailed record of the discussion must be recorded in the meeting minutes, so that there is no doubt that it took place and what it was about. If a parish is to be merged with another and its church is to be closed at the same time, the Priests' Council must consider these changes separately, in two different agenda items. This step satisfies the requirements of Canon 515 §2, according to which the diocesan bishop "is neither to erect, suppress, nor alter notably parishes, unless he has heard the presbyteral council."
7. **Issuance of a Decree** – If, having listened to the Priests' Council, the bishop approves of the change, he will issue a singular, written decree (see Canon 48). This decree will be based on the written proposal and any other important considerations raised by the Committee on Parishes or by the Priests' Council. Through the decree, the bishop both makes his decision about the change and communicates it to those affected by it. If he makes more than one decision – for example, one regarding a parish merger and another regarding a church closure – he should issue more than one decree. Each decree will include at least a summary of the reasons for the decision and an effective date on which the change will take place. It will be sent to pastoral leaders, posted on the diocesan Web site, and likely published in *The Prairie Catholic*.
8. **Events Marking the Change** – On or as close to the effective date as possible, the parishes involved should mark the transition with liturgies and other parish events. For example, in a parish merger, a Mass marking the occasion should be celebrated first in the parish to be merged, and then in the designated parish. Area leaders and parishioners from the designated parish should attend the Mass at the parish to be merged as a sign of solidarity with parishioners. For the closing of a church, a final Mass should be celebrated. After this Mass, the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament should be discontinued and the sacred oils and vessels should be removed. To emphasize the connection between the church to be closed and the parish church, a Eucharistic procession from the former to the latter should be organized. Resources on celebrations to mark parish mergers and church closures will be forthcoming from the diocese's Pastoral Planning Office.

C. Regional Consultation and Recommendations

Pastoral leaders and diocesan planning personnel do indispensable work in identifying parishes that are conducive to structural change and engaging in discussions with the faithful about these changes. This process in itself, however, is no guarantee that all the parishes and area faith communities in the diocese will function well with a reduction in priests when that day comes.

To manage these reductions, forward thinking is critically important. No parish or area faith community should have to scramble to figure out what to do in the event that it no longer has a priest whom it was counting on for pastoral ministry. Pastoral leaders should always be prepared to do without the services of one of their priests. As was made clear earlier in this section, it is only a matter of time before each region in the diocese has to get by with one or two fewer priests.

Early in 2012, the diocesan Pastoral Planning Office and the Committee on Parishes first distributed the regional Church Sizes and Mass Attendance maps (the 2010 versions of Figures 5.15 to 5.20) to pastoral leaders. Using them, they were asked to consider in regional meetings how their region would manage the loss of a priest or two. To ensure that this planning takes place on a regular basis, this Plan for Parishes calls for these discussions to continue on an annual basis. By November 1 of each year beginning in 2013, each region is to submit to the Committee on Parishes and to the Priest Personnel Board a brief written plan on how they plan to deal with the loss of a single priest. If that plan involves structural changes to the area faith communities or parishes in the region, it is to provide details about how those proposed changes are to be pursued.

D. A Unified, Ongoing Approach to Pastoral Planning

It bears repeating that good pastoral planning decisions and actions depend on the coordinated, collaborative efforts of everyone in the diocese – from the bishop to the people in the pews. Each has an important role to play in determining, planning, and implementing those changes that will help ensure a bright future for our diocese. Since the interaction of various people and groups in this process can become complicated, it is worth providing a brief review of their respective roles in pastoral planning.

1. **Diocesan Bishop** – It is the responsibility of the bishop to appoint pastors (c. 523) and parochial vicars (c. 547) to parishes. In carrying out this duty, he customarily consults the Priest Personnel Board. It is also the bishop's sole responsibility "to erect, suppress, or alter parishes" (c. 515 §2). Before he does so, he is obligated to consult the Priests' Council. In the Diocese of New Ulm, he would also consult the Committee on Parishes. Though he has decision-making authority over the organization of parishes, the bishop may not know initially what changes are right for a parish or when the timing is right to make them. For this he must depend primarily on pastoral leaders. He must also depend on them to encourage the faithful to accept these changes.
2. **Pastoral Leaders** – As they have in the past, the pastors, associate pastors, and pastoral administrators of the diocese will play an essential role in initiating, discussing, and implementing pastoral planning decisions. Often a pastoral leader is the first person who sees that fundamental change is necessary in a parish community. The role of pastoral leaders is indispensable in facilitating acceptance of change among the faithful.
3. **Diocesan Planning Personnel** – These diocesan employees are the Coordinator of Staff and the Director of Pastoral Planning. Both serve as staff liaisons to the Committee on Parishes. In addition to writing and editing the plan for parishes, these people are responsible for making sure that the implementation of the plan stays on course.
4. **Priest Personnel Board** – One of the main purposes of the Priest Personnel Board is the "recommendation of priests for appointment by the bishop after careful consultation with the persons concerned" (*Diocesan Policies*, Personnel, Priests 1, page 1). In pursuing this goal, members are to "consider the needs of the diocese and the parishes and any special needs/requests of the priests" and "match the needs of the diocese and parishes with the needs/requests and qualifications of the priests as closely as possible" (p. 4).
5. **Priests' Council** – Canon 495 §1 sets forth the purpose of the presbyteral council in each diocese. It is a group of priests "which, representing the presbyterate, is to be like a senate of the bishop and which assists the bishop in the governance of the diocese according to the norm of law to promote as much as possible the pastoral good of the portion of the People of God entrusted to him" (see also *Diocesan Policies*, Personnel, Priests 4, p. 2). One of the areas of governance in

which the bishop must consult the presbyteral council concerns parishes: “He is neither to erect, suppress, nor alter notably parishes, unless he has heard the presbyteral council” (c. 515 §2). The presbyteral council is a consultative body; the bishop must listen to their advice, but is not obligated to follow it.

6. **Committee on Parishes** – This consultative body consists of priests and lay people of the diocese. They consider all matters pertaining to pastoral planning and make recommendations to the bishop. Together with diocesan planning personnel, they are responsible for the content of each plan for parishes and guide its implementation. They critique the five-year action plans of area faith communities, review regional plans regarding reductions in priests, and evaluate proposals for parish mergers and church closings.
7. **Parish Leaders** – Parish leaders, whether they are appointed by the pastor to a specific ministry or elected by parishioners to serve on some committee, participate in the pastoral governance of the parish. They play a consultative role with respect to pastoral leaders. Whenever a change is considered that falls under their expertise or purview, their advice should be sought. This is especially the case when parish mergers and church closings are being considered, in view of Canon 50. In other matters where it is impractical to canvas all parishioners for their opinions, the voices of their leaders may have to suffice. For more on parish ministry, please see the next chapter of this section.
8. **The Faithful of the Diocese** – The faithful should always be consulted on decisions that will affect their lives in important ways. As indicated above, this applies especially to parish mergers and church closings. Parishioners have invested a great deal spiritually, emotionally, and financially in their parish and in their church. Changes to the way they worship can be painful. They need to be able to consider the potential change from both a historical and a current perspective and express how it will affect them.

It is fair to say that these individuals and groups play the biggest roles in pastoral planning, at least in the Diocese of New Ulm. Other diocesan groups might also participate in planning-related activities from time to time. This could happen, for example, in the event that a parish wants to sell a former church building that has been relegated to secular use. (This is called “alienation” in canon law.) If the amount of the sale exceeds a certain minimum amount established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the parish needs the permission of the diocesan bishop for the sale to be approved. The bishop, in turn, needs the consent of the diocesan Finance Council and the College of Consultors (a subset of the Priests’ Council) to grant this permission (c. 1292 §1).

CHAPTER 5. AREA FAITH COMMUNITY AND PARISH MINISTRY

The allocation of priests, pastoral administrators, and deacons in the diocese is the responsibility of the bishop, in consultation with the Priest Personnel Board. The designation of others for roles in pastoral ministry at the area faith community and parish levels is the responsibility of the pastor. Pastors are encouraged to seek input from diocesan planning personnel and the Committee on Parishes when they are considering important changes to their area faith community or parish personnel.

A. Parish Ministerial Personnel

In his apostolic exhortation *The Church in America*, Pope John Paul II calls the field in which priests work “vast” and encourages them to concentrate on what is essential in their ministry. To do this, they should involve others in the work of the Church.

They should be careful to discern the charisms and strengths of the faithful who might be leaders in the community, listening to them and through dialogue encouraging their participation and co-responsibility. This will lead to a better distribution of tasks, enabling priests “to dedicate themselves to what is most closely tied to the encounter with and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, and thus to represent better within the community the presence of Jesus who draws his people together.” (*Ecclesia in America*, no. 39; see also *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 9)

The pastor, in consultation with others in the area faith community, is responsible for the hiring of area faith community and parish ministerial personnel. Consultation with a diocesan office or AFC committee is appropriate and helpful in the search and interview processes. Furthermore, the diocesan Coordinator of Staff’s office and the diocese’s human resources consultant may be helpful in addressing personnel issues that come up regarding area faith community or parish staff, such as compensation, leave time, or progressive discipline.

The introduction of the area faith community model throughout the diocese has advanced the dialogue about the need for trained personnel in specialized ministries. The newly ordained deacons, women religious, and lay faithful have become more involved with these specialized ministries. They assist pastors and other priests whose responsibilities in sacramental ministry require additional trained personnel.

As the number of priests serving in our diocese continues to decrease, there will be an increasing demand for specialized ministers. The most common positions in parish ministry are the following:

- Pastoral Administrator
- Pastoral Associate
- Pastoral Minister (“Pastoral Assistant”)
- Director of Religious Education (“Director of Faith Formation” or “Religious Education Coordinator”)
- Director of Youth Ministry (“Youth Minister”)
- Hispanic Minister
- Director of Adult Faith Formation
- Director of Liturgy and Music (“Coordinator of Liturgy” or “Music Minister”)
- Social Concerns Director (“Coordinator of Social Concerns”)
- Business Manager

- Bookkeeper
- Parish Secretary
- Catholic School Principal
- Catholic School Teacher

B. Volunteer Parish Ministers

Essential to the effectiveness and quality of parish ministry are the many volunteers who work directly in the organization's programs, events, activities, and meetings. The catechists, liturgical ministers, social concerns personnel, administrative council members, pastoral council and other committee members need to be trained and supported as well.

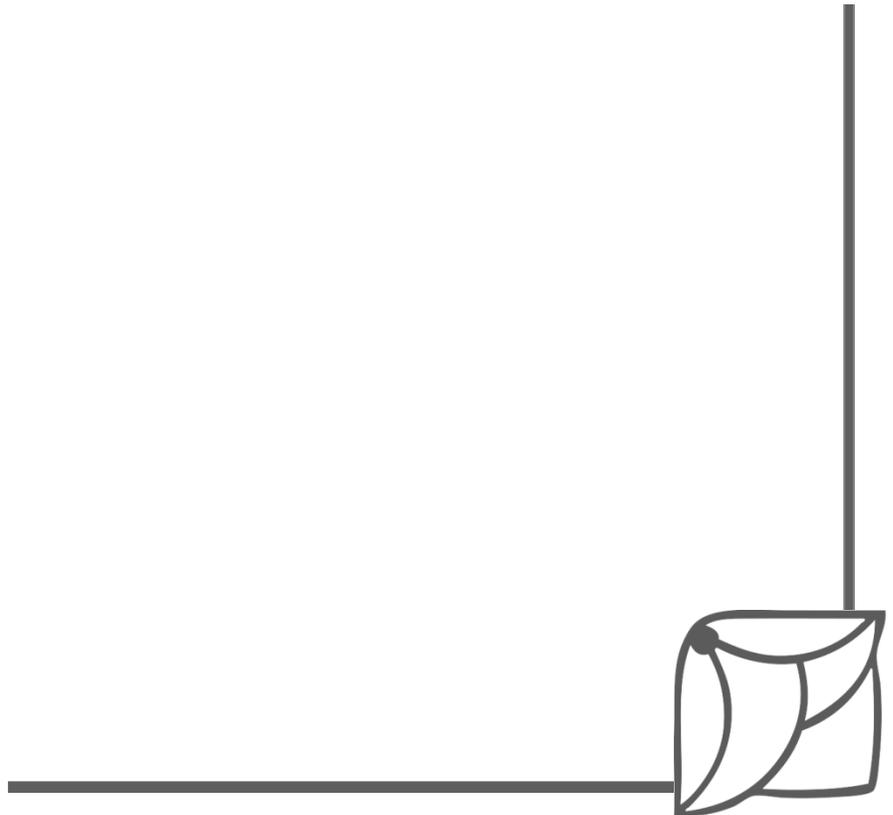
C. Future Issues

There are important personnel issues that the Diocese of New Ulm has addressed and continues to address on an ongoing basis. More discussion and planning in these areas should occur.

- All parish leadership will need to be well-trained and adept in collaborative skills. What kind of training is needed and how will it be provided?
- The deacon's ministerial role in the diocese is beginning to become clear as our first class of permanent deacons has begun to serve. What changes will occur in the recruitment and preparation of the next group of deacon candidates?
- Ecclesial certification, on state, regional, and national levels, is recommended for a number of professional ministries. The diocese will continue to respond to the academic and spiritual formation standards that may be indicated for specific positions.

There are also professional issues that need to be addressed on an ongoing basis. Specific priorities include *continuing* education, financial compensation, and the development of new working relationships as pastors, parish ministers, staff, and volunteers serve an entire area faith community.

ADDENDA
Guidelines



APPENDIX 1. AREA PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

A. Name: Area Pastoral Council

Each area faith community (AFC) should have one Area Pastoral Council (APC) and subcommittees in the areas of priest, prophet, and king, reflecting the threefold mission of Christ and his Church. Under the *Third Plan for Parishes*, the APC has become the principal advisory body for the pastoral leader(s) of an AFC, thus eliminating the need for the Pastoral Council in most parishes. Specific parish discussions and recommendations are made by the individual parish Administrative Councils, which also act as the Finance Council for each parish.

B. Nature and Powers

1. The APC is the primary consultative body to the AFC pastoral leader(s). The Council advises the pastoral leaders on how to best carry out the pastoral ministry of the AFC. Of course, advice should be given within the bounds of Church and civil law, as well as diocesan policy. The pastoral leaders of the AFC are not legally or canonically bound to follow the recommendations of the APC; however, a respectful and open dialogue about the acceptance or rejection of recommendations will increase the effectiveness of the APC and the work of pastoral leader(s).
2. If the area has a single pastor for all its parishes, he is responsible for the pastoral care of those parishes and makes the decisions pursuant to that care. If there are two or more pastoral leaders in the AFC, they will define a process for decision-making in the area.

C. Membership and Terms of Office

1. The APC shall have representatives from each parish in the AFC.
 - a. All pastoral leaders in the AFC are ex officio members of the APC. Pastors may name staff as ex officio members of an APC; open participation of staff serving an AFC is encouraged.
 - b. In the AFCs where parishes are roughly equal in size, each pastoral leader shall appoint at least two members to the APC. In those cases where smaller and larger parishes are in the same AFC, the pastoral leaders, after a selection process, may choose to appoint members proportionately. Each Council should have an appointed membership of at least six and not more than ten members.
 - c. There will be at least one member on the APC representing a subcommittee in each of the areas of priest, prophet, and king.
 - d. The multi-cultural dynamics of any AFC must, in some way, also be represented by the APC membership.
2. The terms of office begin on July 1 and shall be a three-year term for those who are not ex officio members.
 - a. The terms of office should be staggered so that terms of all representatives from one parish do not expire at the same time.

- b. Representatives are limited to two consecutive, three-year terms. A lapse of one year is suggested before the representative is eligible again for membership, unless the pastoral leader(s) are unable to find a suitable parishioner to take that person's place.
- c. For any members who cannot complete a term, the appropriate pastoral leader will appoint a person to complete the term. If the vacancy is for less than eighteen months, the person appointed would be eligible for two additional three-year terms.
- d. Representatives shall assume office at the first regular meeting of the APC after July 1 following their appointment.
- e. A member can be obliged to resign from his/her office after two consecutive unexcused absences or three unexcused absences in one year, at the discretion of the pastoral leaders. Pastoral leaders may also remove a representative from the council for just cause.

D. Transition

- 1. The activity of the APC is suspended if due to illness or any other reason, there are no pastoral leaders assigned to and serving in the area.
- 2. Upon appointment, a new pastoral leader should meet with the other pastoral leaders in the area to be oriented to matters connected with the APC. At the same time, parish representatives on the APC may be changed by the pastoral leaders. Representatives could be reappointed or replaced with new representatives. If the previous representatives are reappointed, they may serve through their unexpired term.
- 3. During a transition, no decisions can be reached regarding area direction or policies. Pastoral leaders need to develop a transition plan for decision making.
- 4. A formal AFC planning process is recommended whenever a new pastor is assigned to a parish in the area. Members of the current APC can share their experiences, vision, and questions. Similarly, the new pastor can convey his experiences, vision, and questions, and make his expectations known. The first year of transition is also an appropriate time to review lengths of service for AFC leadership.

E. Officers and Duties

- 1. At the first regularly scheduled meeting of the APC after July 1, the representatives of the APC shall select a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary from the voting members. The officers shall serve not more than two consecutive three-year terms. A three-year time lapse is required before a representative may be elected to a previously held office. This does not exclude the possibility of someone coming to the meeting to record the minutes.
- 2. The executive committee shall include all the pastoral leaders and the officers of the APC. The pastoral leaders may select one of their members to be the one who regularly attends the executive committee meeting. The duties of the executive committee include the following:
 - a. Make certain that the scope of the APC's concern reflects the entire mission of the Church as well as the needs of the area.
 - b. Make certain that the APC members have adequate training and materials to fulfill their roles.
 - c. See that communication to and from the APC occurs smoothly in each of their parishes.

3. The pastoral leaders and their parish staffs may meet separately to discuss agenda items and review the timeline for bringing these matters to the parish. Each pastoral leader keeps official copies of the staff and APC minutes, agendas, and other materials for the parish record.
4. The chairperson's duties include the following:
 - a. Preparing a written agenda and other needed materials in collaboration with the pastoral leaders and arranging the delivery of these materials prior to the meeting.
 - b. Chairing all meetings of the APC.
 - c. Following a consensus decision-making process. The chairperson does the following:
 - i. Invites all members to give their input on the topic.
 - ii. After sufficient discussion, asks if there are any major questions or concerns.
 - iii. Addresses any questions or concerns mentioned, or directs them to the appropriate person.
 - iv. States the recommended action and asks the members if they are in agreement with or can be supportive of it.
 - v. If there is no consensus, determines whether or not action is necessary at this time. If not, asks members to spend time before the next meeting to reflect and pray about the matter. If action is needed, polls each member to make best recommendations to the pastoral leaders. Recommendations of the APC should involve a two-thirds majority of the voting members to be adopted.
 - d. Calling special meetings of the APC at the request of the pastoral leaders of the AFC.
 - e. Sending the pastoral leaders a written summary of APC recommendations after each meeting.
5. The vice-chairperson shall assume the duties of the chairperson in the event that the chairperson is absent from the meeting for any reason. He/she shall perform such duties as may be delegated by the chairperson. He/she especially fills this role by becoming familiar with the special duties of the chairperson so that the office can be assumed at any time. Members with two consecutive absences shall be contacted by the vice-chairperson and encouraged to improve their attendance.
6. The secretary shall keep minutes of the meeting or oversee the keeping of minutes of the APC, and shall perform other duties as assigned by the chairperson. The secretary's duties include the following:
 - a. Drafting the minutes for the designated pastoral leaders to review and make corrections before they are distributed to the members.
 - b. Retaining copies of the minutes for the APC, which are passed on to his/her successor.
 - c. Maintaining and making available to the parishes and diocesan offices the official list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of all APC members and their terms of office.
 - d. Reporting to the APC all communications and handling all correspondence as directed by the chairperson.
 - e. Assuring that the minutes of the APC meetings are available to all parishioners and parish staff.
7. Each officer shall, within ten days of the expiration of his/her term of office, return to the pastoral leaders all books, papers, and other records and property pertaining to the office.

F. Meetings of the Area Pastoral Council

1. Meetings shall be held at least quarterly each year and preferably monthly during the school year. The APC may opt not to meet in certain months.
2. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the non–ex officio members.
3. Each regular meeting should include time for prayer and enrichment. Praying the Liturgy of the Hours at the beginning of the meeting is strongly encouraged.
4. Advanced notice of time and place of regular meetings of the APC shall be published in all parishes. Meetings are open to observers.
5. At the discretion of the pastoral leaders, the APC may go into executive session to discuss issues requiring confidentiality, which would exclude observers.
6. Since the APC is a consultative body to the pastoral leaders of an AFC, it is inappropriate for the APC to meet without the pastoral leaders. Occasionally, not all pastoral leaders can be present at a meeting. In those cases, the meeting will be held or cancelled at the discretion of the pastoral leaders.

G. Subcommittees of the Area Pastoral Council

1. To help facilitate pastoral ministry in the AFC, the APC shall establish subcommittees in each of the areas of priest, prophet, and king. The priestly committee(s) will focus on prayer and the sacraments, the prophetic committee(s) will focus on handing on the Word of God, and the kingly committee(s) will focus on parish operations, stewardship, and works of Christian charity. Some examples of these committees might be:
 - a. Priestly committees: Worship Committee, Sacred Music Committee
 - b. Prophetic committees: Word Committee, Area Religious Education Committee, Area Schools Committee
 - c. Kingly committees: Service Committee, Social Concerns Committee, Family Life Committee, Stewardship Committee, Buildings and Grounds Committee
2. Because they are area committees, each committee should have representation from each parish in the area. These representatives are recommended by the parish Administrative Council and approved by the pastoral leader.
3. Parish or AFC staff members will serve as ex officio members on appropriate committees.

H. Relationship with the Parish Administrative Councils

1. Both Councils are advisory to pastoral leaders.
2. An official copy of the minutes of APC meetings should be sent to the chair of each Administrative Council.

I. Amendments to the Guidelines

These guidelines shall be subject to such amendments as the bishop, pastoral leaders, and appropriate diocesan committees shall deem necessary for the proper functioning of the parishes in the AFC within the norms of civil and canon law.

APPENDIX 2. AREA ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Area Pastoral Councils (APCs) are strongly encouraged to establish an area assessment to pay for shared costs. This is much simpler than for the pastor, shared staff, and other shared expenses to be paid by two or more separate organizations. These guidelines will help area faith communities (AFCs) to formulate a proportionate assessment. The guidelines are based on those approved for the Diocesan United Fund (see *Diocesan Policies*, Administration, Diocesan 1) and those in use by several AFCs in the diocese. Area assessments do not affect a parish's diocesan assessment in any way. Some adjustments may need to be made to the assessment formula when one or more parishes contribute housing or other in-kind resources.

1. **Determining the Area Assessment Budget** – The total amount of the area assessment to be collected for the fiscal year is proposed in a budget and approved by the pastoral leader(s) after consultation with the APC and the parish Administrative Councils. The total amount is based on the funds needed for the AFC's pastoral needs, usually consisting of personnel, administration, and program expenses.
2. **Determining Each Parish's Total Gross Revenues** – The first step in arriving at a parish's assessment is to determine the parish's Total Gross Income. The following revenues are *excluded*:
 - a. All universal Church collections
 - b. Any capital improvement collections or campaigns
 - c. Cemetery funds
 - d. School revenues *may be excluded* if some school expenses are not to be included in the area assessment.
3. **The Assessment Formula** – Calculating the formula follows these procedures:
 - a. The total parish revenues for all parishes are added together and each parish's portion is calculated as a percentage of the total income.
 - b. The total number of donors contributing \$50 or more per year from all parishes is added together and each parish's portion is calculated as a percentage of the total.
 - c. The total number of Catholics in all parishes is added together and each parish's portion is calculated as a percentage of the total.
 - d. The percentages from each parish, obtained in a, b, and c, are added together and the total divided by three, to obtain the final per-parish percentage figure which will be used in determining the parish's share of the area assessment.
 - e. Each parish's percentage is then multiplied by the total assessment budget to determine the dollar amount of the assessment.
4. **Payment of the Assessment** – Usually the dollar amount of the assessment would be divided by twelve and paid in monthly installments by a specified date.
5. **Collection of the Assessment** – A central location and system for the billing, collection, and disbursement of funds should be established.

APPENDIX 3. ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL GUIDELINES

A. Rationale

1. As individual parishes work together as an area faith community (AFC), the Area Pastoral Council (APC) will guide the pastoral ministry of the AFC. This body is the primary consultative body for the pastoral leader(s) of an area. The APC, for all intents and purposes, has replaced the parish Pastoral Council.
2. While the pastoral ministry of an AFC is guided by the APC, there are still many parish-specific concerns that need attention. Pastoral leaders still need to consult the faithful on these issues and concerns. The life of the parish is also enriched and strengthened by a formal and regular process of consultation.
3. To achieve the goal of giving pastoral leaders an opportunity to consult the faithful on parochial concerns, the *Third Plan for Parishes* directed that each parish's Finance Council become a parish Administrative Council.

B. Formation of the Council and Membership

1. According to canon law, each parish is to have a Finance Council to advise the pastor on the financial well-being of the parish and assist with other temporal needs. The guidelines for Finance Councils can be found in the *Diocesan Policies* (Administration, Parish 8).
2. The Finance Council continues to fulfill its canonical duties, but the scope of its responsibilities has been expanded to include consultation on other parish matters. The name of the Finance Council has been changed to the Administrative Council to reflect the change in its responsibilities. The Administrative Council is part of the kingly office of the parish.
3. There should be at least five and not more than ten members on the Administrative Council, depending on the size of the parish and its needs. At least half of the members should be skilled in financial affairs or civil law in order to carry out their responsibilities as a consultative body on the temporal affairs of the parish. The remaining members should reflect a cross-section of expertise and knowledge of parish life and ministry. The members of the Administrative Council are selected from the parish and/or appointed by the pastoral leader. At least one member of the Administrative Council should also be a member of the APC to facilitate communication and coordination with the AFC.
4. The pastor/pastoral administrator is an ex officio member of the Administrative Council. A staff person, such as an AFC business manager or parish bookkeeper, can also serve ex officio at the request of the pastoral leader.
5. If the parish becomes a designated parish by receiving a merged parish, the membership of the Administrative Council should be expanded or reconstituted. Unless pastoral leaders can find a more equitable way of determining membership, there should be a proportional representation from each parish according to its membership before the merger. This arrangement should continue for several years until pastoral leaders determine that it is no longer necessary.

6. The Administrative Council is a consultative body that advises the pastoral leader(s) of the parish. It does not meet in the absence of the pastoral leader(s) or an appointed representative.

C. Duties and Responsibilities

1. The parish Administrative Council is to fulfill all of the duties of a Finance Council.
2. In addition to the duties of the Finance Council, the Administrative Council also advises the pastor on other parish-specific matters. As the AFC evolves, so will the work of the Administrative Council. Many issues that used to be discussed by parish Pastoral Councils are now handled by the APCs. Some issues involving local activities and pastoral decisions which affect the local parish still need to be made on the parish level. The Administrative Council advises the pastoral leader(s) on these issues as well.
3. Some of these issues may include the planning of special parish events, the maintenance of buildings and grounds, cemetery administration, the recruitment and support of local volunteers, and the review of any local programs and ministries. A general practice in deciding the scope of the work of the Administrative Council is to ask the question: "Is this an issue, program, or decision that pertains only to our parish?" If the answer is "yes," then it is the work of the Administrative Council. If the answer is "no," then it is the work of the Area Pastoral Council or one of its subcommittees.
4. The members of the parish Administrative Council should be familiar with and support the mission statement, goals, and objectives of the AFC. They should not proceed with their business and work in any way that would isolate the parish from the broader AFC.

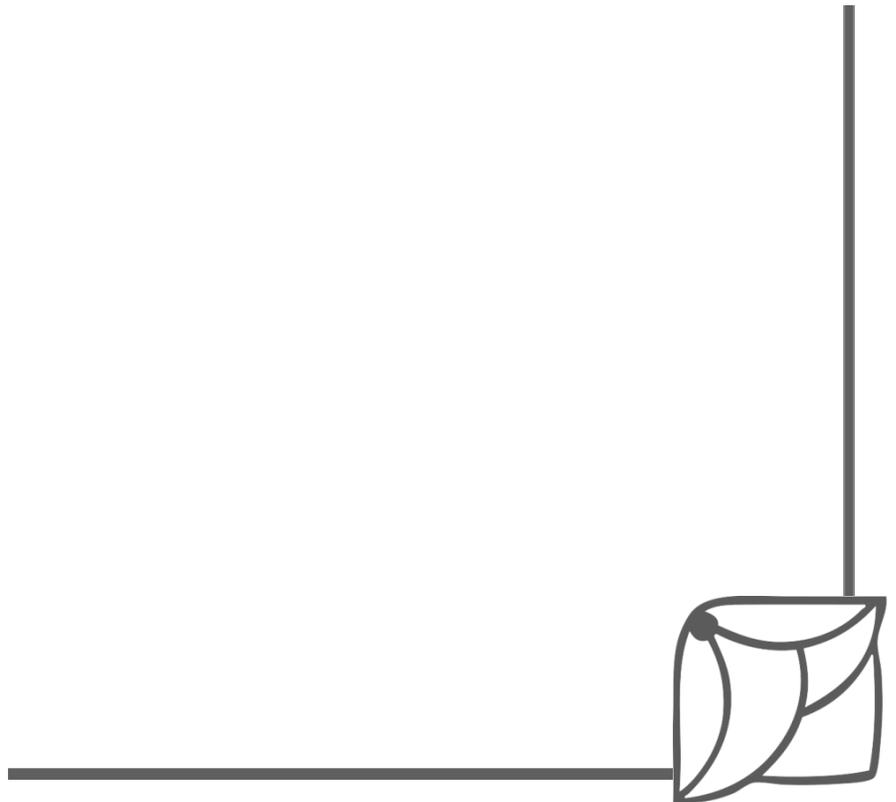
D. Relationship with the Area Pastoral Council

1. The parish Administrative Council is responsible to the pastoral leader(s) of the parish. Its work in financial matters is not subject to review by the Area Pastoral Council. However, cooperation between these groups is essential to the well-being of the AFC.
2. Formal structures for communication and reporting are necessary to the development of the AFC. The sharing of information, schedules, and plans for the local parish with the APC helps to avoid conflict and competition with events and promotes understanding of the entire area's needs.

E. The Changing Role of the Administrative Council

As AFCs develop, so will the guidelines for APCs and Administrative Councils. Each parish, in consultation with the Committee on Parishes and the bishop, may need to adapt these guidelines to their particular situation.

Section III Figures



LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | Title | Type |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| 3.1 | General Population of the Diocese of New Ulm, 1900-2010 | Graph |
| 3.2 | Diocese of New Ulm Counties and Incorporated Municipalities, 2010 | Map |
| 3.3 | Diocese of New Ulm General Population by County, 1900-2010 | Table |
| 3.4 | Diocese of New Ulm General Population by County, 1900-2010 | Graph |
| 3.5 | Diocese of New Ulm Median Household Income and Income Distribution by County | Table |
| 3.6 | Diocese of New Ulm Median Household Income by County | Graph |
| 3.7 | Diocese of New Ulm Household Income Distribution by County | Graph |
| 3.8 | Diocese of New Ulm Poverty Levels by County | Table |
| 3.9 | Municipalities in the Diocese Gaining Population, 1990-2010 | Table |
| 3.10 | Municipalities in the Diocese Losing Population or Stable, 1990-2010 | Table |
| 3.11 | Diocese of New Ulm County and Municipality Population Change, 1990-2010 | Table |
| 3.12 | Diocese of New Ulm Projected Population to 2040 by County | Table |
| 3.13 | Diocese of New Ulm Projected Population to 2040 by County | Graph |
| 3.14 | Minnesota Projected Population by Large Age Group, 2010-2040 | Graph |
| 3.15 | Diocese of New Ulm Projected Population by Large Age Group, 2010-2040 | Graph |
| 3.16 | Minnesota Projected Population Percentage by Large Age Group, 2010-2040 | Graph |
| 3.17 | Diocese of New Ulm Projected Population Percentage by Large Age Group, 2010-2040 | Graph |
| 3.18 | Diocese of New Ulm Projected Population Percentages by Small Age Group, 2010-2040 | Graph |
| 3.19 | Growth of Diocesan Hispanic Population, 1990-2010 | Table |
| 3.20 | Diocesan Municipalities with at Least Fifty Hispanics, 2010 | Table |
| 3.21 | Diocese of New Ulm Population by Race and County, 2010 | Table |
| 3.22 | Diocese of New Ulm Registered Catholic Population, 1958-2012 | Graph |
| 3.23 | Diocese of New Ulm Catholic Population by Age Group, 2000-2012 | Graph |
| 3.24 | Diocese of New Ulm Parish Households/Parishioners, 2011-2012 | Map |
| 3.25 | Diocese of New Ulm Parish Households/Parishioners Percentage Changes, 2002-2012 | Map |
| 3.26 | Diocese of New Ulm Catholic Population and Sunday Mass Attendance, 2000-2012 | Graph |
| 3.27 | Diocese of New Ulm Sunday Mass Attendance Percentage, 2000-2012 | Graph |
| 3.28 | Diocese of New Ulm Catholics, Religious, and Non-Church Affiliated People by County and Census Year, 1980-2010 | Table |
| 3.29 | Diocese of New Ulm Percentages of Catholics by County and Census Year, 1980-2010 | Graph |
| 3.30 | Diocese of New Ulm Percentages of Non-Church-Affiliated People by County and Census Year, 1980-2010 | Graph |

LIST OF FIGURES (CONTINUED)

| Figure | Title | Type |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| 3.31 | Diocese of New Ulm Baptismal Rate Compared to Minnesota and Diocesan Birth Rates, 1999-2010 | Graph |
| 3.32 | Diocese of New Ulm Funeral Rate Compared to Minnesota and Diocesan Death Rates, 1999-2010 | Graph |
| 3.33 | Diocese of New Ulm Sacramental Participation, 2000-2012 | Graph |
| 3.34 | Diocese of New Ulm Sacramental Participation Rates, 2000-2012 | Graph |

Figure 3.1
General Population of the Diocese of New Ulm, 1900-2010
Source: Decennial U.S. Census

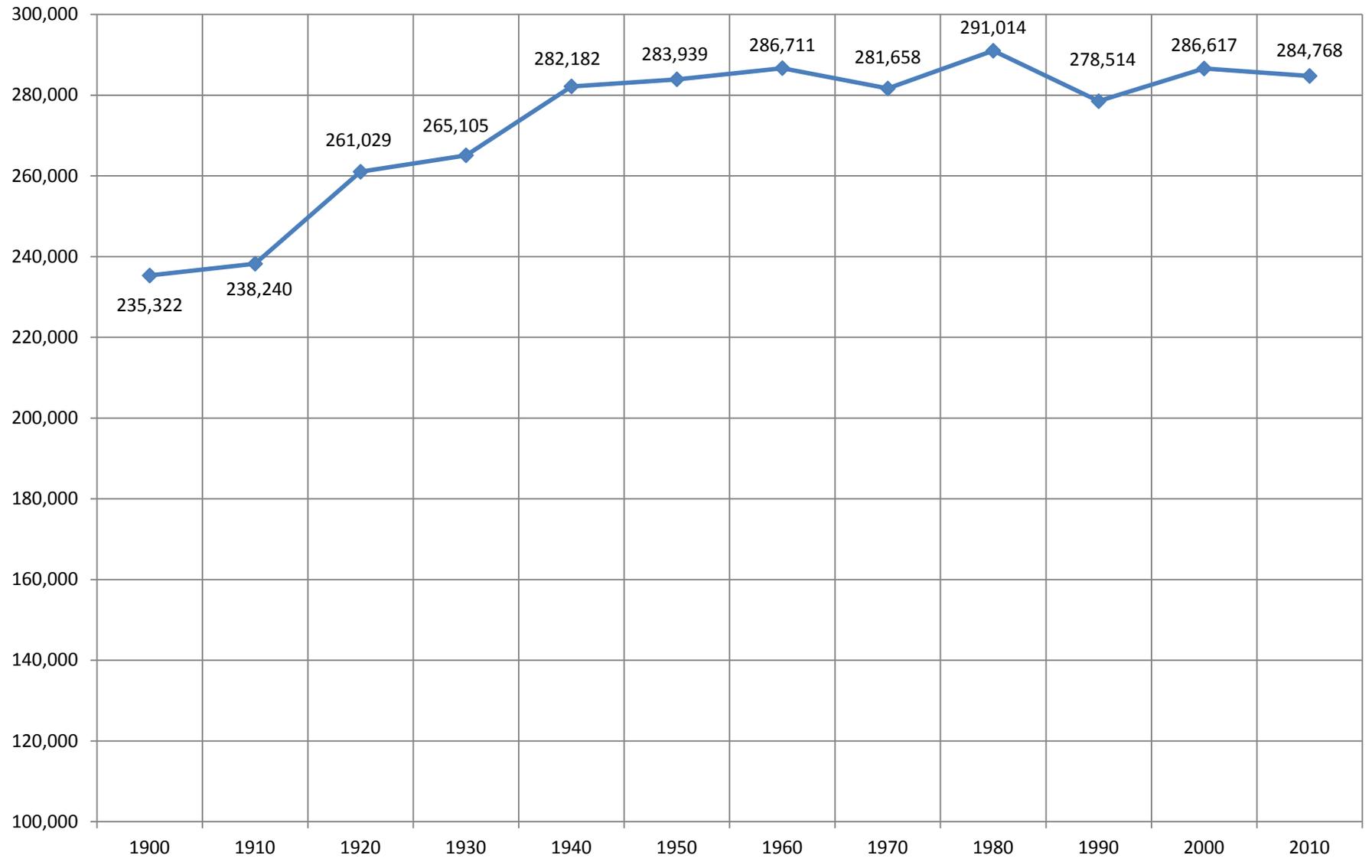


Figure 3.2
 Diocese of New Ulm Counties and Incorporated Municipalities, 2010

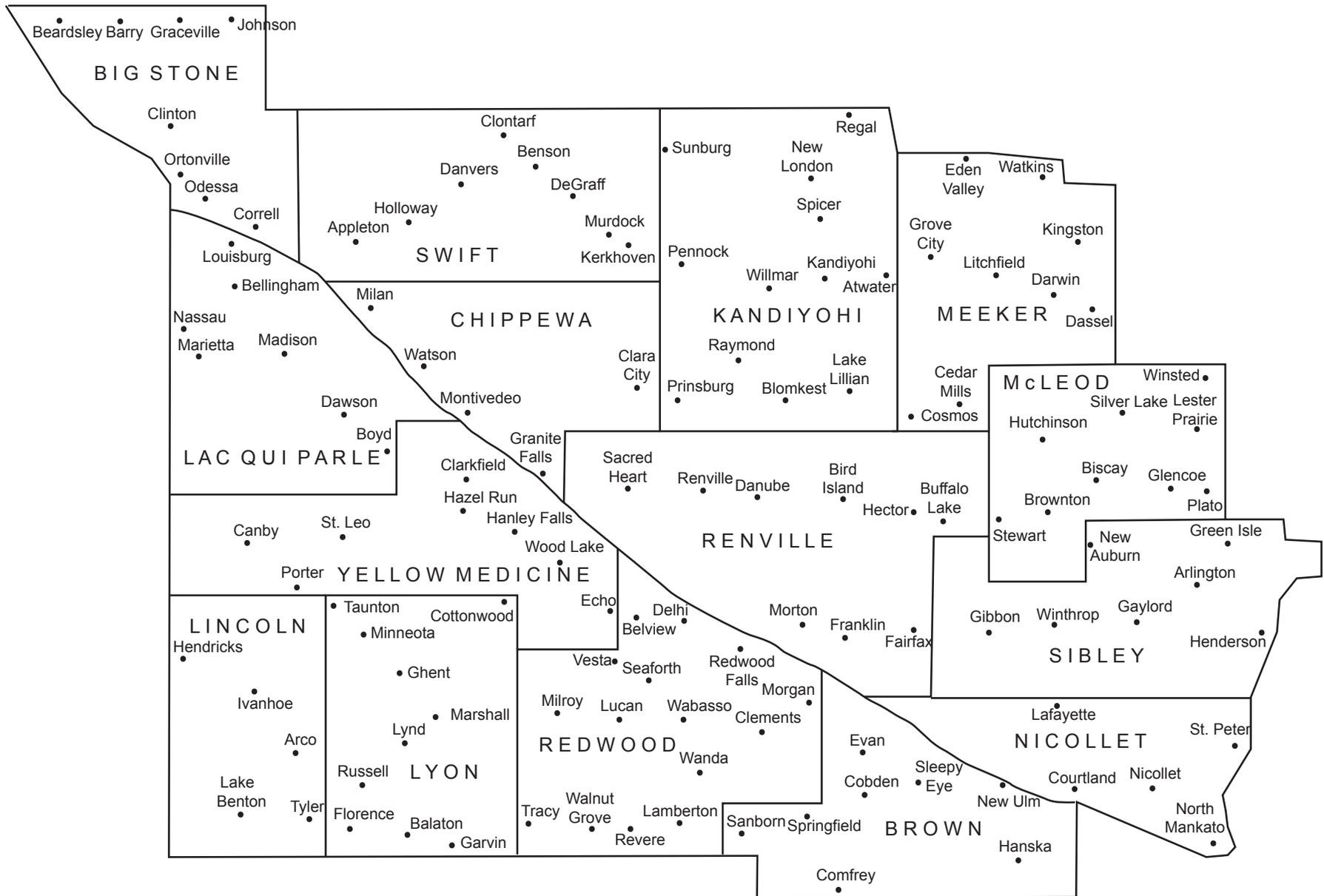


Figure 3.3

Diocese of New Ulm General Population by County, 1900-2010

Source: Decennial U.S. Census

| | 1900 | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Big Stone County | 8,731 | 9,367 | 9,766 | 9,838 | 10,447 | 9,607 | 8,954 | 7,941 | 7,716 | 6,285 | 5,820 | 5,269 |
| Brown County | 19,787 | 20,134 | 22,421 | 23,428 | 25,544 | 25,895 | 27,676 | 28,887 | 28,645 | 26,984 | 26,911 | 25,893 |
| Chippewa County | 12,499 | 13,458 | 15,720 | 15,762 | 16,927 | 16,739 | 16,320 | 15,109 | 14,941 | 13,228 | 13,088 | 12,441 |
| Kandiyohi County | 18,416 | 18,969 | 22,060 | 23,574 | 26,524 | 28,644 | 29,987 | 30,548 | 36,763 | 38,761 | 41,203 | 42,239 |
| Lac qui Parle County | 14,289 | 15,435 | 15,554 | 15,398 | 15,509 | 14,545 | 13,330 | 11,164 | 10,592 | 8,924 | 8,067 | 7,259 |
| Lincoln County | 8,966 | 9,874 | 11,268 | 11,303 | 10,797 | 10,150 | 9,651 | 8,143 | 8,207 | 6,890 | 6,429 | 5,896 |
| Lyon County | 14,591 | 15,722 | 18,837 | 19,326 | 21,569 | 22,253 | 22,655 | 24,273 | 25,207 | 24,789 | 25,425 | 25,857 |
| McLeod County | 19,595 | 18,691 | 20,444 | 20,522 | 21,380 | 22,198 | 24,401 | 27,662 | 29,657 | 32,030 | 34,898 | 36,651 |
| Meeker County | 17,753 | 17,022 | 18,103 | 17,914 | 19,277 | 18,966 | 18,887 | 18,810 | 20,594 | 20,846 | 22,644 | 23,300 |
| Nicollet County | 14,774 | 14,125 | 15,036 | 16,550 | 18,282 | 20,929 | 23,196 | 24,518 | 26,929 | 28,076 | 29,771 | 32,727 |
| Redwood County | 17,261 | 18,425 | 20,908 | 20,620 | 22,290 | 22,127 | 21,718 | 20,024 | 19,341 | 17,254 | 16,815 | 16,059 |
| Renville County | 23,693 | 23,123 | 23,634 | 23,645 | 24,625 | 23,954 | 23,249 | 21,139 | 20,401 | 17,673 | 17,154 | 15,730 |
| Sibley County | 16,862 | 15,540 | 15,635 | 15,865 | 16,625 | 15,816 | 16,228 | 15,845 | 15,448 | 14,366 | 15,356 | 15,226 |
| Swift County | 13,503 | 12,949 | 15,093 | 14,735 | 15,469 | 15,837 | 14,936 | 13,177 | 12,920 | 10,724 | 11,956 | 9,783 |
| Yellow Medicine County | 14,602 | 15,406 | 16,550 | 16,625 | 16,917 | 16,279 | 15,523 | 14,418 | 13,653 | 11,684 | 11,080 | 10,438 |
| Diocese of New Ulm | 235,322 | 238,240 | 261,029 | 265,105 | 282,182 | 283,939 | 286,711 | 281,658 | 291,014 | 278,514 | 286,617 | 284,768 |
| Minnesota | 1,751,394 | 2,075,708 | 2,387,125 | 2,563,953 | 2,792,300 | 2,982,483 | 3,413,864 | 3,804,971 | 4,075,970 | 4,375,099 | 4,919,492 | 5,303,925 |

Figure 3.4
 Diocese of New Ulm General Population by County, 1900-2010
 Source: Decennial U.S. Census

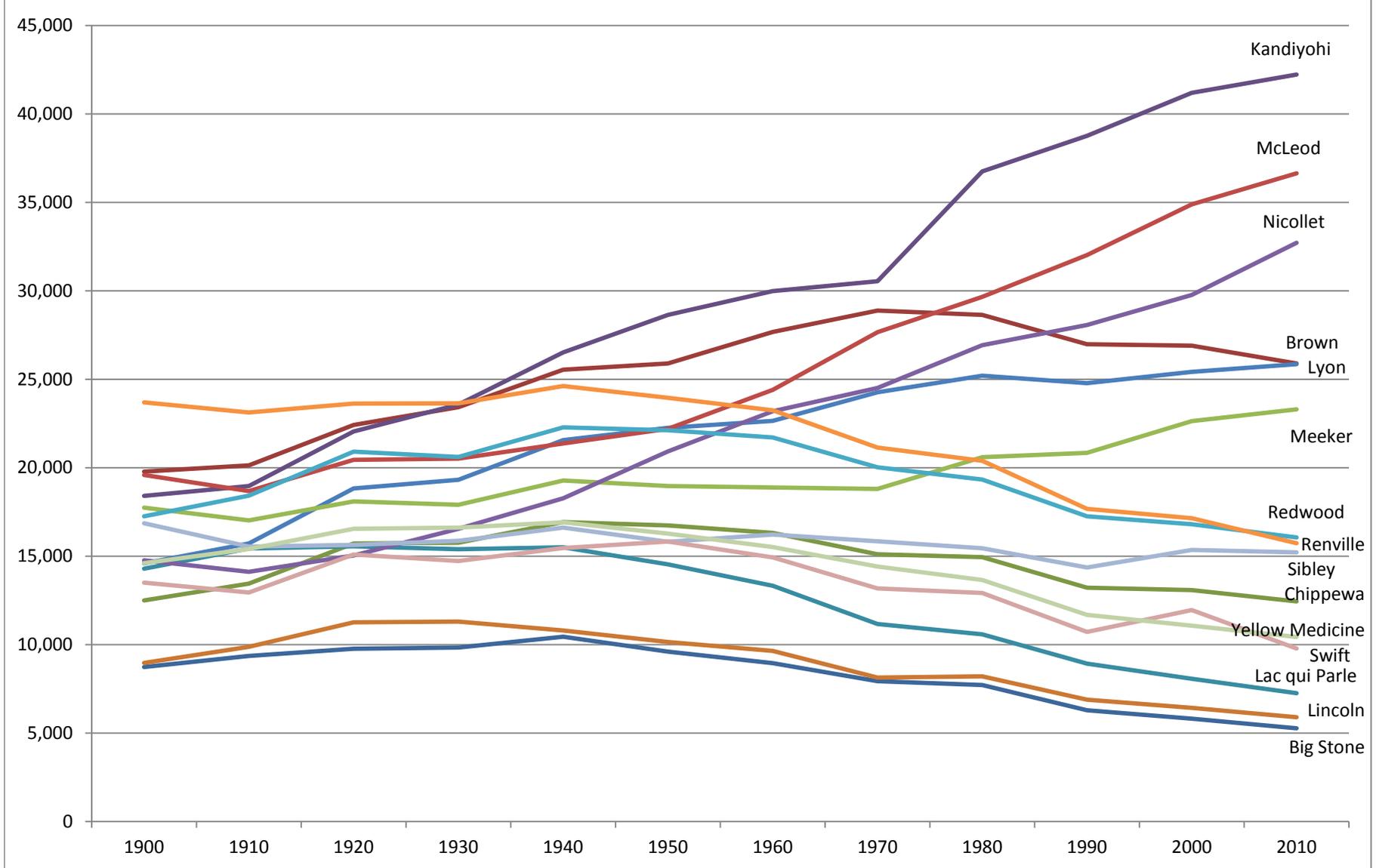


Figure 3.5

Diocese of New Ulm Median Household Income and Income Distribution by County

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

| County | Median Household Income | Less Than \$10,000 | \$10,000 to \$19,999 | \$20,000 to \$29,999 | \$30,000 to \$39,999 | \$40,000 to \$49,999 | \$50,000 to \$59,999 | \$60,000 to \$74,999 | \$75,000 to \$99,999 | \$100,000 to \$124,999 | \$125,000 to \$149,999 | \$150,000 to \$199,999 | \$200,000 and Above |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Swift | 43,846 | 7.4% | 12.9% | 13.0% | 13.3% | 9.9% | 8.3% | 11.5% | 12.5% | 6.4% | 2.1% | 1.4% | 1.3% |
| Big Stone | 44,438 | 7.1% | 14.5% | 12.5% | 10.3% | 12.7% | 11.6% | 10.3% | 10.2% | 4.6% | 1.6% | 2.7% | 1.8% |
| Chippewa | 44,712 | 7.2% | 11.9% | 11.2% | 15.8% | 9.2% | 10.0% | 10.8% | 12.5% | 5.5% | 2.4% | 2.2% | 1.4% |
| Redwood | 45,177 | 6.7% | 13.8% | 11.4% | 11.7% | 11.1% | 9.3% | 9.9% | 12.8% | 5.9% | 2.8% | 2.5% | 2.1% |
| Lincoln | 46,270 | 8.2% | 12.7% | 11.4% | 12.2% | 8.5% | 10.2% | 12.3% | 12.3% | 5.8% | 2.6% | 1.7% | 2.2% |
| Lyon | 47,254 | 7.9% | 12.6% | 11.5% | 10.2% | 10.3% | 7.4% | 11.0% | 13.9% | 7.3% | 3.4% | 3.0% | 1.5% |
| Brown | 48,149 | 5.1% | 11.5% | 11.8% | 13.4% | 10.2% | 9.0% | 11.3% | 14.2% | 7.2% | 2.2% | 2.1% | 2.0% |
| Lac qui Parle | 48,269 | 4.2% | 11.7% | 11.9% | 13.9% | 9.9% | 10.9% | 13.3% | 11.2% | 5.3% | 3.1% | 2.0% | 2.5% |
| Renville | 48,442 | 6.7% | 11.9% | 11.5% | 11.8% | 9.6% | 11.5% | 11.2% | 13.1% | 6.4% | 2.9% | 2.0% | 1.4% |
| Kandiyohi | 49,915 | 6.0% | 10.6% | 12.2% | 11.4% | 9.9% | 8.4% | 10.9% | 14.4% | 7.2% | 3.6% | 2.5% | 2.9% |
| Yellow Medicine | 50,740 | 5.2% | 11.7% | 10.2% | 12.1% | 10.0% | 12.0% | 11.9% | 14.5% | 6.6% | 2.6% | 2.0% | 1.2% |
| Meeker | 51,929 | 4.2% | 9.5% | 11.8% | 11.2% | 10.8% | 10.9% | 13.8% | 15.1% | 6.8% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 1.6% |
| Sibley | 52,482 | 4.9% | 10.1% | 10.6% | 11.5% | 9.6% | 12.4% | 12.5% | 14.7% | 5.9% | 4.0% | 2.2% | 1.7% |
| McLeod | 57,323 | 4.6% | 9.1% | 10.2% | 9.6% | 9.8% | 8.3% | 12.3% | 17.8% | 10.0% | 3.9% | 2.6% | 1.8% |
| Nicollet | 59,877 | 4.3% | 8.9% | 8.0% | 9.5% | 11.5% | 8.0% | 13.9% | 17.7% | 8.8% | 5.5% | 2.2% | 1.9% |
| DNU | 49,255 | 6.0% | 11.6% | 11.3% | 11.8% | 10.2% | 9.9% | 11.8% | 13.8% | 6.6% | 3.0% | 2.2% | 1.8% |
| Minnesota | 50,907 | 5.7% | 9.3% | 9.3% | 9.4% | 8.9% | 8.5% | 11.3% | 14.3% | 9.1% | 5.2% | 4.8% | 4.2% |

Figure 3.6
Diocese of New Ulm Median Household Income by County
Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

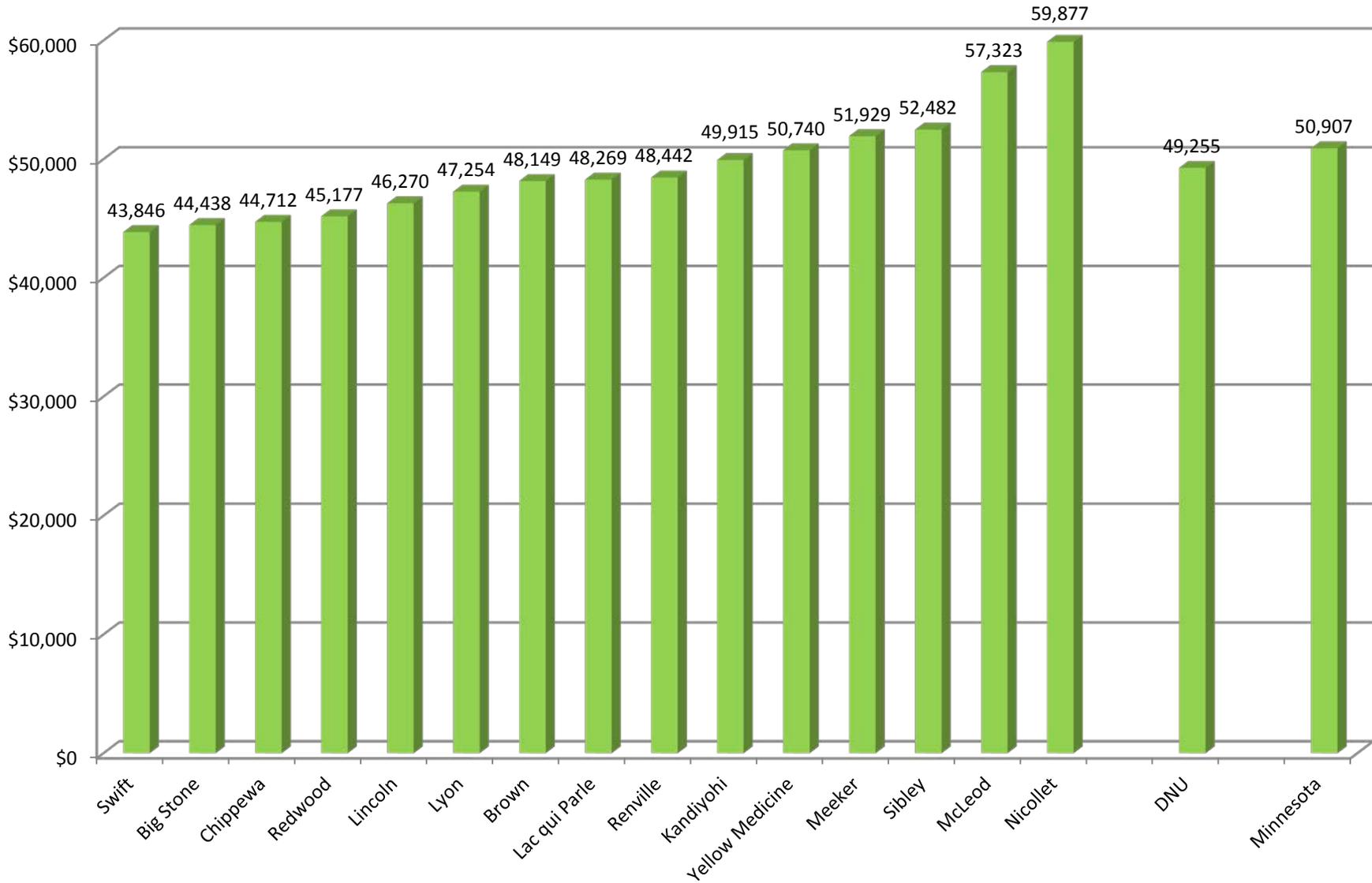


Figure 3.7
 Diocese of New Ulm Household Income Distribution by County
 Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

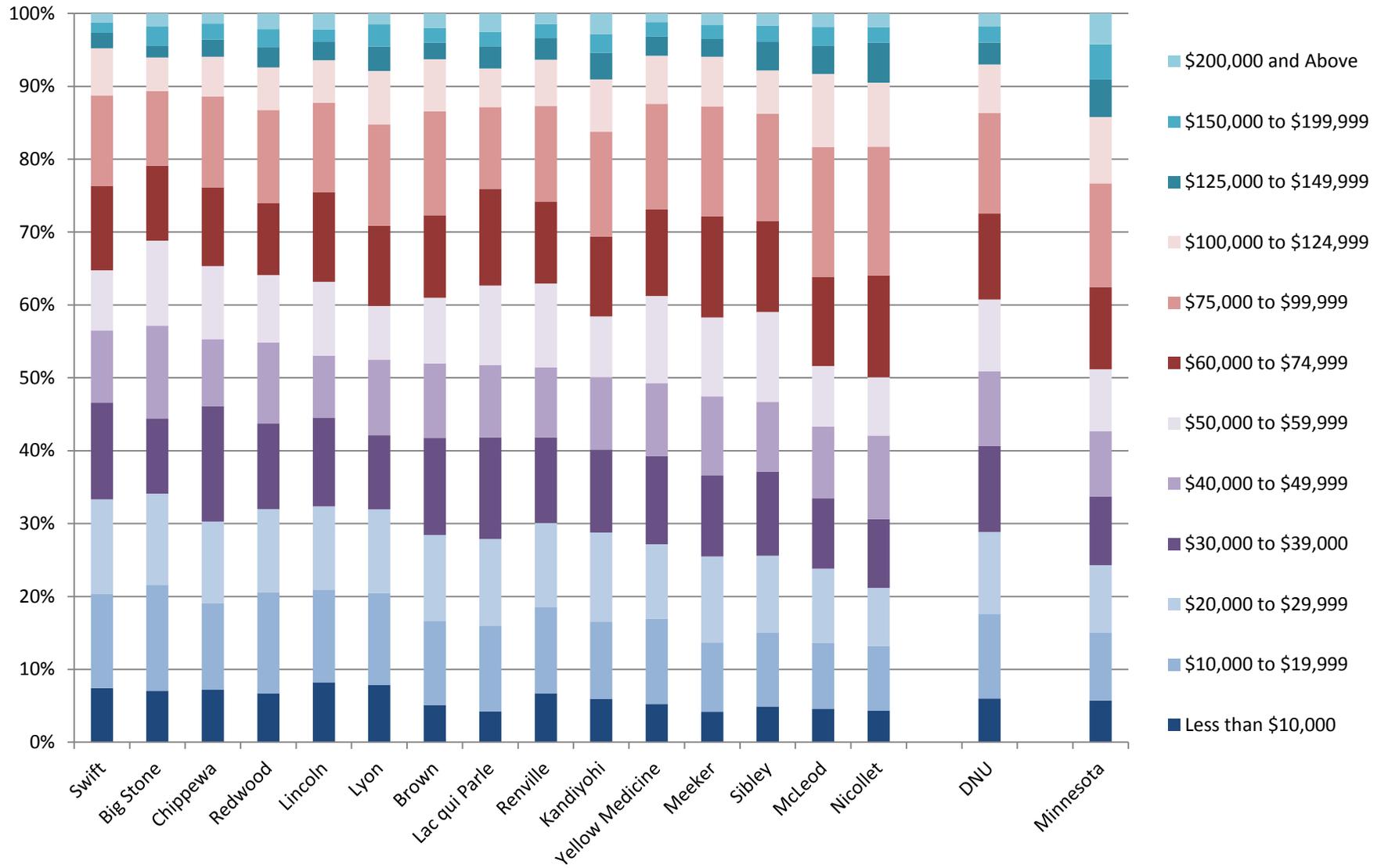


Figure 3.8

Diocese of New Ulm Poverty Levels by County

Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

| County Name | 2011 Total Population Estimate | Total Below Poverty Level | Percent Below Poverty Level | Total Male | Percent Male | Total Female | Percent Female | Children Ages 0-17 | Percent Children 0-17 | Adults Ages 18-64 | Percent Adults 18-64 | Elderly Ages 65 Plus | Percent Elderly 65 Plus |
|------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Yellow Medicine | 10,252 | 1,410 | 13.8% | 579 | 5.6% | 831 | 8.1% | 568 | 5.5% | 681 | 6.6% | 161 | 1.6% |
| Lyon | 24,513 | 3,200 | 13.1% | 1,335 | 5.4% | 1,865 | 7.6% | 879 | 3.6% | 1,982 | 8.1% | 339 | 1.4% |
| Kandiyohi | 41,250 | 5,249 | 12.7% | 2,478 | 6.0% | 2,771 | 6.7% | 1,867 | 4.5% | 2,981 | 7.2% | 401 | 1.0% |
| Sibley | 14,957 | 1,804 | 12.1% | 849 | 5.7% | 955 | 6.4% | 690 | 4.6% | 876 | 5.9% | 238 | 1.6% |
| Nicollet | 30,213 | 3,402 | 11.3% | 1,644 | 5.4% | 1,758 | 5.8% | 851 | 2.8% | 2,286 | 7.6% | 265 | 0.9% |
| Big Stone | 5,159 | 579 | 11.2% | 213 | 4.1% | 366 | 7.1% | 156 | 3.0% | 308 | 6.0% | 115 | 2.2% |
| Renville | 15,519 | 1,680 | 10.8% | 648 | 4.2% | 1,032 | 6.6% | 511 | 3.3% | 855 | 5.5% | 314 | 2.0% |
| Chippewa | 12,155 | 1,313 | 10.8% | 500 | 4.1% | 813 | 6.7% | 390 | 3.2% | 660 | 5.4% | 263 | 2.2% |
| Redwood | 15,697 | 1,646 | 10.5% | 724 | 4.6% | 922 | 5.9% | 519 | 3.3% | 808 | 5.1% | 319 | 2.0% |
| Brown | 24,771 | 2,481 | 10.0% | 1,127 | 4.5% | 1,354 | 5.5% | 783 | 3.2% | 1,118 | 4.5% | 580 | 2.3% |
| Meeker | 22,920 | 2,164 | 9.4% | 982 | 4.3% | 1,182 | 5.2% | 765 | 3.3% | 1,132 | 4.9% | 267 | 1.2% |
| Lincoln | 5,741 | 542 | 9.4% | 195 | 3.4% | 347 | 6.0% | 117 | 2.0% | 238 | 4.1% | 187 | 3.3% |
| Swift | 9,011 | 826 | 9.2% | 304 | 3.4% | 522 | 5.8% | 196 | 2.2% | 426 | 4.7% | 204 | 2.3% |
| Lac qui Parle | 7,108 | 645 | 9.1% | 273 | 3.8% | 372 | 5.2% | 173 | 2.4% | 327 | 4.6% | 145 | 2.0% |
| McLeod | 36,085 | 2,701 | 7.5% | 1,195 | 3.3% | 1,506 | 4.2% | 802 | 2.2% | 1,514 | 4.2% | 385 | 1.1% |
| DNU | 275,351 | 29,642 | 10.7% | 13,046 | 4.5% | 16,596 | 6.2% | 9,267 | 3.3% | 16,192 | 5.6% | 4,183 | 1.8% |
| Minnesota | 5,155,949 | 565,154 | 11.0% | 257,038 | 5.0% | 308,116 | 6.0% | 176,594 | 3.4% | 335,074 | 6.5% | 53,486 | 1.0% |

Figure 3.9

Municipalities in the Diocese Gaining Population, 1990-2010

Source: Decennial U.S. Census

| City | County | 1990 Population | 2000 Population | 2010 Population | 2000-2010 Percent Change | 1990-2010 Percent Change |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Green Isle | Sibley | 239 | 334 | 559 | 67.4% | 133.9% |
| Lynd | Lyon | 287 | 346 | 448 | 29.5% | 56.1% |
| Winsted | McLeod | 1,581 | 2,094 | 2,355 | 12.5% | 49.0% |
| Courtland | Nicollet | 412 | 538 | 611 | 13.6% | 48.3% |
| Lester Prairie | McLeod | 1,180 | 1,377 | 1,730 | 25.6% | 46.6% |
| Eden Valley | Meeker | 732 | 866 | 1,042 | 20.3% | 42.3% |
| Walnut Grove | Redwood | 625 | 599 | 871 | 45.4% | 39.4% |
| Darwin | Meeker | 252 | 276 | 350 | 26.8% | 38.9% |
| Nicollet | Nicollet | 795 | 889 | 1,093 | 22.9% | 37.5% |
| Dassel | Meeker | 1,082 | 1,233 | 1,469 | 19.1% | 35.8% |
| North Mankato | Nicollet | 10,164 | 11,798 | 13,394 | 13.5% | 31.8% |
| New London | Kandiyohi | 971 | 1,066 | 1,251 | 17.4% | 28.8% |
| New Auburn | Sibley | 363 | 488 | 456 | -6.6% | 25.6% |
| Hanley Falls | Yellow Medicine | 246 | 323 | 304 | -5.9% | 23.6% |
| Cottonwood | Lyon | 982 | 1,148 | 1,212 | 5.6% | 23.4% |
| Hutchinson | McLeod | 11,523 | 13,080 | 14,178 | 8.4% | 23.0% |
| Kingston | Meeker | 131 | 120 | 161 | 34.2% | 22.9% |
| Glencoe | McLeod | 4,648 | 5,453 | 5,631 | 3.3% | 21.1% |
| Gaylord | Sibley | 1,935 | 2,279 | 2,305 | 1.1% | 19.1% |
| St. Peter | Nicollet | 9,421 | 9,747 | 11,196 | 14.9% | 18.8% |
| Henderson | Sibley | 746 | 910 | 886 | -2.6% | 18.8% |
| Arlington | Sibley | 1,886 | 2,048 | 2,233 | 9.0% | 18.4% |
| Ghent | Lyon | 316 | 315 | 370 | 17.5% | 17.1% |
| Grove City | Meeker | 547 | 608 | 635 | 4.4% | 16.1% |
| Spicer | Kandiyohi | 1,020 | 1,126 | 1,167 | 3.6% | 14.4% |
| Raymond | Kandiyohi | 668 | 803 | 764 | -4.9% | 14.4% |
| Marshall | Lyon | 12,023 | 12,735 | 13,680 | 7.4% | 13.8% |
| Watkins | Meeker | 849 | 880 | 962 | 9.3% | 13.3% |
| Louisburg | Lac qui Parle | 42 | 26 | 47 | 80.8% | 11.9% |
| Willmar | Kandiyohi | 17,531 | 18,351 | 19,610 | 6.9% | 11.9% |
| Litchfield | Meeker | 6,041 | 6,562 | 6,726 | 2.5% | 11.3% |
| Franklin | Renville | 463 | 498 | 510 | 2.4% | 10.2% |
| Silver Lake | McLeod | 764 | 761 | 837 | 10.0% | 9.6% |
| Winthrop | Sibley | 1,279 | 1,367 | 1,399 | 2.3% | 9.4% |
| Lafayette | Nicollet | 462 | 529 | 504 | -4.7% | 9.1% |
| Gibbon | Sibley | 712 | 808 | 772 | -4.5% | 8.4% |
| Redwood Falls | Redwood | 4,859 | 5,459 | 5,254 | -3.8% | 8.1% |
| Wood Lake | Yellow Medicine | 406 | 436 | 439 | 0.7% | 8.1% |
| Atwater | Kandiyohi | 1,053 | 1,079 | 1,133 | 5.0% | 7.6% |
| Pennock | Kandiyohi | 476 | 504 | 508 | 0.8% | 6.7% |
| Vesta | Redwood | 302 | 339 | 319 | -5.9% | 5.6% |
| Tracy | Lyon | 2,059 | 2,268 | 2,163 | -4.6% | 5.1% |
| Milan | Chippewa | 353 | 326 | 369 | 13.2% | 4.5% |
| Hendricks | Lincoln | 684 | 725 | 713 | -1.7% | 4.2% |
| Clara City | Chippewa | 1,307 | 1,393 | 1,360 | -2.4% | 4.1% |
| Lake Lillian | Kandiyohi | 229 | 257 | 238 | -7.4% | 3.9% |
| Kerkhoven | Swift | 732 | 759 | 759 | 0.0% | 3.7% |
| New Ulm | Brown | 13,132 | 13,594 | 13,522 | -0.5% | 3.0% |
| Wabasso | Redwood | 684 | 643 | 696 | 8.2% | 1.8% |
| Delhi | Redwood | 69 | 69 | 70 | 1.4% | 1.4% |
| Hector | Renville | 1,145 | 1,166 | 1,151 | -1.3% | 0.5% |
| Belview | Redwood | 383 | 412 | 384 | -6.8% | 0.3% |
| Benson | Swift | 3,235 | 3,376 | 3,240 | -4.0% | 0.2% |

Figure 3.10

Municipalities in the Diocese Losing Population or Stable, 1990-2010

Source: Decennial U.S. Census

| City | County | 1990 Population | 2000 Population | 2010 Population | 2000-2010 Percent Change | 1990-2010 Percent Change |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Barry | Big Stone | 40 | 25 | 16 | -36.0% | -60.0% |
| Cedar Mills | Meeker | 80 | 53 | 45 | -15.1% | -43.8% |
| Correll | Big Stone | 60 | 47 | 34 | -27.7% | -43.3% |
| Cobden | Brown | 62 | 61 | 36 | -41.0% | -41.9% |
| Madison | Lac qui Parle | 2,594 | 1,768 | 1,551 | -12.3% | -40.2% |
| Johnson | Big Stone | 46 | 32 | 29 | -9.4% | -37.0% |
| Regal | Kandiyohi | 51 | 40 | 34 | -15.0% | -33.3% |
| Bellingham | Lac qui Parle | 247 | 205 | 168 | -18.0% | -32.0% |
| Boyd | Lac qui Parle | 251 | 210 | 175 | -16.7% | -30.3% |
| Arco | Lincoln | 104 | 100 | 75 | -25.0% | -27.9% |
| Florence | Lyon | 53 | 61 | 39 | -36.1% | -26.4% |
| Sanborn | Redwood | 459 | 434 | 339 | -21.9% | -26.1% |
| Ivanhoe | Lincoln | 751 | 679 | 559 | -17.7% | -25.6% |
| Holloway | Swift | 123 | 112 | 92 | -17.9% | -25.2% |
| Marietta | Lac qui Parle | 211 | 174 | 162 | -6.9% | -23.2% |
| DeGraff | Swift | 149 | 133 | 115 | -13.5% | -22.8% |
| Cosmos | Meeker | 610 | 582 | 473 | -18.7% | -22.5% |
| Hazel Run | Yellow Medicine | 81 | 64 | 63 | -1.6% | -22.2% |
| Clinton | Big Stone | 574 | 453 | 449 | -0.9% | -21.8% |
| Beardsley | Big Stone | 297 | 262 | 233 | -11.1% | -21.5% |
| Bird Island | Renville | 1,326 | 1,195 | 1,042 | -12.8% | -21.4% |
| Taunton | Lyon | 175 | 207 | 139 | -32.9% | -20.6% |
| Clements | Redwood | 191 | 191 | 153 | -19.9% | -19.9% |
| Revere | Redwood | 117 | 100 | 95 | -5.0% | -18.8% |
| Lucan | Redwood | 235 | 226 | 191 | -15.5% | -18.7% |
| Wanda | Redwood | 103 | 103 | 84 | -18.4% | -18.4% |
| Lamberton | Redwood | 972 | 859 | 824 | -4.1% | -15.2% |
| Milroy | Redwood | 297 | 271 | 252 | -7.0% | -15.2% |
| Sunburg | Kandiyohi | 117 | 110 | 100 | -9.1% | -14.5% |
| Russell | Lyon | 394 | 371 | 338 | -8.9% | -14.2% |
| Blomkest | Kandiyohi | 183 | 186 | 157 | -15.6% | -14.2% |
| Graceville | Big Stone | 671 | 605 | 577 | -4.6% | -14.0% |
| Nassau | Lac qui Parle | 83 | 83 | 72 | -13.3% | -13.3% |
| Ortonville | Big Stone | 2,205 | 2,158 | 1,916 | -11.2% | -13.1% |
| Odessa | Big Stone | 155 | 113 | 135 | 19.5% | -12.9% |
| Porter | Yellow Medicine | 210 | 190 | 183 | -3.7% | -12.9% |
| Balaton | Lyon | 737 | 637 | 643 | 0.9% | -12.8% |
| Comfrey | Brown | 433 | 367 | 382 | 4.1% | -11.8% |
| Danube | Renville | 562 | 529 | 505 | -4.5% | -10.1% |
| St. Leo | Yellow Medicine | 111 | 106 | 100 | -5.7% | -9.9% |
| Plato | McLeod | 355 | 336 | 320 | -4.8% | -9.9% |
| Garvin | Lyon | 149 | 159 | 135 | -15.1% | -9.4% |
| Hanska | Brown | 443 | 443 | 402 | -9.3% | -9.3% |
| Sacred Heart | Renville | 603 | 549 | 548 | -0.2% | -9.1% |
| Tyler | Lincoln | 1,257 | 1,218 | 1,143 | -6.2% | -9.1% |
| Appleton | Swift | 1,552 | 2,871 | 1,412 | -50.8% | -9.0% |
| Echo | Yellow Medicine | 304 | 278 | 278 | 0.0% | -8.6% |
| Morton | Renville | 448 | 442 | 411 | -7.0% | -8.3% |
| Morgan | Redwood | 965 | 903 | 896 | -0.8% | -7.2% |
| Clarkfield | Yellow Medicine | 924 | 944 | 863 | -8.6% | -6.6% |
| Granite Falls | Chippewa | 3,083 | 3,070 | 2,897 | -5.6% | -6.0% |
| Evan | Brown | 91 | 91 | 86 | -5.5% | -5.5% |

Figure 3.10

Municipalities in the Diocese Losing Population or Stable, 1990-2010

Source: Decennial U.S. Census

| City | County | 1990 Population | 2000 Population | 2010 Population | 2000-2010 Percent Change | 1990-2010 Percent Change |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Olivia | Renville | 2,623 | 2,570 | 2,484 | -3.3% | -5.3% |
| Dawson | Lac qui Parle | 1,626 | 1,539 | 1,540 | 0.1% | -5.3% |
| Clontarf | Swift | 172 | 173 | 164 | -5.2% | -4.7% |
| Fairfax | Renville | 1,276 | 1,295 | 1,235 | -4.6% | -3.2% |
| Kandiyohi | Kandiyohi | 506 | 555 | 491 | -11.5% | -3.0% |
| Watson | Chippewa | 211 | 209 | 205 | -1.9% | -2.8% |
| Sleepy Eye | Brown | 3,694 | 3,515 | 3,599 | 2.4% | -2.6% |
| Stewart | McLeod | 586 | 564 | 571 | 1.2% | -2.6% |
| Brownston | McLeod | 781 | 807 | 762 | -5.6% | -2.4% |
| Renville | Renville | 1,315 | 1,323 | 1,287 | -2.7% | -2.1% |
| Montevideo | Chippewa | 5,499 | 5,346 | 5,383 | 0.7% | -2.1% |
| Minneota | Lyon | 1,417 | 1,449 | 1,392 | -3.9% | -1.8% |
| Canby | Yellow Medicine | 1,826 | 1,903 | 1,795 | -5.7% | -1.7% |
| Lake Benton | Lincoln | 693 | 703 | 683 | -2.8% | -1.4% |
| Murdock | Swift | 282 | 303 | 278 | -8.3% | -1.4% |
| Seaforth | Redwood | 87 | 77 | 86 | 11.7% | -1.1% |
| Danvers | Swift | 98 | 108 | 97 | -10.2% | -1.0% |
| Prinsburg | Kandiyohi | 502 | 458 | 497 | 8.5% | -1.0% |
| Springfield | Brown | 2,173 | 2,215 | 2,152 | -2.8% | -1.0% |
| Buffalo Lake | Renville | 734 | 768 | 733 | -4.6% | -0.1% |
| Biscay | McLeod | 113 | 114 | 113 | -0.9% | 0.0% |

Figure 3.11

Diocese of New Ulm County and Municipality Population Change, 1990-2010

Source: Decennial U.S. Census; Table by the Diocese of New Ulm

| County | County Totals | | | | | Cities Only | | | | | Percentages | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | 1990 Pop. | 2000 Pop. | 2010 Pop. | 2000-2010 Percent Change | 1990-2010 Percent Change | 1990 Pop. | 2000 Pop. | 2010 Pop. | 2000-2010 Percent Change | 1990-2010 Percent Change | 1990 Percent City | 2000 Percent City | 2010 Percent City |
| Nicollet | 28,076 | 29,771 | 32,727 | 9.9% | 16.6% | 21,254 | 23,501 | 26,798 | 14.0% | 26.1% | 75.7% | 78.9% | 81.9% |
| McLeod | 32,030 | 34,898 | 36,651 | 5.0% | 14.4% | 21,531 | 24,586 | 26,497 | 7.8% | 23.1% | 67.2% | 70.5% | 72.3% |
| Meeker | 20,846 | 22,644 | 23,300 | 2.9% | 11.8% | 10,324 | 11,180 | 11,863 | 6.1% | 14.9% | 49.5% | 49.4% | 50.9% |
| Kandiyohi | 38,761 | 41,203 | 42,239 | 2.5% | 9.0% | 23,307 | 24,535 | 25,950 | 5.8% | 11.3% | 60.1% | 59.5% | 61.4% |
| Sibley | 14,366 | 15,356 | 15,226 | -0.8% | 6.0% | 7,160 | 8,234 | 8,610 | 4.6% | 20.3% | 49.8% | 53.6% | 56.5% |
| Lyon | 24,789 | 25,425 | 25,857 | 1.7% | 4.3% | 18,592 | 19,696 | 20,559 | 4.4% | 10.6% | 75.0% | 77.5% | 79.5% |
| Brown | 26,984 | 26,911 | 25,893 | -3.8% | -4.0% | 20,028 | 20,286 | 20,179 | -0.5% | 0.8% | 74.2% | 75.4% | 77.9% |
| Chippewa | 13,228 | 13,088 | 12,441 | -4.9% | -5.9% | 10,453 | 10,344 | 10,214 | -1.3% | -2.3% | 79.0% | 79.0% | 82.1% |
| Redwood | 17,254 | 16,815 | 16,059 | -4.5% | -6.9% | 10,348 | 10,685 | 10,514 | -1.6% | 1.6% | 60.0% | 63.5% | 65.5% |
| Swift | 10,724 | 11,956 | 9,783 | -18.2% | -8.8% | 6,343 | 7,835 | 6,157 | -21.4% | -2.9% | 59.1% | 65.5% | 62.9% |
| Yellow Medicine | 11,684 | 11,080 | 10,438 | -5.8% | -10.7% | 4,108 | 4,244 | 4,025 | -5.2% | -2.0% | 35.2% | 38.3% | 38.6% |
| Renville | 17,673 | 17,154 | 15,730 | -8.3% | -11.0% | 10,495 | 10,335 | 9,906 | -4.2% | -5.6% | 59.4% | 60.2% | 63.0% |
| Lincoln | 6,890 | 6,429 | 5,896 | -8.3% | -14.4% | 3,489 | 3,425 | 3,173 | -7.4% | -9.1% | 50.6% | 53.3% | 53.8% |
| Big Stone | 6,285 | 5,820 | 5,269 | -9.5% | -16.2% | 4,048 | 3,695 | 3,389 | -8.3% | -16.3% | 64.4% | 63.5% | 64.3% |
| Lac qui Parle | 8,924 | 8,067 | 7,259 | -10.0% | -18.7% | 5,054 | 4,005 | 3,715 | -7.2% | -26.5% | 56.6% | 49.6% | 51.2% |
| Totals | 278,514 | 286,617 | 284,768 | -0.6% | 2.2% | 176,534 | 186,586 | 191,549 | 2.7% | 8.5% | 63.4% | 65.1% | 67.3% |

Figure 3.12

Diocese of New Ulm Projected Population to 2040 by County

Source: Minnesota Population Projections by County, 2015 to 2040
 Minnesota State Demographic Center, October 2012

| County | 2010 Census | 2015 Projection | 2020 Projection | 2025 Projection | 2030 Projection | 2035 Projection | 2040 Projection | Percent Change 2010-2020 | Percent Change 2010-2040 |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Nicollet | 32,727 | 33,937 | 35,340 | 36,662 | 37,897 | 39,087 | 40,280 | 8.0% | 23.1% |
| McLeod | 36,651 | 37,740 | 38,841 | 39,755 | 40,480 | 41,063 | 41,560 | 6.0% | 13.4% |
| Meeker | 23,300 | 23,755 | 24,185 | 24,482 | 24,644 | 24,705 | 24,699 | 3.8% | 6.0% |
| Lyon | 25,857 | 26,193 | 26,529 | 26,768 | 26,912 | 26,998 | 27,060 | 2.6% | 4.7% |
| Kandiyohi | 42,239 | 42,728 | 43,092 | 43,119 | 42,814 | 42,239 | 41,457 | 2.0% | -1.9% |
| Sibley | 15,226 | 15,189 | 15,234 | 15,222 | 15,155 | 15,055 | 14,943 | 0.1% | -1.9% |
| Yellow Medicine | 10,438 | 10,179 | 10,040 | 9,921 | 9,827 | 9,771 | 9,767 | -3.8% | -6.4% |
| Redwood | 16,059 | 15,823 | 15,658 | 15,471 | 15,268 | 15,068 | 14,892 | -2.5% | -7.3% |
| Brown | 25,893 | 25,661 | 25,436 | 25,118 | 24,714 | 24,263 | 23,801 | -1.8% | -8.1% |
| Chippewa | 12,441 | 12,183 | 11,989 | 11,766 | 11,519 | 11,266 | 11,023 | -3.6% | -11.4% |
| Lac qui Parle | 7,259 | 6,967 | 6,738 | 6,532 | 6,352 | 6,209 | 6,112 | -7.2% | -15.8% |
| Swift | 9,783 | 9,675 | 9,359 | 9,020 | 8,662 | 8,299 | 7,945 | -4.3% | -18.8% |
| Renville | 15,730 | 15,140 | 14,627 | 14,073 | 13,488 | 12,893 | 12,311 | -7.0% | -21.7% |
| Lincoln | 5,896 | 5,642 | 5,424 | 5,195 | 4,957 | 4,721 | 4,491 | -8.0% | -23.8% |
| Big Stone | 5,269 | 5,014 | 4,791 | 4,564 | 4,335 | 4,111 | 3,897 | -9.1% | -26.0% |
| DNU | 284,768 | 285,826 | 287,283 | 287,668 | 287,024 | 285,748 | 284,238 | 0.9% | -0.2% |
| Minnesota | 5,303,925 | 5,537,385 | 5,772,258 | 5,987,609 | 6,182,306 | 6,363,010 | 6,537,710 | 8.8% | 23.3% |

Figure 3.13
Diocese of New Ulm Projected Population to 2040 by County
 Source: Minnesota Population Projections by County, 2015 to 2040
 Minnesota State Demographic Center, October 2012

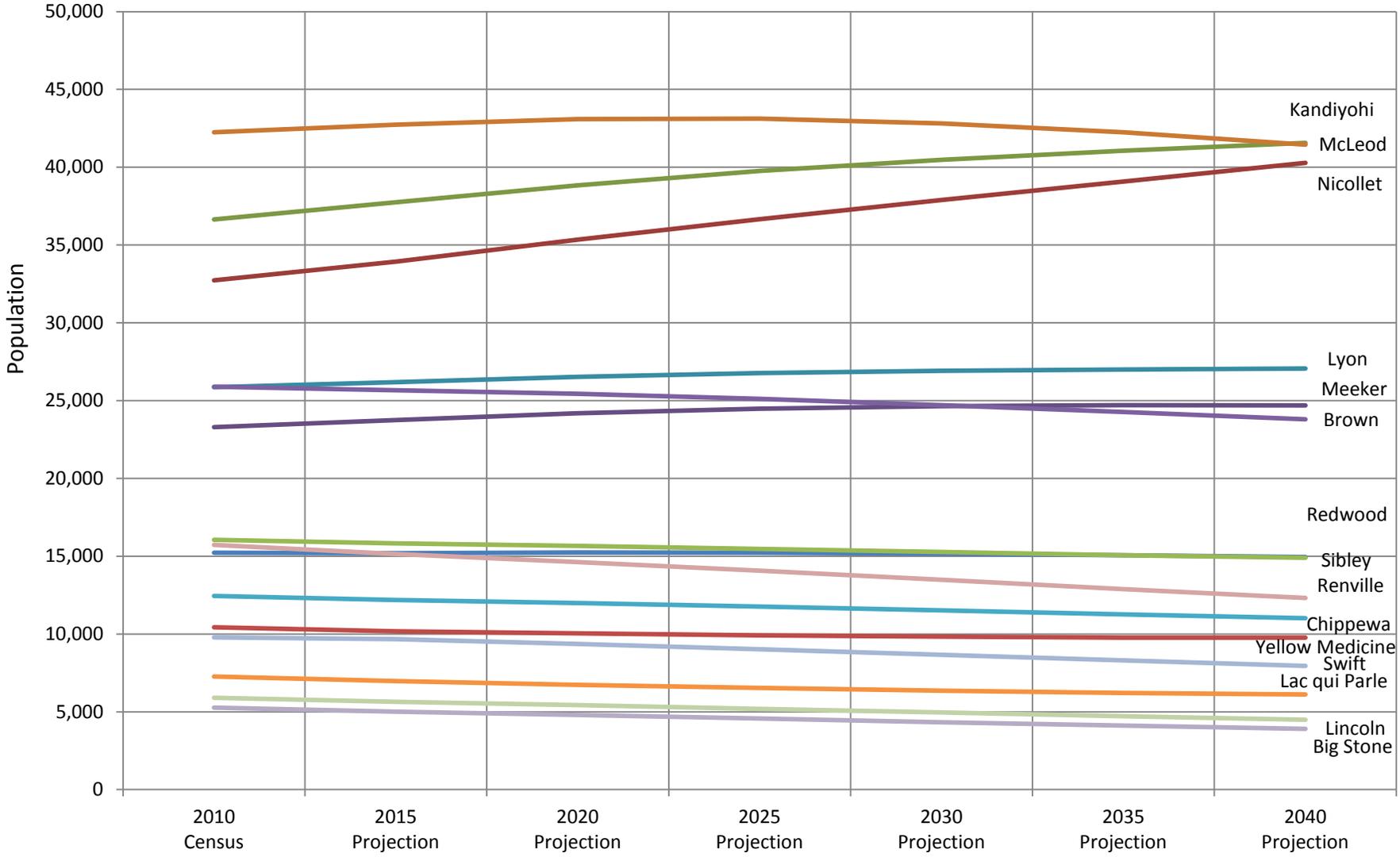


Figure 3.14
Minnesota Projected Population by Large Age Group, 2010-2040
 Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center, October 2012

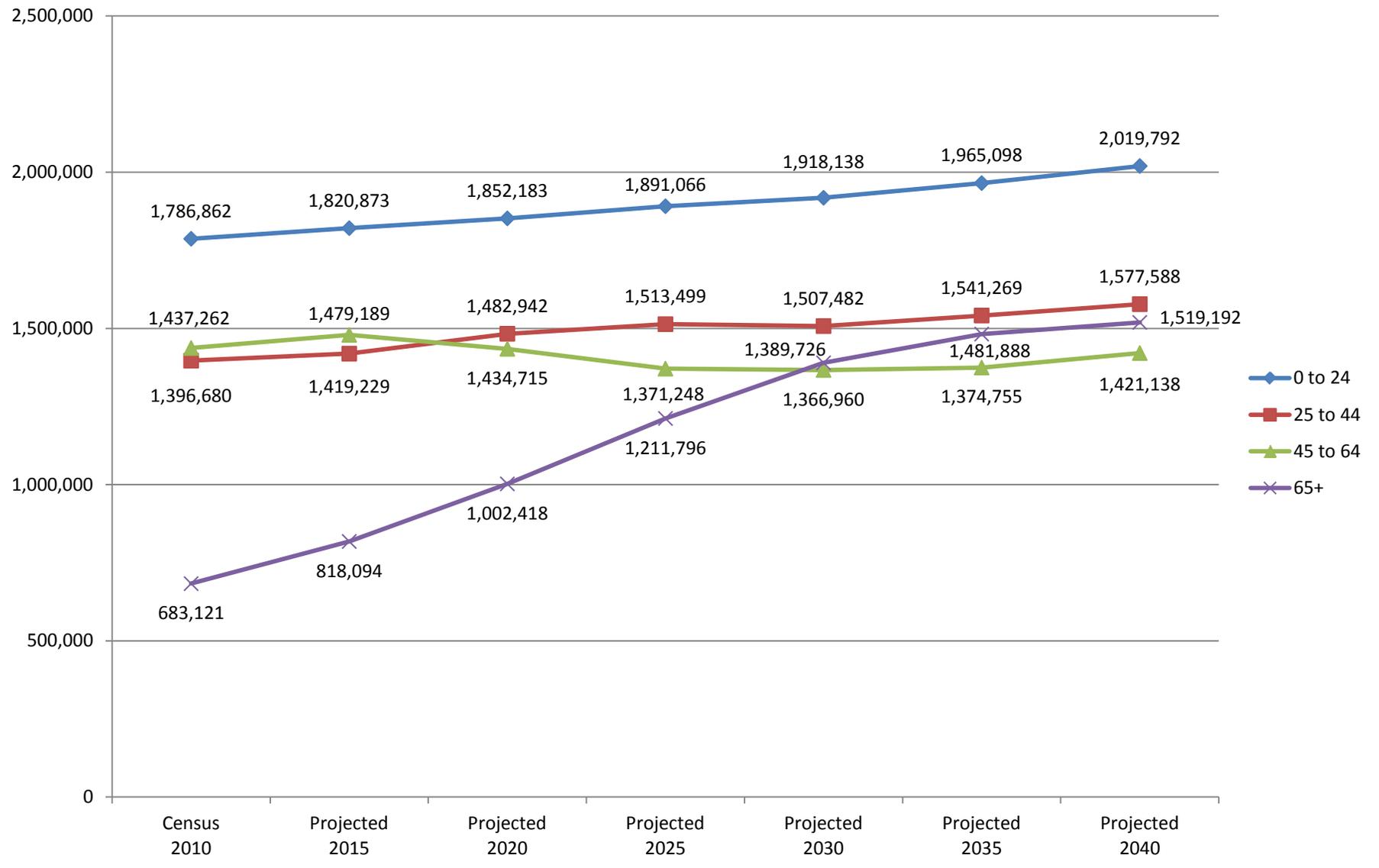


Figure 3.15
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Projected Population by Large Age Group, 2010-2040
 Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center, October 2012

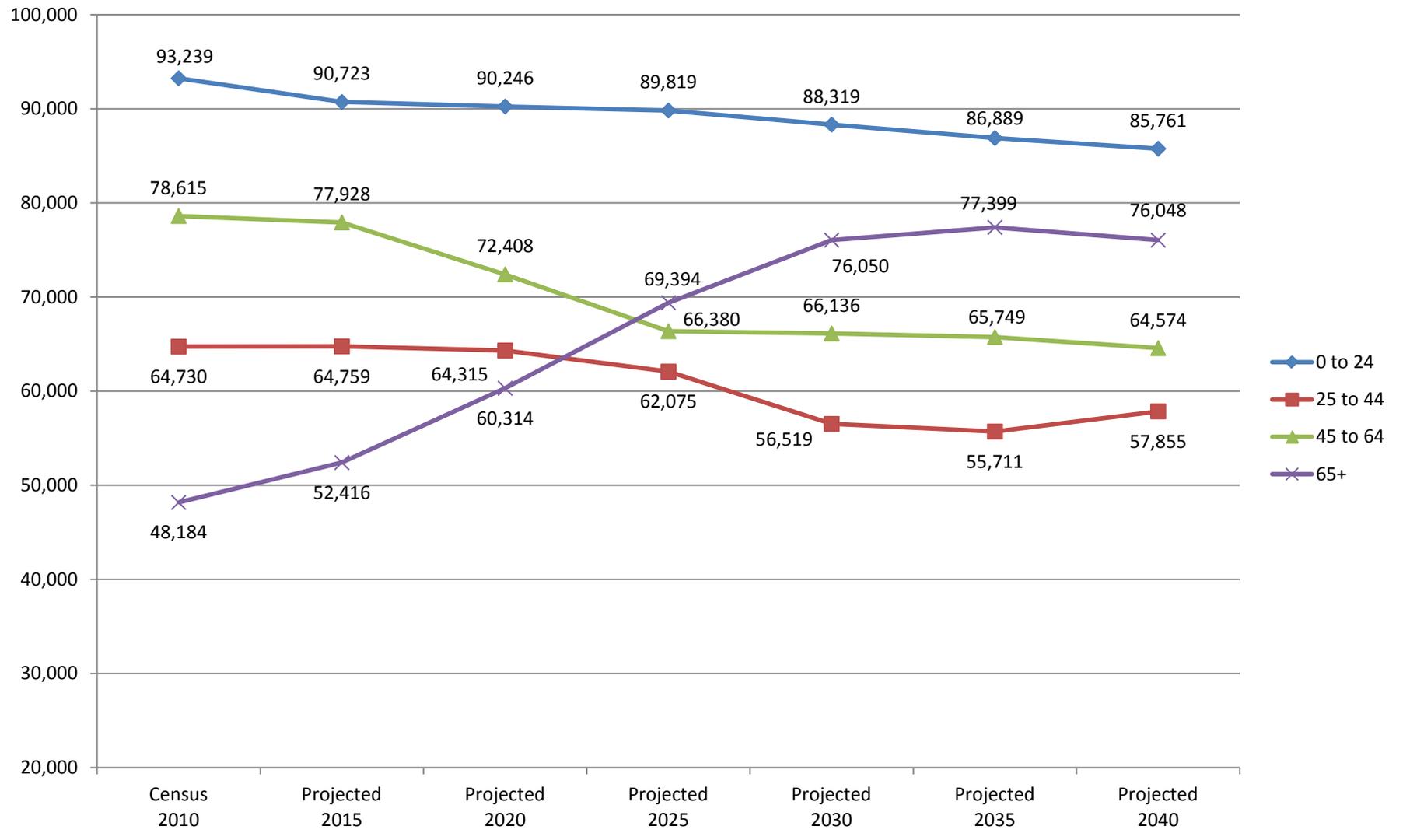


Figure 3.16
 Minnesota
 Projected Population Percentage by Large Age Group, 2010-2040
 Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center, October 2012

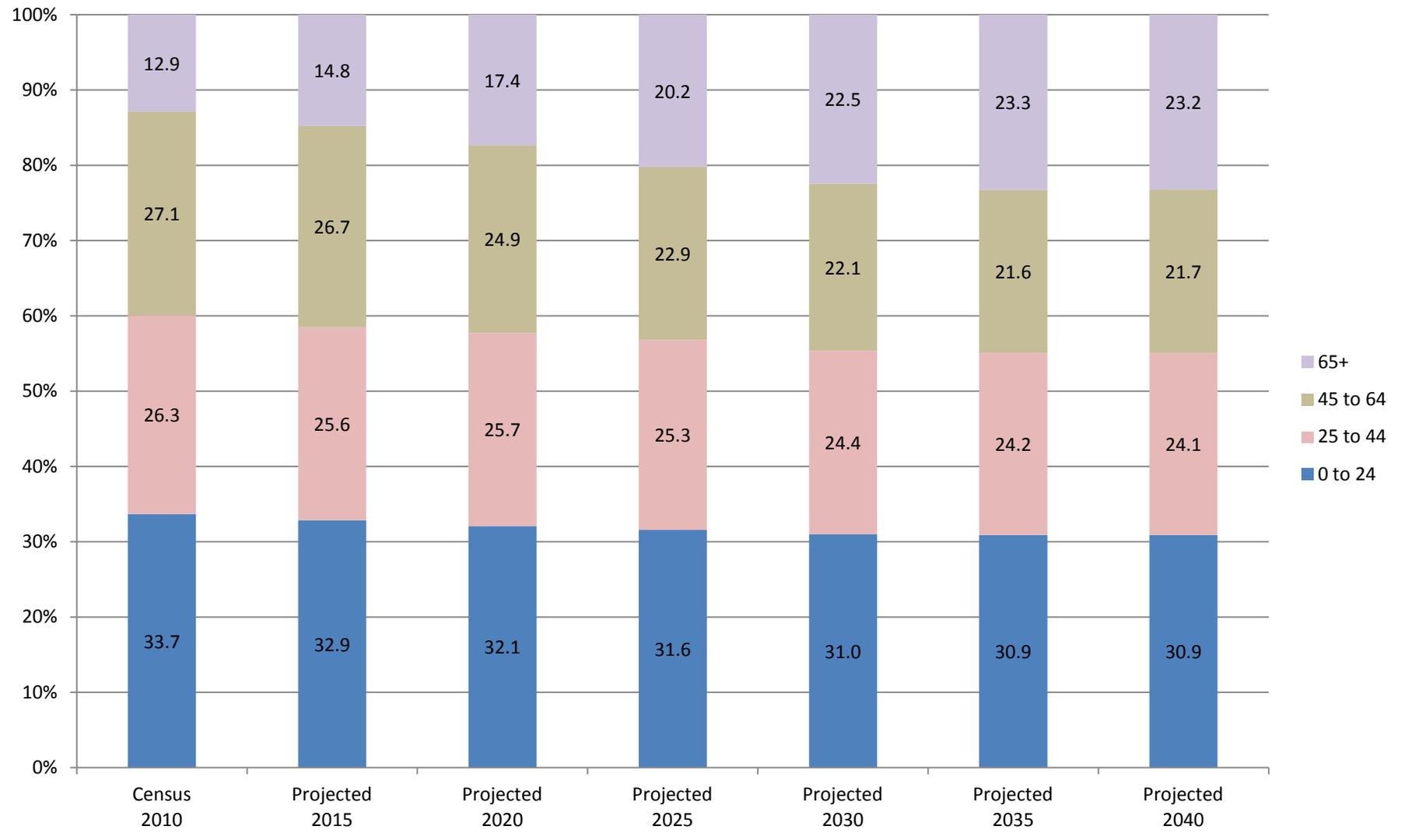


Figure 3.17
Diocese of New Ulm
Projected Population Percentage by Large Age Group, 2010-2040
 Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center, October 2012

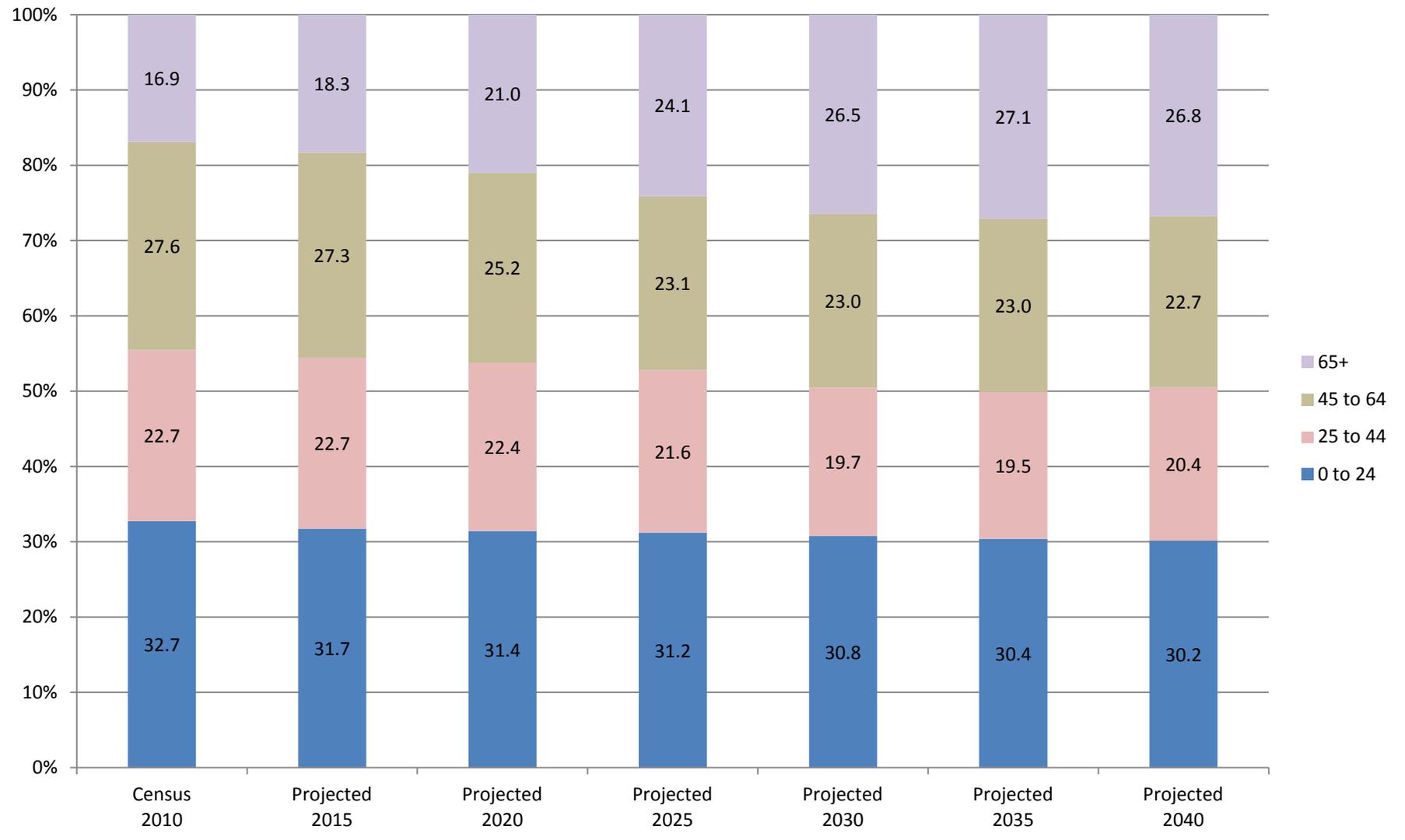


Figure 3.18
Diocese of New Ulm
Projected Population Percentages by Small Age Group, 2010-2040
 Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center, October 2012

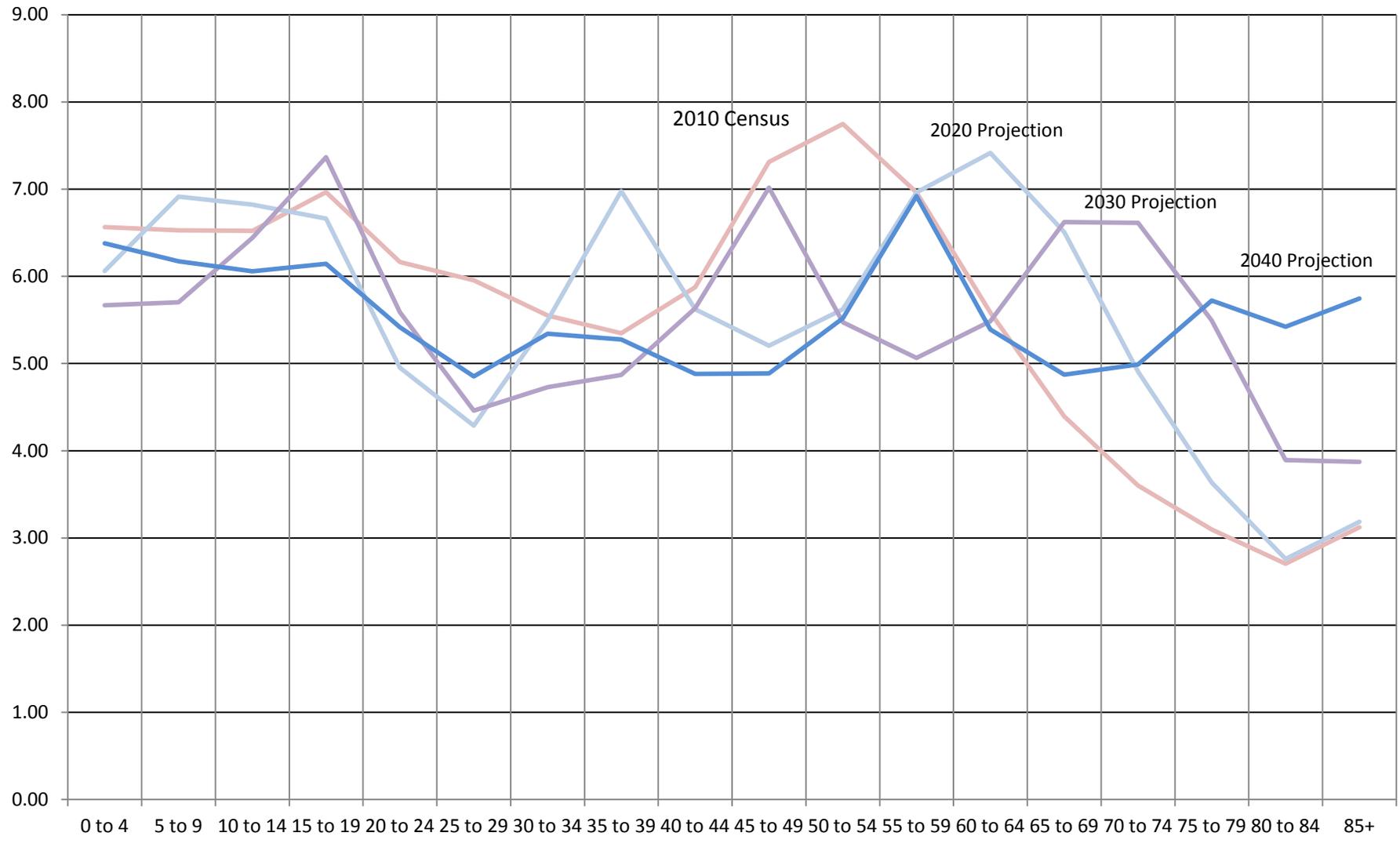


Figure 3.19

Growth of Diocesan Hispanic Population, 1990-2010

Source: Decennial U.S. Census

| County | 1990 | | | 2000 | | | 2010 | | | 1990-2010 Hispanic Growth |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Total Population | Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic Percentage | Total Population | Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic Percentage | Total Population | Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic Percentage | |
| Kandiyohi County | 38,761 | 1,359 | 3.5% | 41,203 | 3,295 | 8.0% | 42,239 | 4,710 | 11.2% | 346.6% |
| Sibley County | 14,366 | 126 | 0.9% | 15,356 | 834 | 5.4% | 15,226 | 1,098 | 7.2% | 871.4% |
| Renville County | 17,673 | 216 | 1.2% | 17,154 | 876 | 5.1% | 15,730 | 1,046 | 6.6% | 484.3% |
| Lyon County | 24,789 | 218 | 0.9% | 25,425 | 1,009 | 4.0% | 25,857 | 1,541 | 6.0% | 706.9% |
| McLeod County | 32,030 | 283 | 0.9% | 34,898 | 1,268 | 3.6% | 36,651 | 1,811 | 4.9% | 639.9% |
| Chippewa County | 13,228 | 94 | 0.7% | 13,088 | 251 | 1.9% | 12,441 | 611 | 4.9% | 650.0% |
| Yellow Medicine County | 11,684 | 81 | 0.7% | 11,080 | 195 | 1.8% | 10,438 | 397 | 3.8% | 490.1% |
| Nicollet County | 28,076 | 202 | 0.7% | 29,771 | 535 | 1.8% | 32,727 | 1,226 | 3.7% | 606.9% |
| Swift County | 10,724 | 79 | 0.7% | 11,956 | 320 | 2.7% | 9,783 | 350 | 3.6% | 443.0% |
| Brown County | 26,984 | 151 | 0.6% | 26,911 | 545 | 2.0% | 25,893 | 860 | 3.3% | 569.5% |
| Meeker County | 20,846 | 231 | 1.1% | 22,644 | 487 | 2.2% | 23,300 | 767 | 3.3% | 332.0% |
| Redwood County | 17,254 | 91 | 0.5% | 16,815 | 192 | 1.1% | 16,059 | 335 | 2.1% | 368.1% |
| Lac qui Parle County | 8,924 | 23 | 0.3% | 8,067 | 21 | 0.3% | 7,259 | 108 | 1.5% | 469.6% |
| Lincoln County | 6,890 | 22 | 0.3% | 6,429 | 55 | 0.9% | 5,896 | 72 | 1.2% | 327.3% |
| Big Stone County | 6,285 | 22 | 0.4% | 5,820 | 20 | 0.3% | 5,269 | 41 | 0.8% | 186.4% |
| Diocese of New Ulm | 278,514 | 3,198 | 1.1% | 286,617 | 9,903 | 3.5% | 284,768 | 14,973 | 5.3% | 468.2% |
| Minnesota | 4,387,283 | 54,300 | 1.2% | 4,919,479 | 143,382 | 2.9% | 5,303,925 | 250,258 | 4.7% | 460.9% |

Figure 3.20

Diocesan Municipalities With at Least Fifty Hispanics, 2010

Source: Decennial U.S. Census

| City | County | Total Population | Hispanic Population | Hispanic Percentage |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Willmar | Kandiyohi | 19,610 | 4,099 | 20.9% |
| Marshall | Lyon | 13,680 | 1,063 | 7.8% |
| Glencoe | McLeod | 5,631 | 834 | 14.8% |
| St. Peter | Nicollet | 11,196 | 718 | 6.4% |
| Hutchinson | McLeod | 14,178 | 534 | 3.8% |
| Gaylord | Sibley | 2,305 | 530 | 23.0% |
| Litchfield | Meeker | 6,726 | 487 | 7.2% |
| Sleepy Eye | Brown | 3,599 | 467 | 13.0% |
| Montevideo | Chippewa | 5,383 | 450 | 8.4% |
| North Mankato | Nicollet | 13,394 | 400 | 3.0% |
| New Ulm | Brown | 13,522 | 241 | 1.8% |
| Renville | Renville | 1,287 | 234 | 18.2% |
| Arlington | Sibley | 2,233 | 211 | 9.4% |
| Olivia | Renville | 2,484 | 207 | 8.3% |
| Redwood Falls | Redwood | 5,254 | 173 | 3.3% |
| Lester Prairie | McLeod | 1,730 | 161 | 9.3% |
| Fairfax | Renville | 1,235 | 140 | 11.3% |
| Granite Falls | Chippewa | 2,897 | 136 | 4.7% |
| Tracy | Lyon | 2,163 | 116 | 5.4% |
| Winthrop | Sibley | 1,399 | 104 | 7.4% |
| Springfield | Brown | 2,152 | 98 | 4.6% |
| Kerkhoven | Swift | 759 | 93 | 12.3% |
| Minneota | Lyon | 1,392 | 93 | 6.7% |
| Hanley Falls | Yellow Medicine | 304 | 88 | 28.9% |
| Pennock | Kandiyohi | 508 | 86 | 16.9% |
| Lynd | Lyon | 448 | 85 | 19.0% |
| Benson | Swift | 3,240 | 83 | 2.6% |
| Hector | Renville | 1,151 | 66 | 5.7% |
| Buffalo Lake | Renville | 733 | 61 | 8.3% |
| Appleton | Swift | 1,412 | 60 | 4.2% |
| Cottonwood | Lyon | 1,212 | 57 | 4.7% |
| New Auburn | Sibley | 456 | 57 | 12.5% |
| Brownton | McLeod | 762 | 53 | 7.0% |
| Clara City | Chippewa | 1,360 | 51 | 3.8% |
| Sacred Heart | Renville | 548 | 50 | 9.1% |
| All Others | | 45,206 | 1,101 | 2.4% |
| Total | | 191,549 | 13,487 | 7.0% |

Figure 3.21

Diocese of New Ulm Population by Race and County, 2010

Source: Decennial U.S. Census

| County | Total Population | White | Non-White | Non-White Percentage | Black or African American | American Indian and Alaska Native | Asian | Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | Some Other Race | Two or More (Non-White) Races |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Redwood County | 16,059 | 14,305 | 1,754 | 10.9% | 75 | 796 | 507 | 2 | 59 | 315 |
| Lyon County | 25,857 | 23,360 | 2,497 | 9.7% | 587 | 114 | 679 | 7 | 708 | 402 |
| Kandiyohi County | 42,239 | 39,206 | 3,033 | 7.2% | 984 | 130 | 172 | 19 | 1,221 | 507 |
| Chippewa County | 12,441 | 11,632 | 809 | 6.5% | 65 | 119 | 57 | 97 | 317 | 154 |
| Nicollet County | 32,727 | 30,666 | 2,061 | 6.3% | 667 | 99 | 431 | 1 | 397 | 466 |
| Yellow Medicine County | 10,438 | 9,806 | 632 | 6.1% | 16 | 314 | 33 | 6 | 138 | 125 |
| Sibley County | 15,226 | 14,430 | 796 | 5.2% | 48 | 30 | 85 | 2 | 451 | 180 |
| Renville County | 15,730 | 15,014 | 716 | 4.6% | 44 | 91 | 54 | 6 | 356 | 165 |
| McLeod County | 36,651 | 35,159 | 1,492 | 4.1% | 199 | 101 | 267 | 17 | 547 | 361 |
| Swift County | 9,783 | 9,453 | 330 | 3.4% | 49 | 36 | 21 | 3 | 129 | 92 |
| Meeker County | 23,300 | 22,663 | 637 | 2.7% | 77 | 44 | 59 | 13 | 272 | 172 |
| Brown County | 25,893 | 25,245 | 648 | 2.5% | 61 | 21 | 153 | 2 | 228 | 183 |
| Lac qui Parle County | 7,259 | 7,087 | 172 | 2.4% | 17 | 17 | 29 | 3 | 45 | 61 |
| Lincoln County | 5,896 | 5,777 | 119 | 2.0% | 8 | 9 | 14 | 0 | 43 | 45 |
| Big Stone County | 5,269 | 5,175 | 94 | 1.8% | 11 | 22 | 4 | 0 | 15 | 42 |
| Diocese of New Ulm | 284,768 | 268,978 | 15,790 | 5.5% | 2,908 | 1,943 | 2,565 | 178 | 4,926 | 3,270 |
| Percentage of Total | 100.0% | 94.5% | 5.5% | | 1.0% | 0.7% | 0.9% | 0.1% | 1.7% | 1.1% |

Figure 3.22
Diocese of New Ulm Registered Catholic Population, 1958-2012
Source: Official Catholic Directory, Annual Parish Self Study

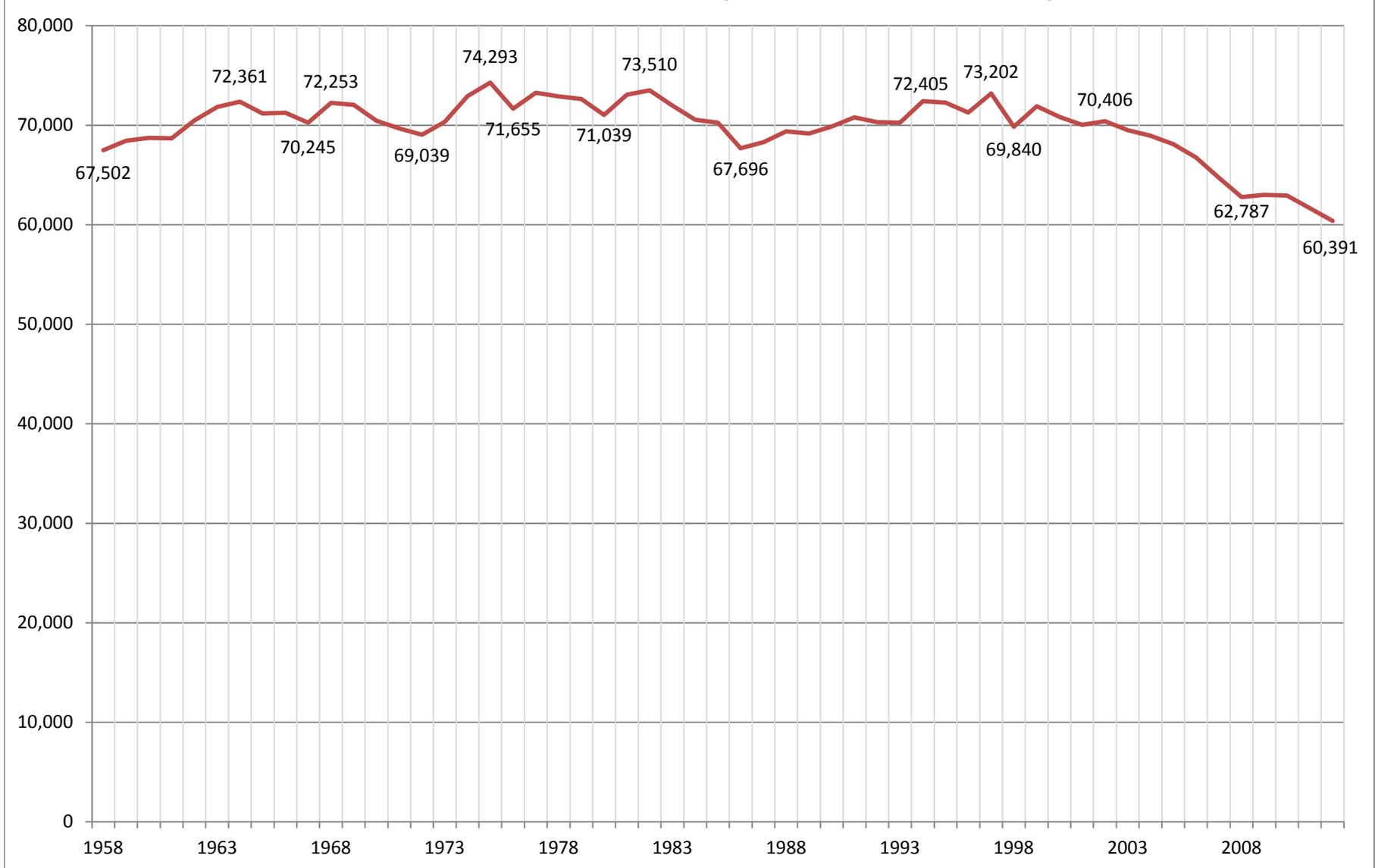


Figure 3.23
 Diocese of New Ulm Catholic Population by Age Group, 2000-2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study

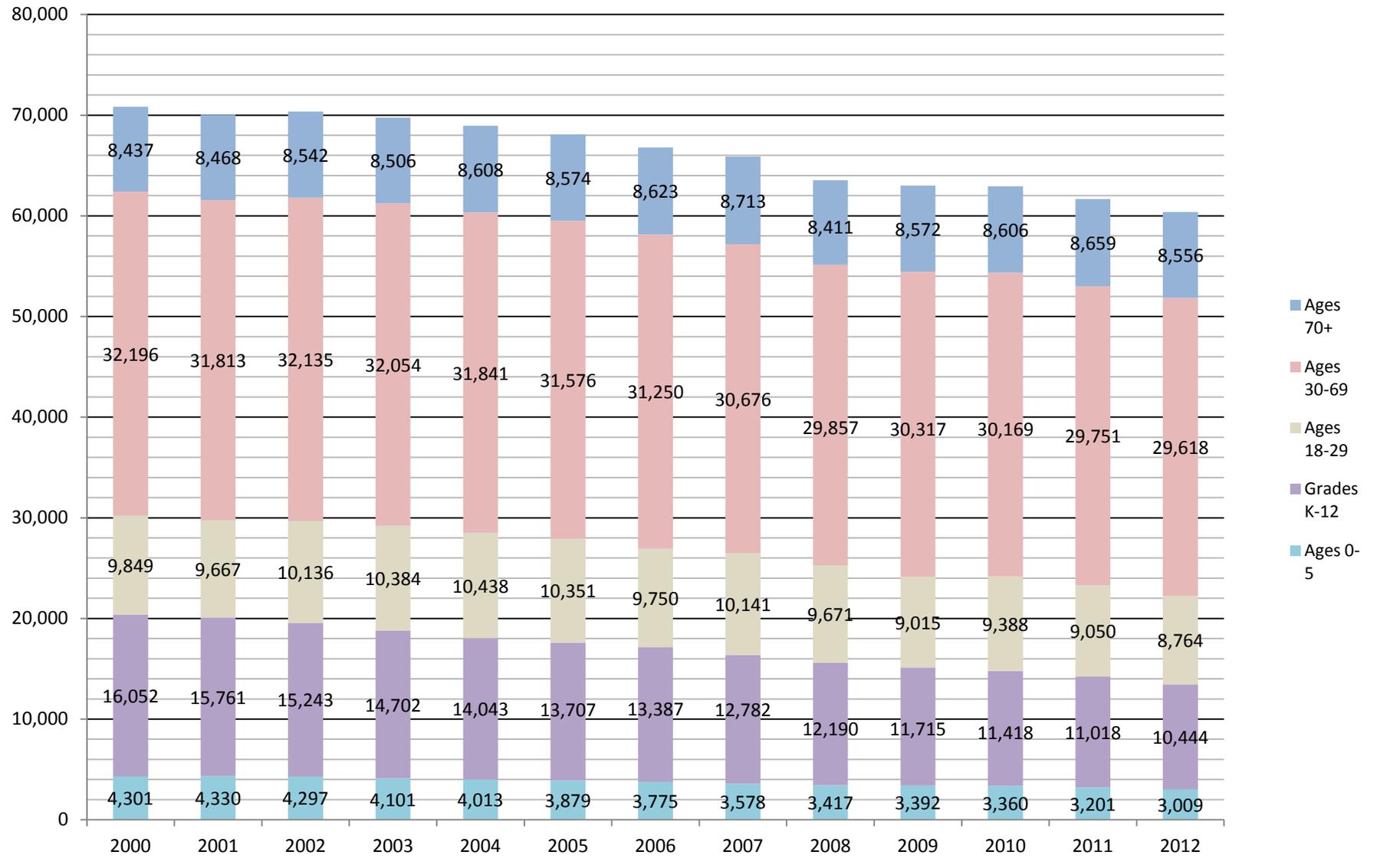
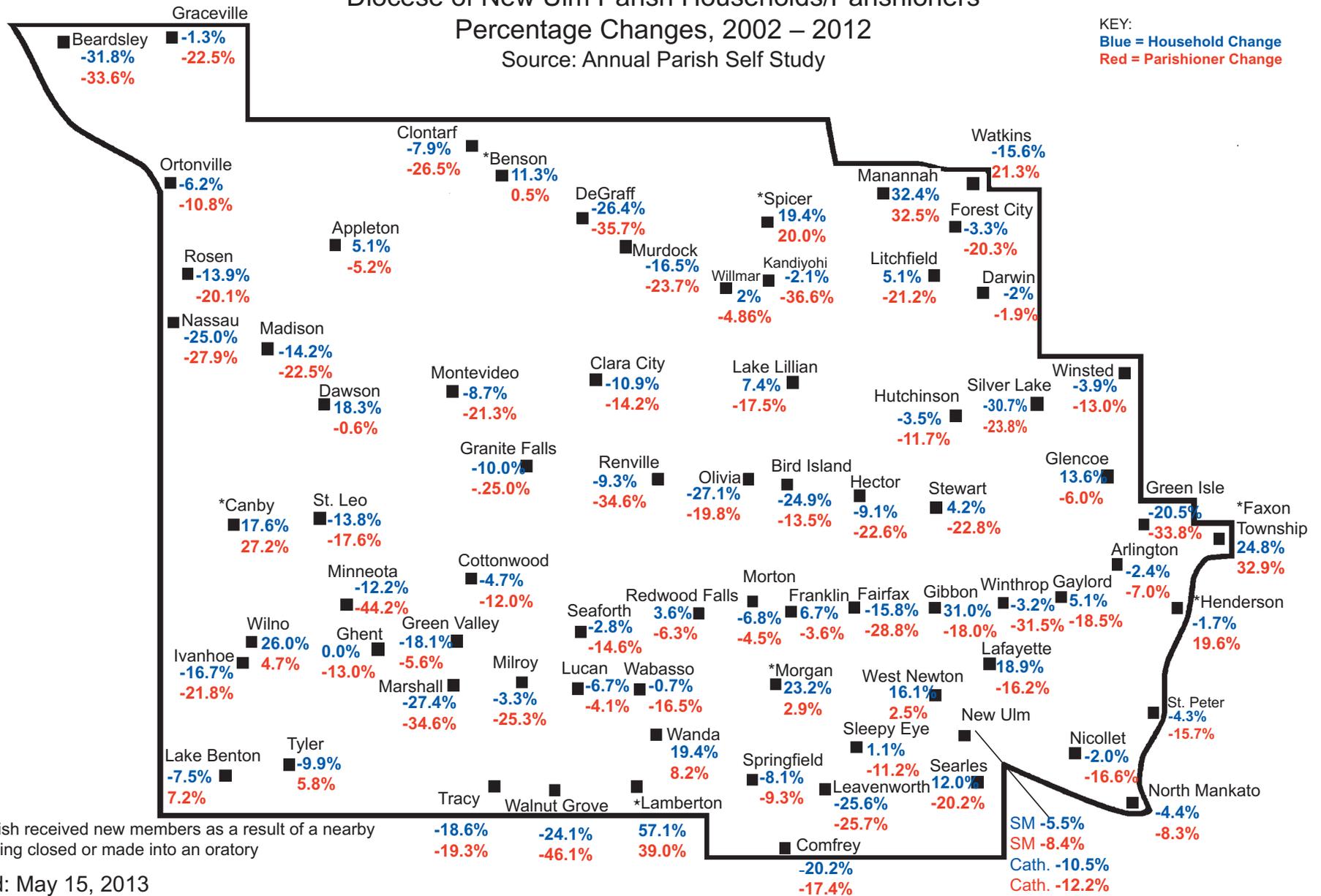


Figure 3.25
 Diocese of New Ulm Parish Households/Parishioners
 Percentage Changes, 2002 – 2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study

KEY:
 Blue = Household Change
 Red = Parishioner Change



* This parish received new members as a result of a nearby church being closed or made into an oratory

Revised: May 15, 2013

Figure 3.26
 Diocese of New Ulm Catholic Population and Sunday Mass
 Attendance, 2000-2012

Source: Annual Parish Self Study

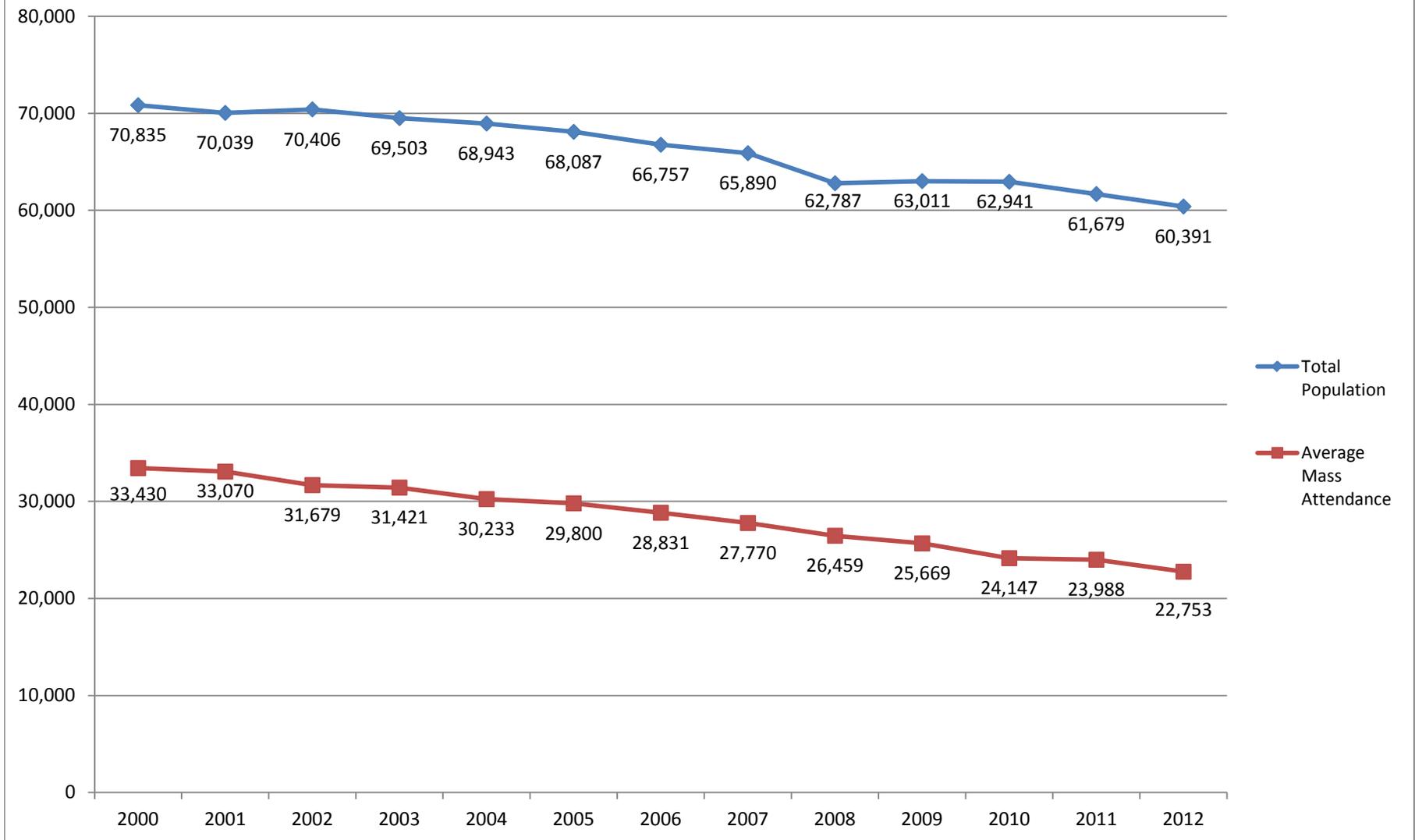


Figure 3.27
Diocese of New Ulm Sunday Mass Attendance Percentage,
2000-2012

Source: Annual Parish Self Study

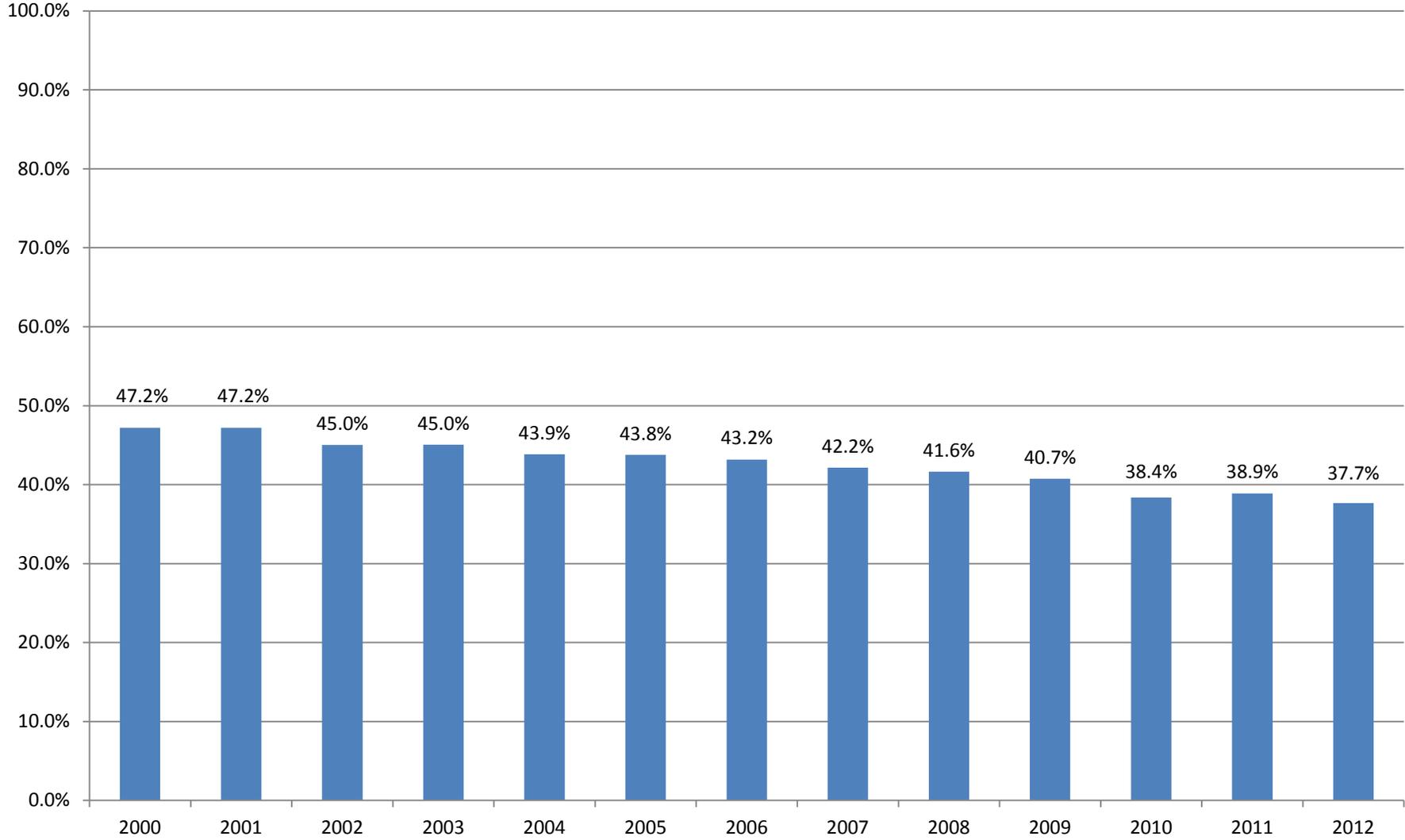


Figure 3.28

Diocese of New Ulm Catholics, Religious, and Non-Church Affiliated People by County and Census Year, 1980-2010

Source: 2010 U.S. Religion Census: Religious Congregations & Membership Study, Published by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) and as Found on the Web site of the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA)

| County | 2010 | | | | | | | 2000 | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Pop. | Catholic | Pct. | Adherents | Pct. | Unchurched | Pct. | Pop. | Catholic | Pct. | Adherents | Pct. | Unchurched | Pct. |
| Brown | 25,893 | 10,778 | 41.6% | 23,150 | 89.4% | 2,743 | 10.6% | 26,911 | 11,944 | 44.4% | 24,816 | 92.2% | 2,095 | 7.8% |
| Lyon | 25,857 | 7,457 | 28.8% | 16,788 | 64.9% | 9,069 | 35.1% | 25,425 | 8,766 | 34.5% | 17,695 | 69.6% | 7,730 | 30.4% |
| Lincoln | 5,896 | 1,673 | 28.4% | 4,511 | 76.5% | 1,385 | 23.5% | 6,429 | 1,820 | 28.3% | 6,005 | 93.4% | 424 | 6.6% |
| Redwood | 16,059 | 4,432 | 27.6% | 12,848 | 80.0% | 3,211 | 20.0% | 16,815 | 5,417 | 32.2% | 14,757 | 87.8% | 2,058 | 12.2% |
| Big Stone | 5,269 | 1,408 | 26.7% | 4,506 | 85.5% | 763 | 14.5% | 5,820 | 1,875 | 32.2% | 5,820 | 100.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Meeker | 23,300 | 5,946 | 25.5% | 16,176 | 69.4% | 7,124 | 30.6% | 22,644 | 4,471 | 19.7% | 15,512 | 68.5% | 7,132 | 31.5% |
| Renville | 15,730 | 3,859 | 24.5% | 12,250 | 77.9% | 3,480 | 22.1% | 17,154 | 4,682 | 27.3% | 14,918 | 87.0% | 2,236 | 13.0% |
| Swift | 9,783 | 2,399 | 24.5% | 8,054 | 82.3% | 1,729 | 17.7% | 11,956 | 2,745 | 23.0% | 9,718 | 81.3% | 2,238 | 18.7% |
| McLeod | 36,651 | 8,020 | 21.9% | 29,923 | 81.6% | 6,728 | 18.4% | 34,898 | 8,943 | 25.6% | 30,692 | 87.9% | 4,206 | 12.1% |
| Yellow Medicine | 10,438 | 2,274 | 21.8% | 9,727 | 93.2% | 711 | 6.8% | 11,080 | 2,108 | 19.0% | 10,081 | 91.0% | 999 | 9.0% |
| Nicollet | 32,727 | 5,741 | 17.5% | 17,699 | 54.1% | 15,028 | 45.9% | 29,771 | 6,345 | 21.3% | 17,370 | 58.3% | 12,401 | 41.7% |
| Sibley | 15,226 | 2,354 | 15.5% | 10,466 | 68.7% | 4,760 | 31.3% | 15,356 | 2,516 | 16.4% | 11,489 | 74.8% | 3,867 | 25.2% |
| Lac qui Parle | 7,259 | 1,046 | 14.4% | 6,952 | 95.8% | 307 | 4.2% | 8,067 | 1,221 | 15.1% | 8,067 | 100.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Kandiyohi | 42,239 | 5,376 | 12.7% | 31,080 | 73.6% | 11,159 | 26.4% | 41,203 | 5,672 | 13.8% | 31,694 | 76.9% | 9,509 | 23.1% |
| Chippewa | 12,441 | 1,531 | 12.3% | 10,688 | 85.9% | 1,753 | 14.1% | 13,088 | 1,514 | 11.6% | 11,526 | 88.1% | 1,562 | 11.9% |
| Diocese | 284,768 | 64,294 | 22.6% | 214,818 | 75.4% | 69,950 | 24.6% | 286,617 | 70,039 | 24.4% | 230,160 | 80.3% | 56,457 | 19.7% |
| County | 1990 | | | | | | | 1980 | | | | | | |
| | Pop. | Catholic | Pct. | Adherents | Pct. | Unchurched | Pct. | Pop. | Catholic | Pct. | Adherents | Pct. | Unchurched | Pct. |
| Brown | 26,984 | 11,542 | 42.8% | 23,919 | 88.6% | 3,065 | 11.4% | 28,645 | 12,944 | 45.2% | 26,680 | 93.1% | 1,965 | 6.9% |
| Lyon | 24,789 | 8,662 | 34.9% | 18,731 | 75.6% | 6,058 | 24.4% | 25,207 | 8,816 | 35.0% | 19,878 | 78.9% | 5,329 | 21.1% |
| Lincoln | 6,890 | 2,255 | 32.7% | 6,614 | 96.0% | 276 | 4.0% | 8,207 | 2,266 | 27.6% | 7,494 | 91.3% | 713 | 8.7% |
| Redwood | 17,254 | 5,963 | 34.6% | 16,371 | 94.9% | 883 | 5.1% | 19,341 | 6,101 | 31.5% | 18,030 | 93.2% | 1,311 | 6.8% |
| Big Stone | 6,285 | 1,698 | 27.0% | 6,285 | 100.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 7,716 | 2,108 | 27.3% | 7,565 | 98.0% | 151 | 2.0% |
| Meeker | 20,846 | 4,446 | 21.3% | 15,236 | 73.1% | 5,610 | 26.9% | 20,594 | 4,610 | 22.4% | 16,546 | 80.3% | 4,048 | 19.7% |
| Renville | 17,673 | 5,264 | 29.8% | 16,575 | 93.8% | 1,098 | 6.2% | 20,401 | 5,556 | 27.2% | 18,584 | 91.1% | 1,817 | 8.9% |
| Swift | 10,724 | 2,608 | 24.3% | 10,724 | 100.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 12,920 | 3,249 | 25.1% | 12,078 | 93.5% | 842 | 6.5% |
| McLeod | 32,030 | 8,198 | 25.6% | 28,923 | 90.3% | 3,107 | 9.7% | 29,657 | 7,822 | 26.4% | 27,389 | 92.4% | 2,268 | 7.6% |
| Yellow Medicine | 11,684 | 1,723 | 14.7% | 10,638 | 91.0% | 1,046 | 9.0% | 13,653 | 2,122 | 15.5% | 11,978 | 87.7% | 1,675 | 12.3% |
| Nicollet | 28,076 | 5,961 | 21.2% | 17,066 | 60.8% | 11,010 | 39.2% | 26,929 | 6,600 | 24.5% | 17,690 | 65.7% | 9,239 | 34.3% |
| Sibley | 14,366 | 2,662 | 18.5% | 12,376 | 86.1% | 1,990 | 13.9% | 15,448 | 2,595 | 16.8% | 13,072 | 84.6% | 2,376 | 15.4% |
| Lac qui Parle | 8,924 | 1,442 | 16.2% | 8,924 | 100.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 10,592 | 1,723 | 16.3% | 9,588 | 90.5% | 1,004 | 9.5% |
| Kandiyohi | 38,761 | 5,262 | 13.6% | 30,139 | 77.8% | 8,622 | 22.2% | 36,763 | 4,398 | 12.0% | 28,751 | 78.2% | 8,012 | 21.8% |
| Chippewa | 13,228 | 1,473 | 11.1% | 11,824 | 89.4% | 1,404 | 10.6% | 14,941 | 1,427 | 9.6% | 13,197 | 88.3% | 1,744 | 11.7% |
| Diocese | 278,514 | 69,159 | 24.8% | 234,345 | 84.1% | 44,169 | 15.9% | 291,014 | 72,337 | 24.9% | 248,520 | 85.4% | 42,494 | 14.6% |

Figure 3.29
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Percentages of Catholics by County and Census Year, 1980-2010
 Source: ASARB 2010 U.S. Religion Census

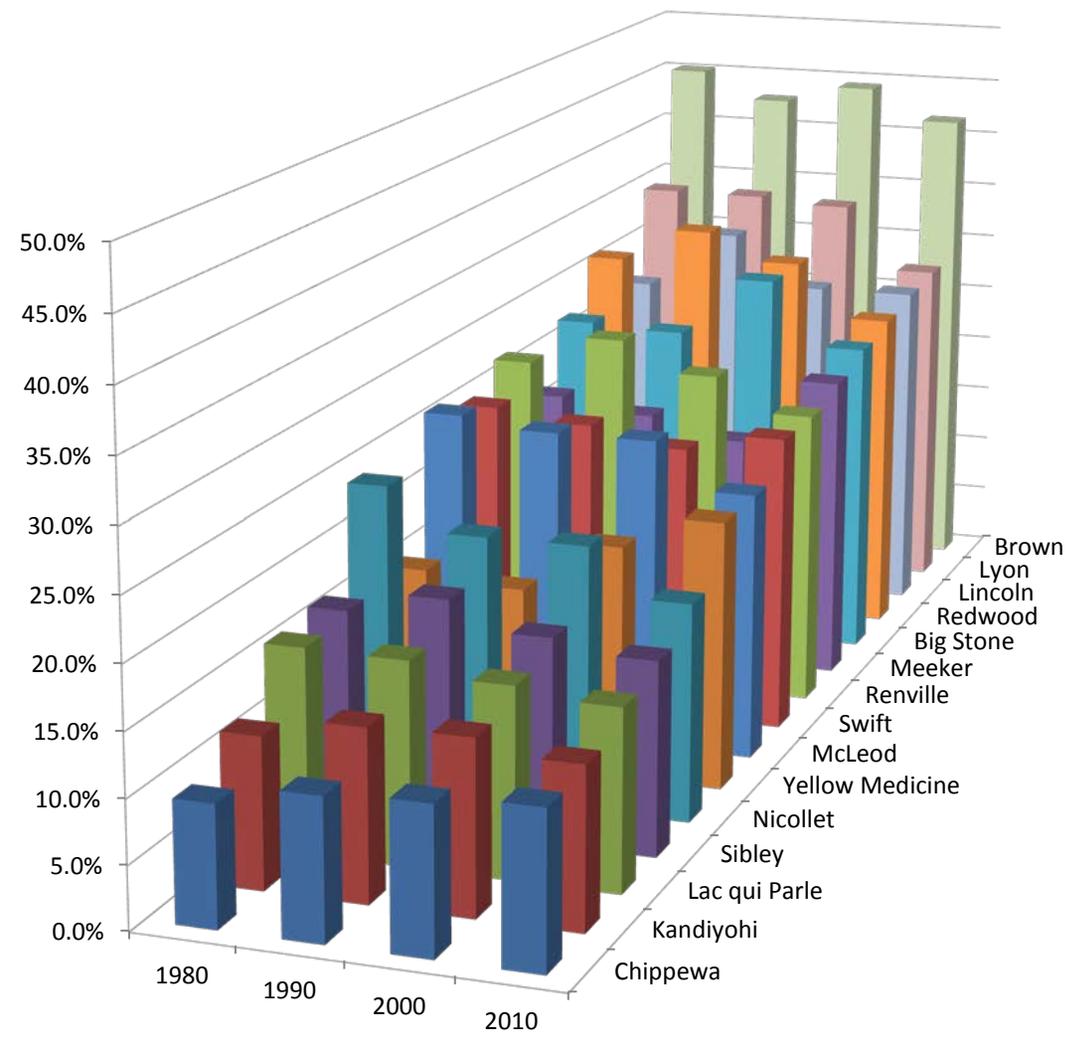


Figure 3.30
 Diocese of New Ulm Percentages of Non-Church-Affiliated People
 by County and Census Year, 1980-2010
 Source: ASARB 2010 U.S. Religion Census

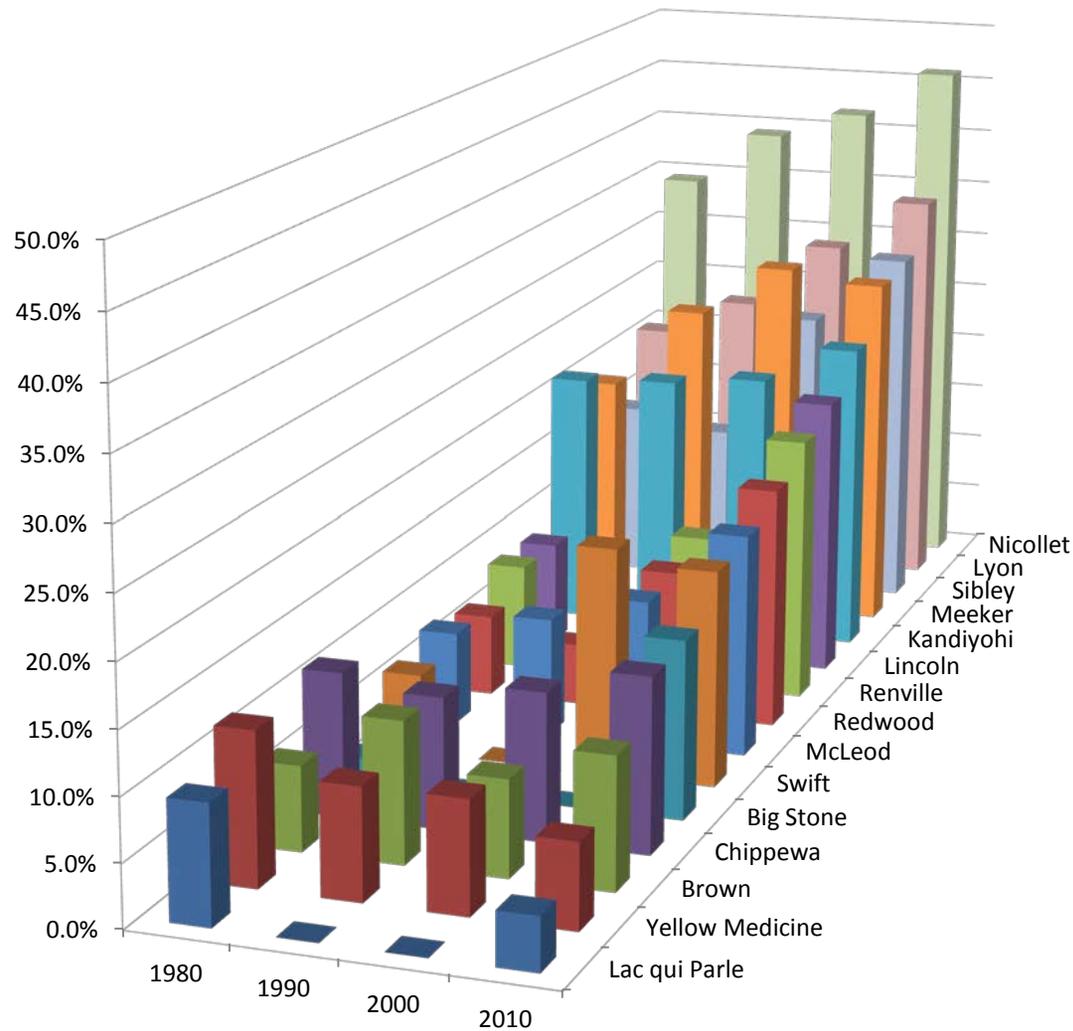


Figure 3.31
**Diocese of New Ulm Baptismal Rate Compared to
 Minnesota and Diocesan Birth Rates, 1999-2010**
 Sources: U.S. Census, Minnesota Department of Health, Annual Parish Self Study

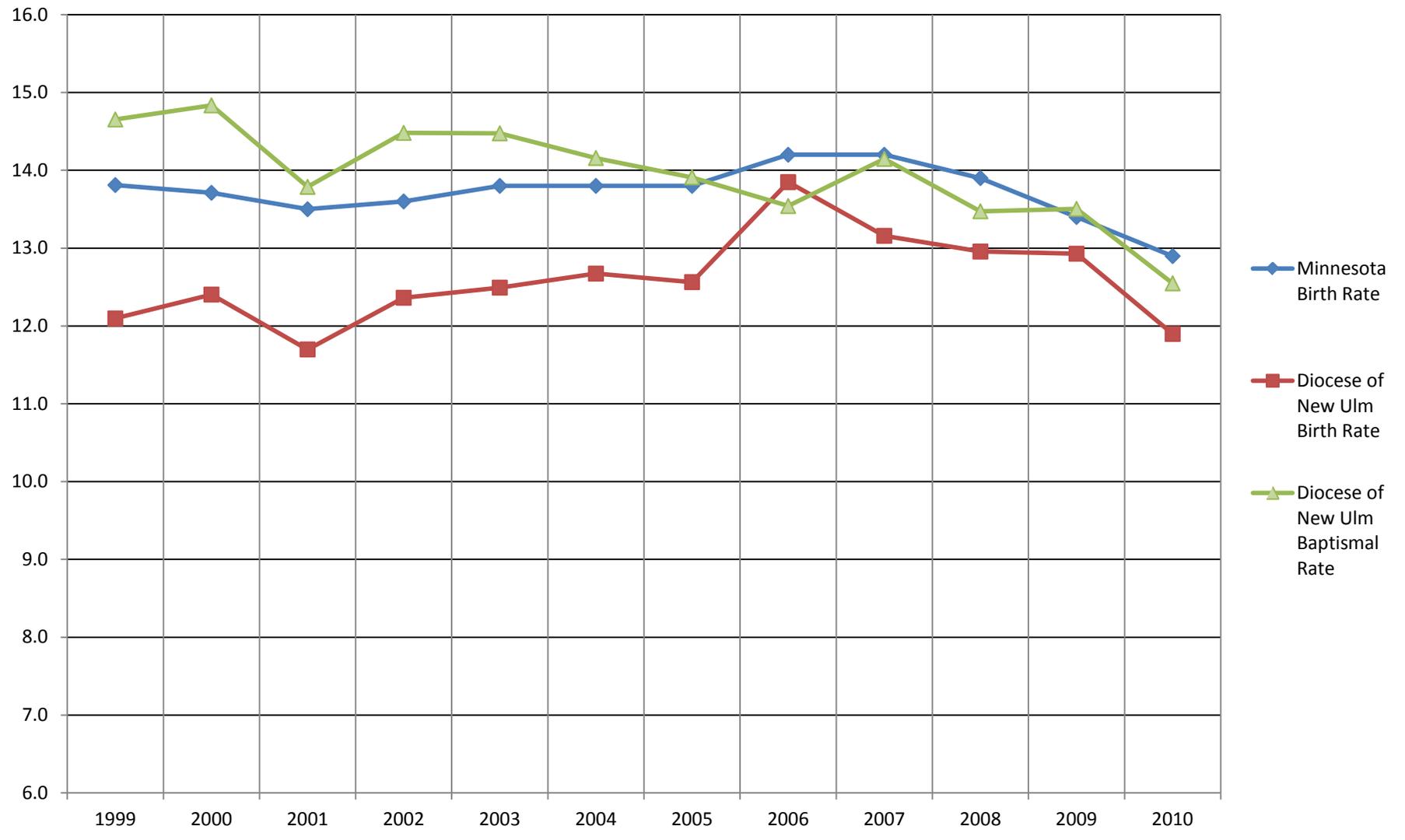


Figure 3.32
 Diocese of New Ulm Funeral Rate Compared to
 Minnesota and Diocesan Death Rates, 1999-2010

Sources: U.S. Census, Minnesota Department of Health, Annual Parish Self Study

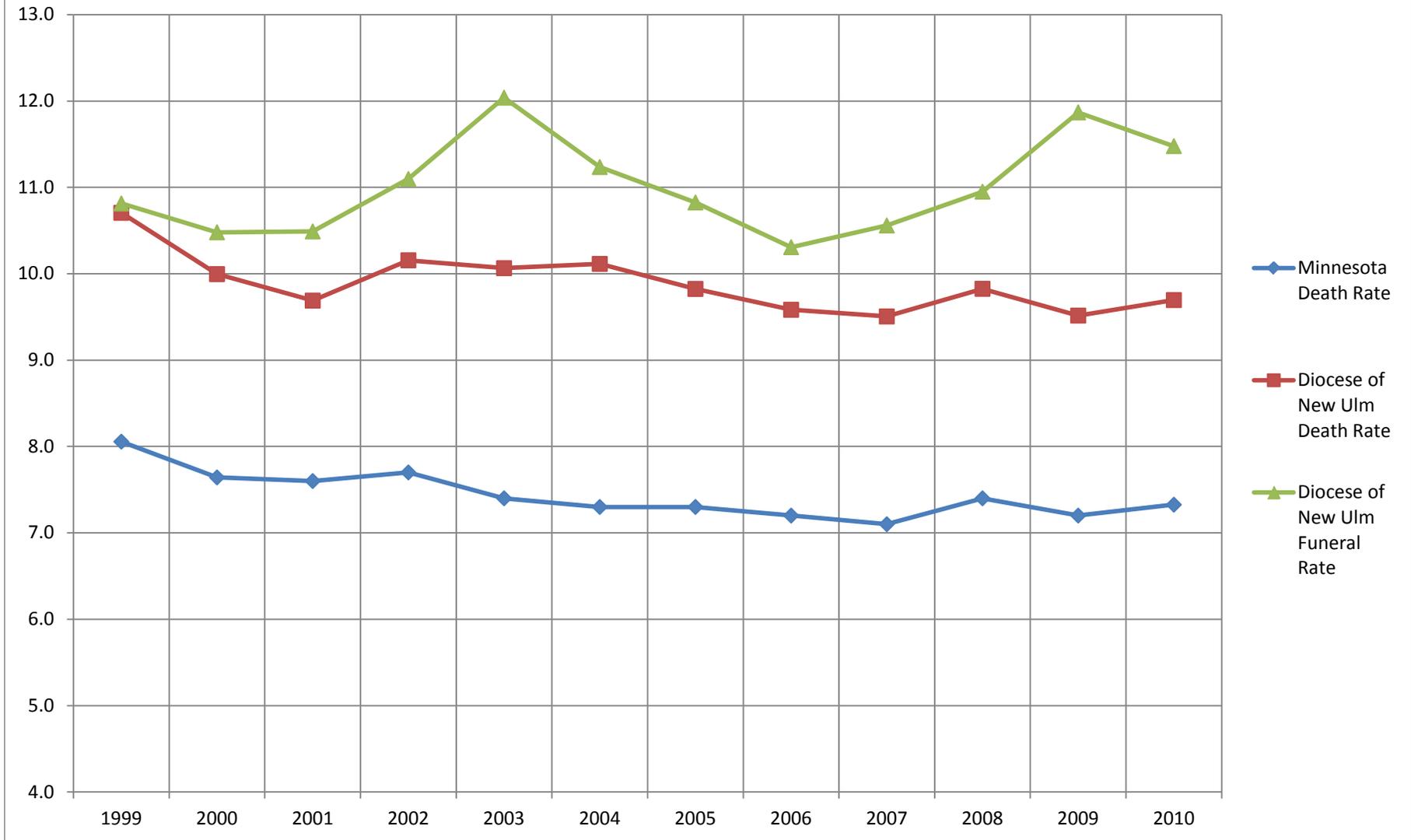


Figure 3.33
 Diocese of New Ulm Sacramental Participation, 2000-2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study

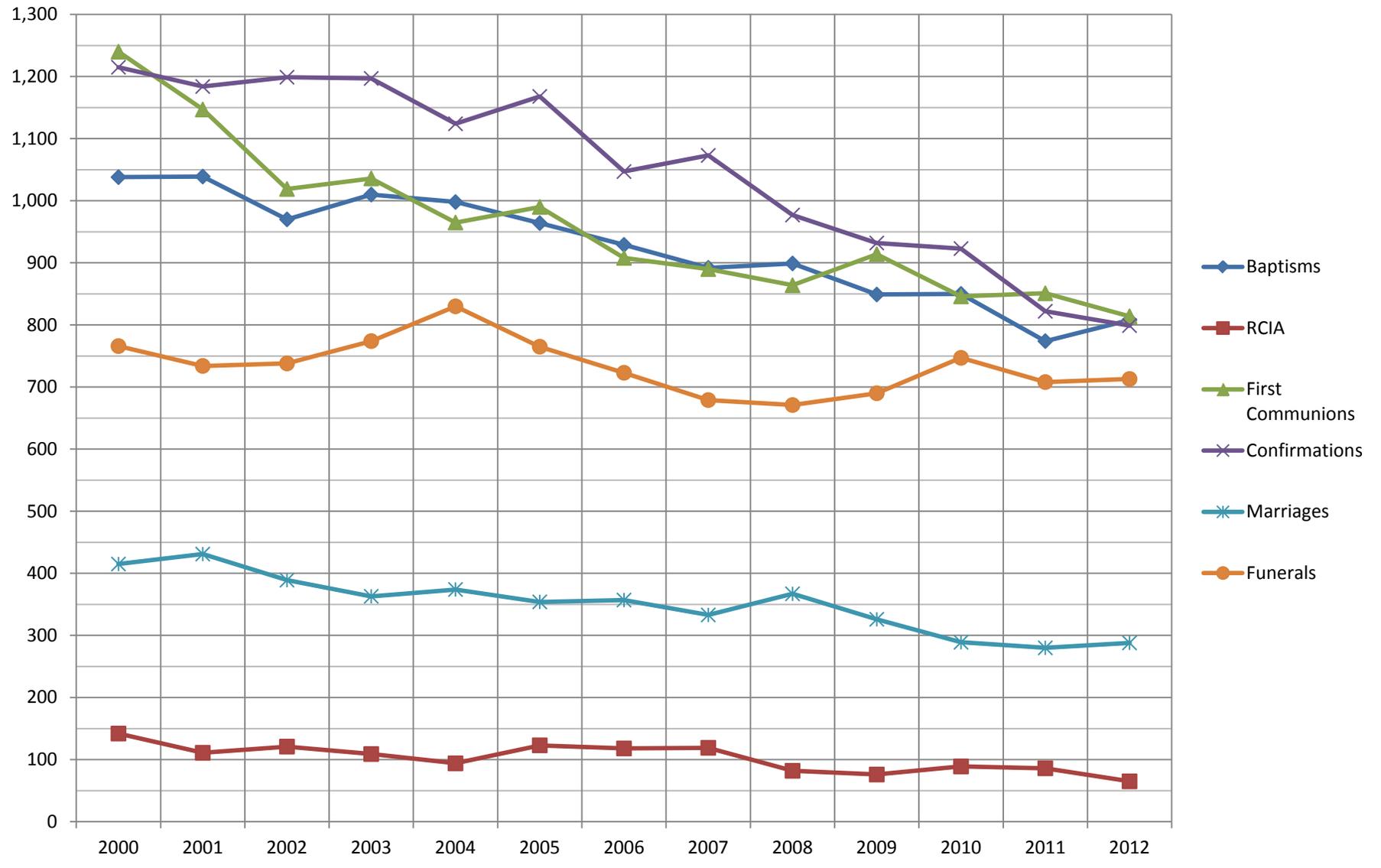
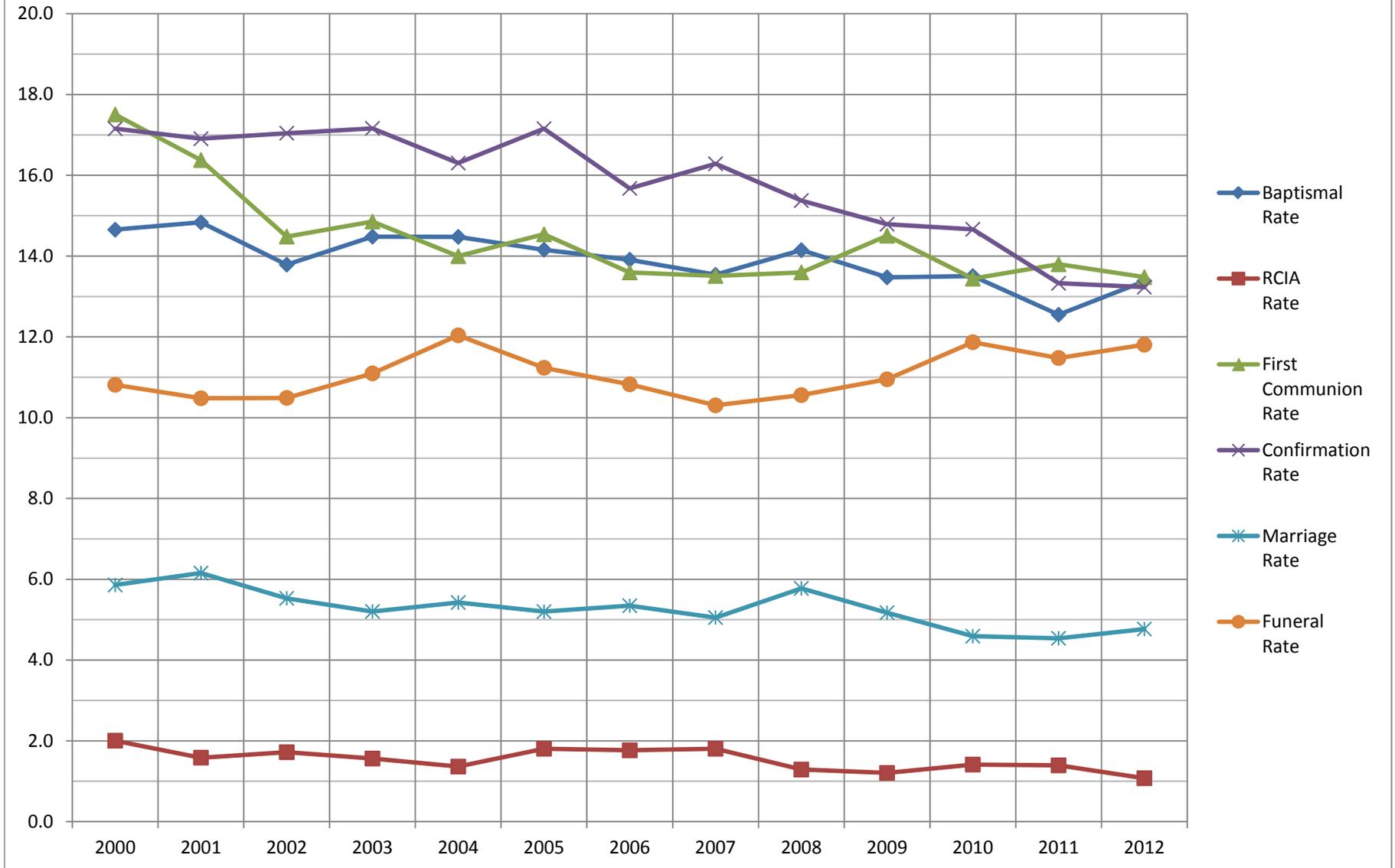
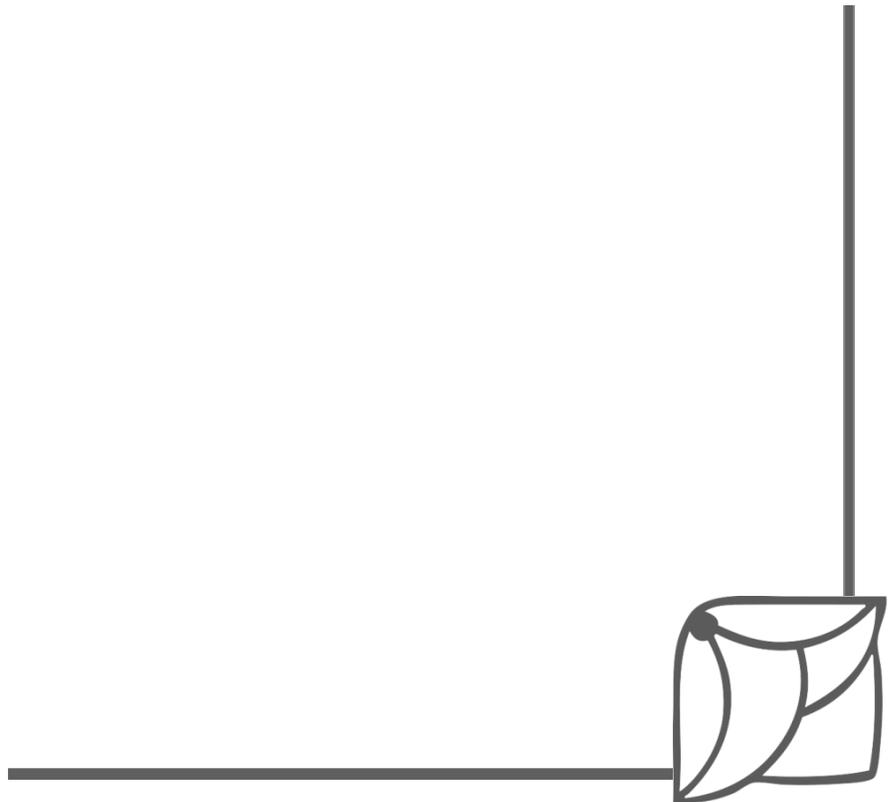


Figure 3.34
 Diocese of New Ulm Sacramental Participation Rates, 2000-2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study



Section IV Figures



LIST OF FIGURES

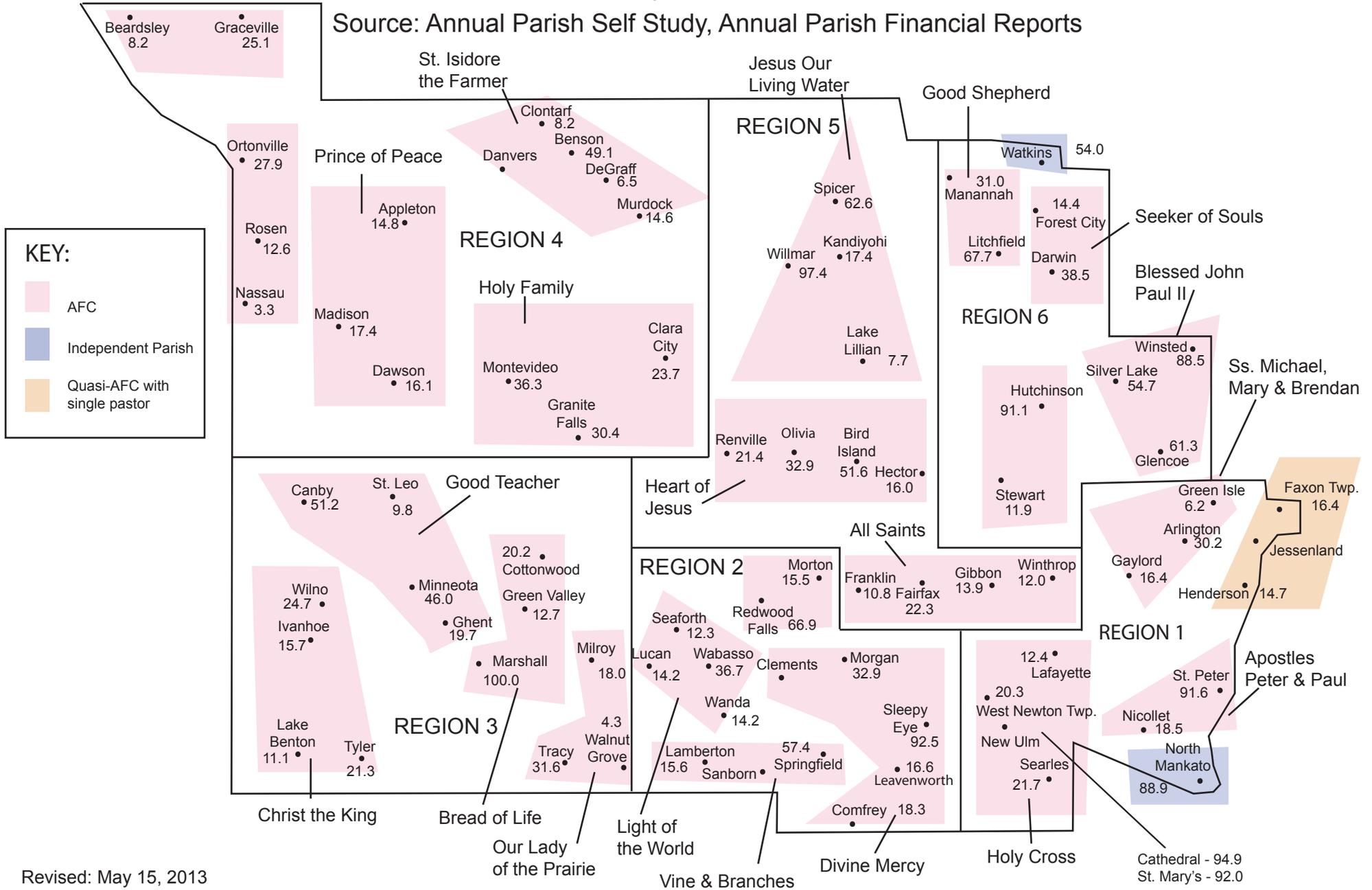
| Figure | Title | Type |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| 4.1 | Diocese of New Ulm Parish Vitality Index, 2012 | Table |
| 4.2 | Diocese of New Ulm Parish Vitality Index Values, 2012 | Map |

Figure 4.1
Diocese of New Ulm Parish Vitality Index, 2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study, Annual Parish Financial Reports

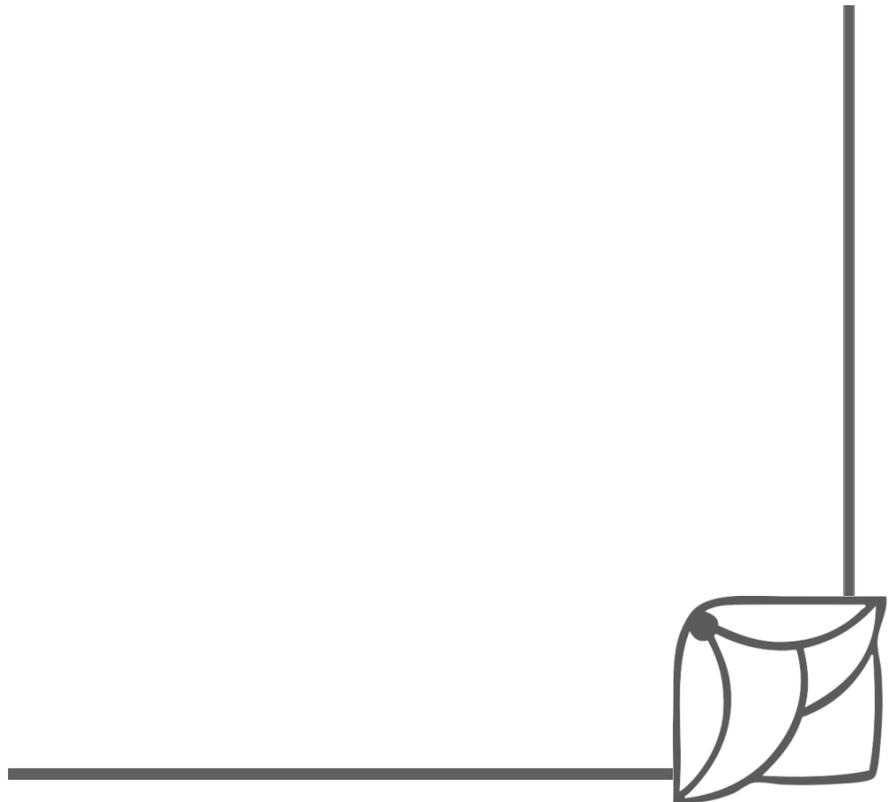
| Parish | PVI Score | Parish | PVI Score | Parish | PVI Score | Parish | PVI Score |
|--------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| Nassau | 3.3 | Forest City | 14.4 | West Newton Twp. | 20.3 | Benson | 49.1 |
| Walnut Grove | 4.3 | Murdock | 14.6 | Tyler | 21.3 | Canby | 51.2 |
| Green Isle | 6.2 | Henderson | 14.7 | Renville | 21.4 | Bird Island | 51.6 |
| DeGraff | 6.5 | Appleton | 14.8 | Searles | 21.7 | Watkins | 54.0 |
| Lake Lillian | 7.7 | Morton | 15.5 | Fairfax | 22.3 | Silver Lake | 54.7 |
| Clontarf | 8.2 | Lamberton | 15.6 | Clara City | 23.7 | Springfield | 57.4 |
| Beardsley | 8.2 | Ivanhoe | 15.7 | Wilno | 24.7 | Glencoe | 61.3 |
| St. Leo | 9.8 | Hector | 16.0 | Graceville | 25.1 | Spicer | 62.6 |
| Franklin | 10.8 | Dawson | 16.1 | Ortonville | 27.9 | Redwood Falls | 66.9 |
| Lake Benton | 11.1 | Gaylord | 16.4 | Arlington | 30.2 | Litchfield | 67.7 |
| Stewart | 11.9 | Faxon Township | 16.4 | Granite Falls | 30.4 | Winsted | 88.5 |
| Winthrop | 12.0 | Leavenworth | 16.6 | Manannah | 31.0 | North Mankato | 88.9 |
| Seaforth | 12.3 | Kandiyohi | 17.4 | Tracy | 31.6 | Hutchinson | 91.1 |
| Lafayette | 12.4 | Madison | 17.4 | Morgan | 32.9 | St. Peter | 91.6 |
| Rosen | 12.6 | Milroy | 18.0 | Olivia | 32.9 | New Ulm St. Mary's | 92.0 |
| Green Valley | 12.7 | Comfrey | 18.3 | Montevideo | 36.3 | Sleepy Eye | 92.5 |
| Gibbon | 13.9 | Nicollet | 18.5 | Wabasso | 36.7 | New Ulm Cathedral | 94.9 |
| Lucan | 14.2 | Ghent | 19.7 | Darwin | 38.5 | Willmar | 97.4 |
| Wanda | 14.2 | Cottonwood | 20.2 | Minneota | 46.0 | Marshall | 100.0 |

Figure 4.2 Diocese of New Ulm Parish Vitality Index Values, 2012

Source: Annual Parish Self Study, Annual Parish Financial Reports



Section V
Figures



LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | Title | Type |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| 5.1 | Diocese of New Ulm Projected Number of Diocesan Priests, 2012-2037 | Graph |
| 5.2 | Diocese of New Ulm Age Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037, at Current Ordination Rate (6.5/10 Years) | Graph |
| 5.3 | Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Roles Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037, at Current Ordination Rate (6.5/10 Years) | Graph |
| 5.4 | Diocese of New Ulm Age Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037, at High Ordination Rate (8/10 Years) | Graph |
| 5.5 | Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Roles Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037, at High Ordination Rate (8/10 Years) | Graph |
| 5.6 | Diocese of New Ulm Age Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037, at Low Ordination Rate (5/10 Years) | Graph |
| 5.7 | Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Roles Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037, at Low Ordination Rate (5/10 Years) | Graph |
| 5.8 | Diocese of New Ulm Area Faith Communities as of July 2, 2012 | Table |
| 5.9 | Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Leaders and Permanent Deacons as of July 2, 2012 | Table |
| 5.10 | Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Leaders and Permanent Deacons as of July 2, 2012 | Map |
| 5.11 | Diocese of New Ulm Current and Projected Allocation of Priests by Region | Table |
| 5.12 | Diocese of New Ulm Parishioners Per Priest and Per Pastoral Leader in Each AFC, 2012 | Table |
| 5.13 | Diocese of New Ulm Sacramental Responsibility Analysis by Parish, 2012 | Table |
| 5.14 | Diocese of New Ulm Sacramental Responsibility Analysis by AFC, 2012 | Table |
| 5.15 | Diocese of New Ulm Region 1 Church Sizes and Mass Attendance, 2012 | Map |
| 5.16 | Diocese of New Ulm Region 2 Church Sizes and Mass Attendance, 2012 | Map |
| 5.17 | Diocese of New Ulm Region 3 Church Sizes and Mass Attendance, 2012 | Map |
| 5.18 | Diocese of New Ulm Region 4 Church Sizes and Mass Attendance, 2012 | Map |
| 5.19 | Diocese of New Ulm Region 5 Church Sizes and Mass Attendance, 2012 | Map |
| 5.20 | Diocese of New Ulm Region 6 Church Sizes and Mass Attendance, 2012 | Map |

Figure 5.1
Diocese of New Ulm
Projected Number of Diocesan Priests, 2012-2037

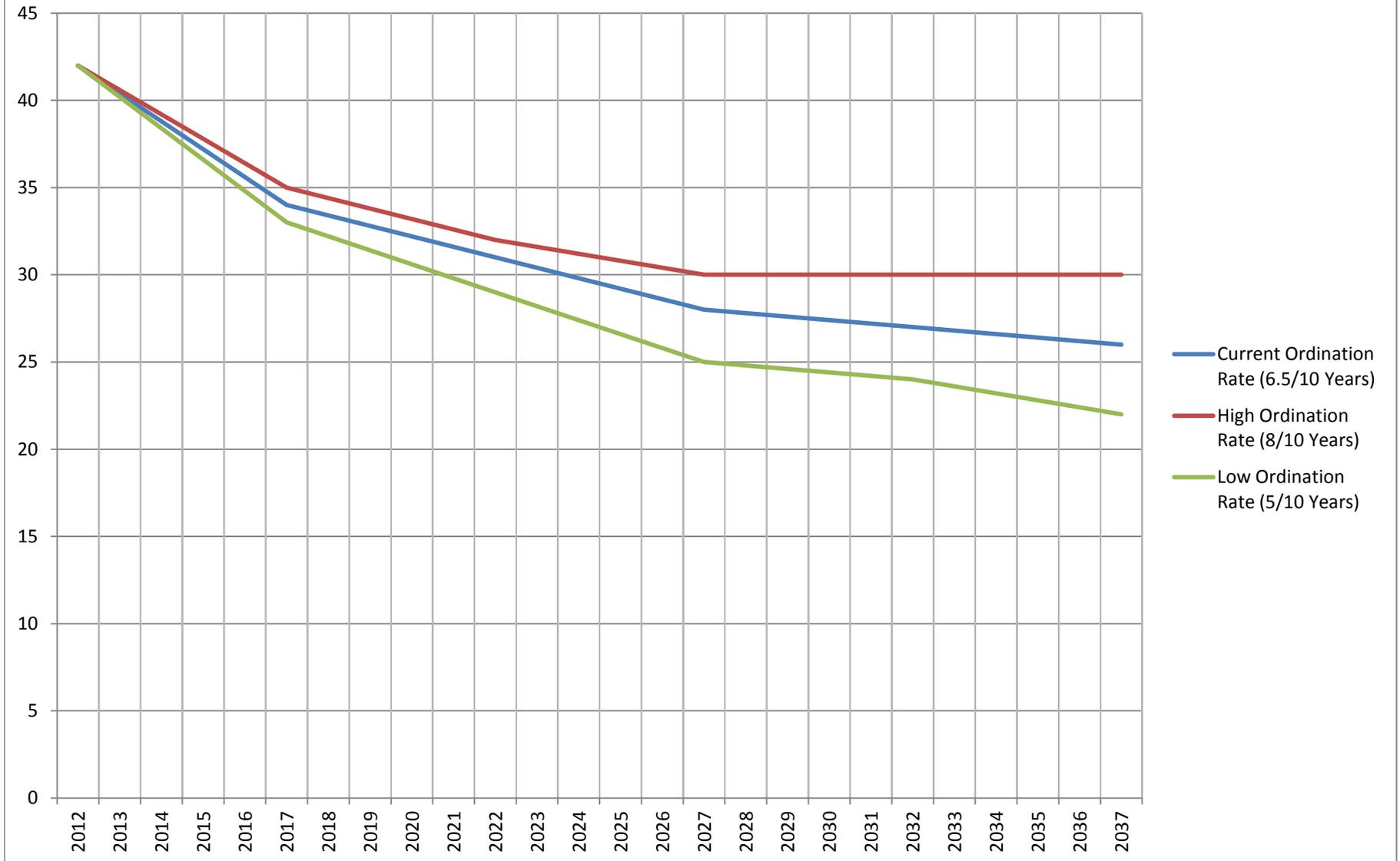


Figure 5.2
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Age Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037,
 at Current Ordination Rate (6.5/10 Years)

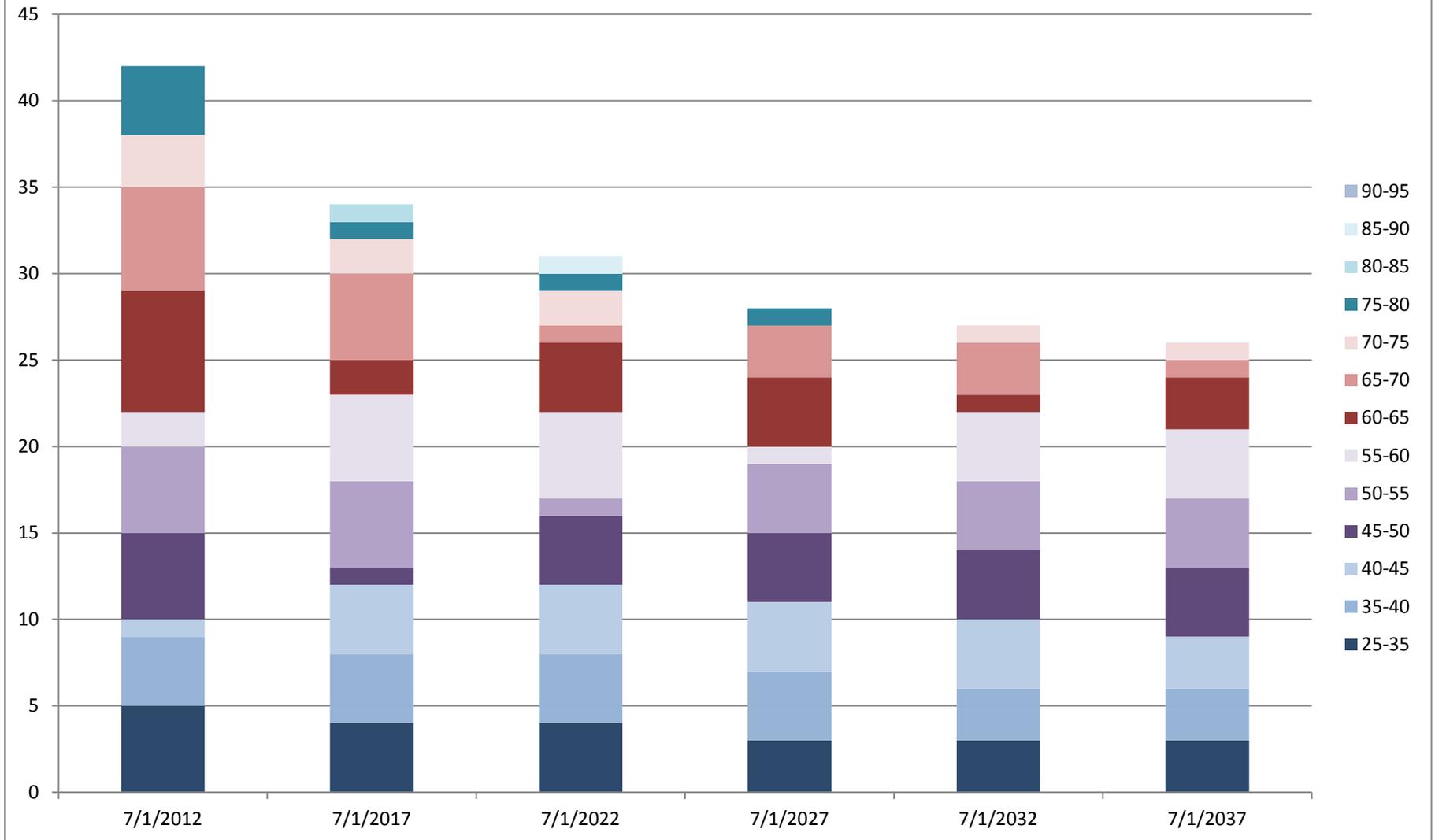


Figure 5.3
 Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Roles Distribution for Diocesan Priest
 Projection, 2012-2037, at Current Ordination Rate (6.5/10 Years)

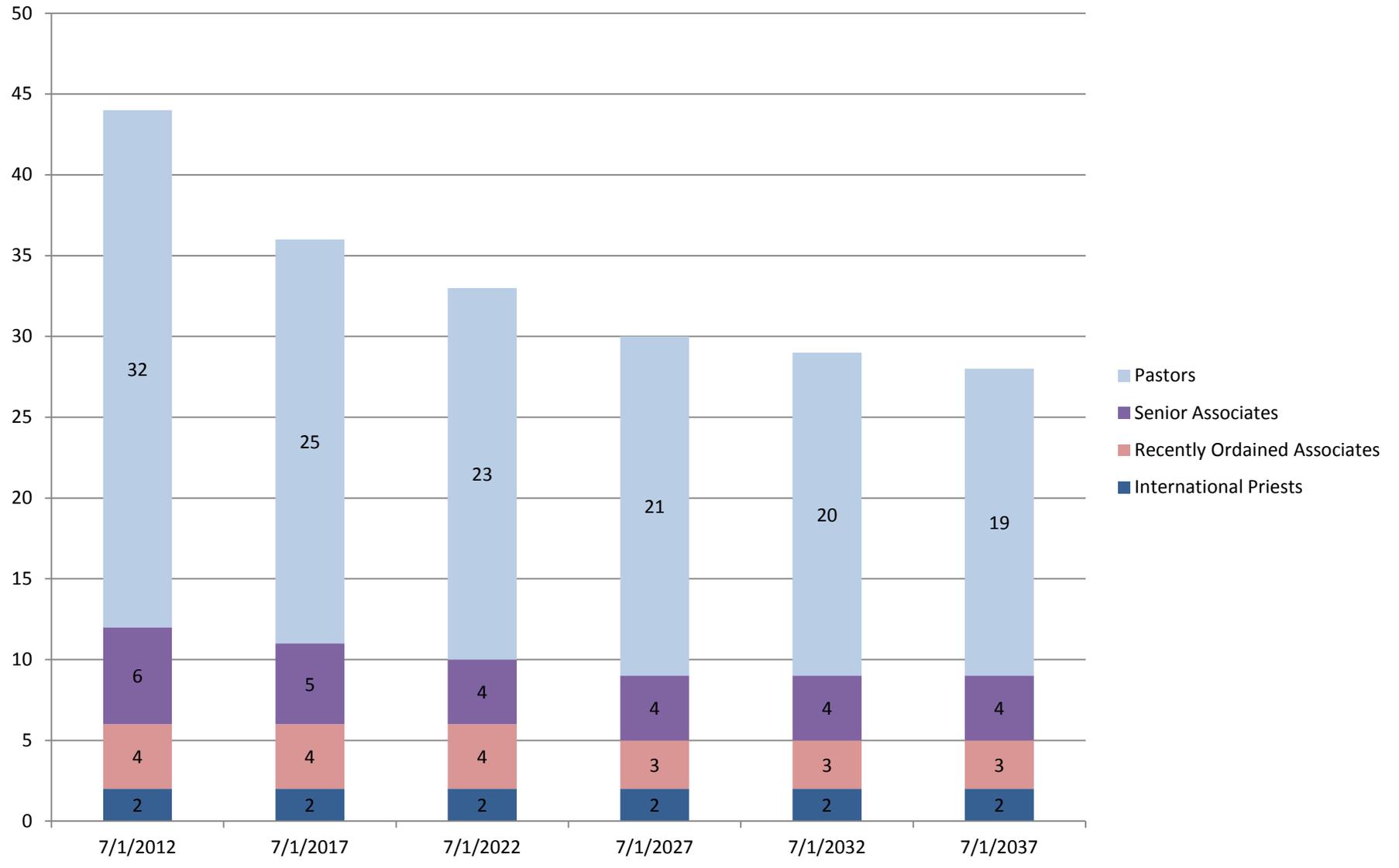


Figure 5.4
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Age Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037,
 at High Ordination Rate (8/10 Years)

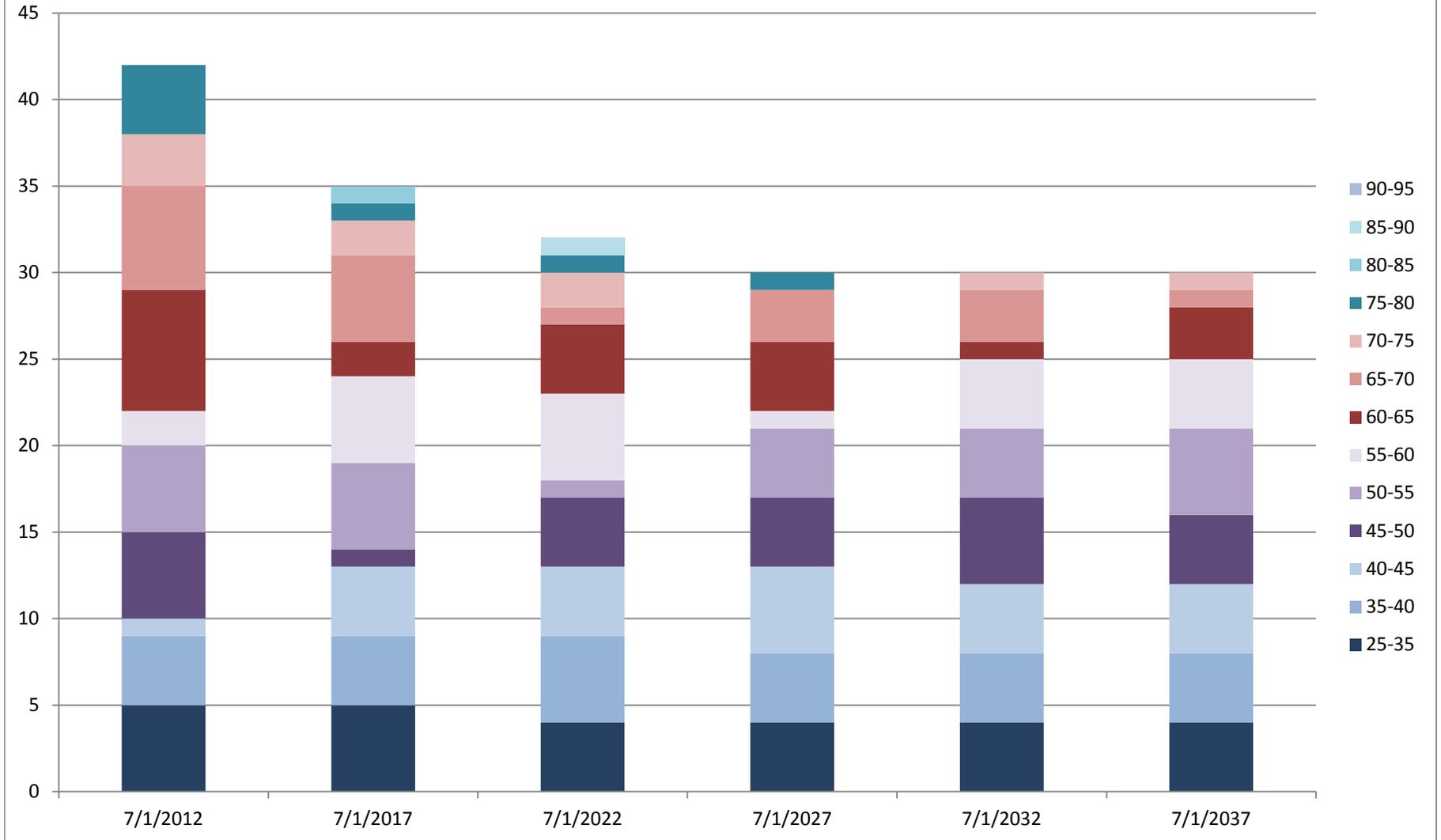


Figure 5.5
 Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Roles Distribution for Diocesan Priest
 Projection, 2012-2037, at High Ordination Rate (8/10 Years)

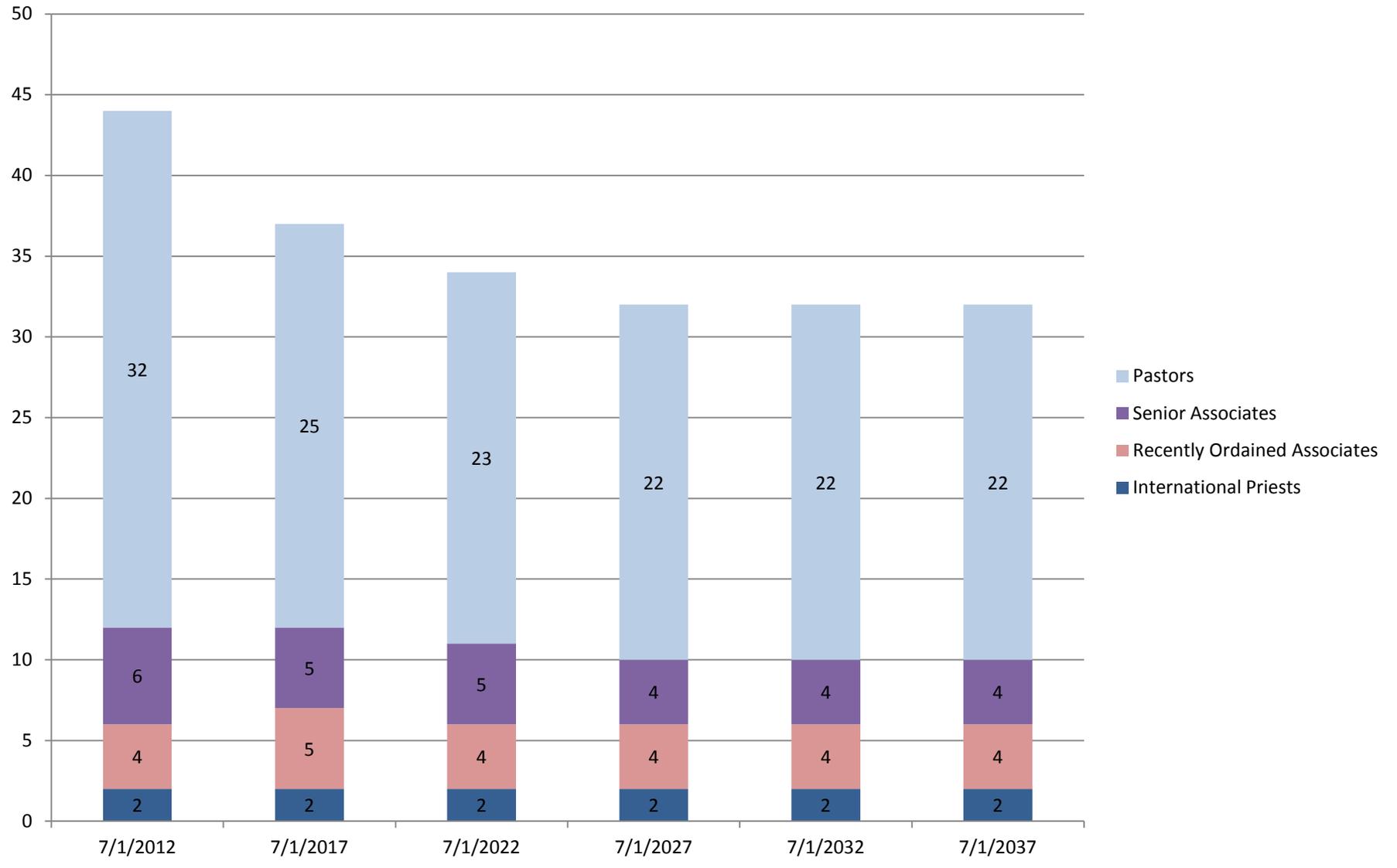


Figure 5.6
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Age Distribution for Diocesan Priest Projection, 2012-2037,
 at Low Ordination Rate (5/10 Years)

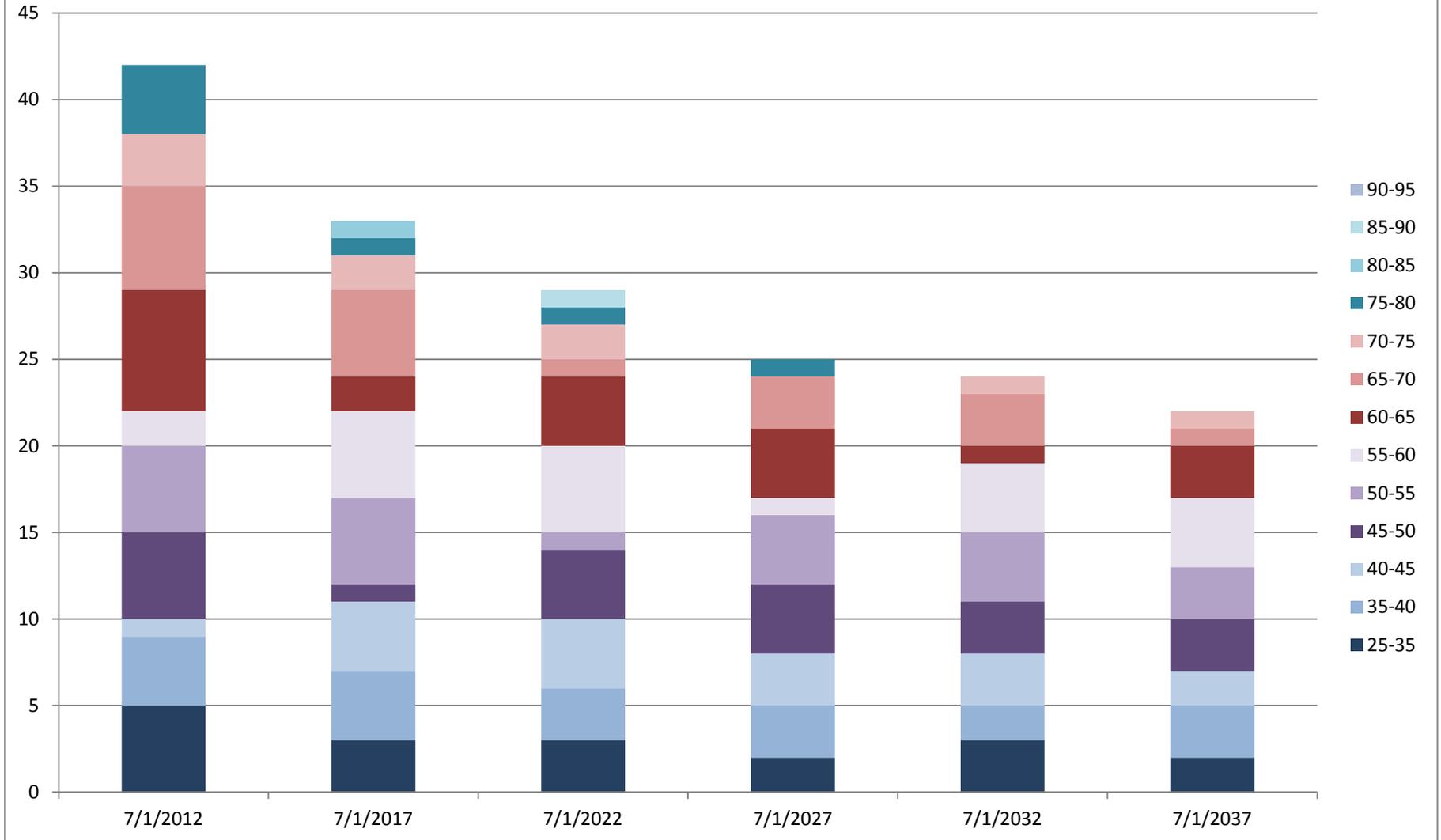


Figure 5.7
 Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Roles Distribution for Diocesan Priest
 Projection, 2012-2037, at Low Ordination Rate (5/10 Years)

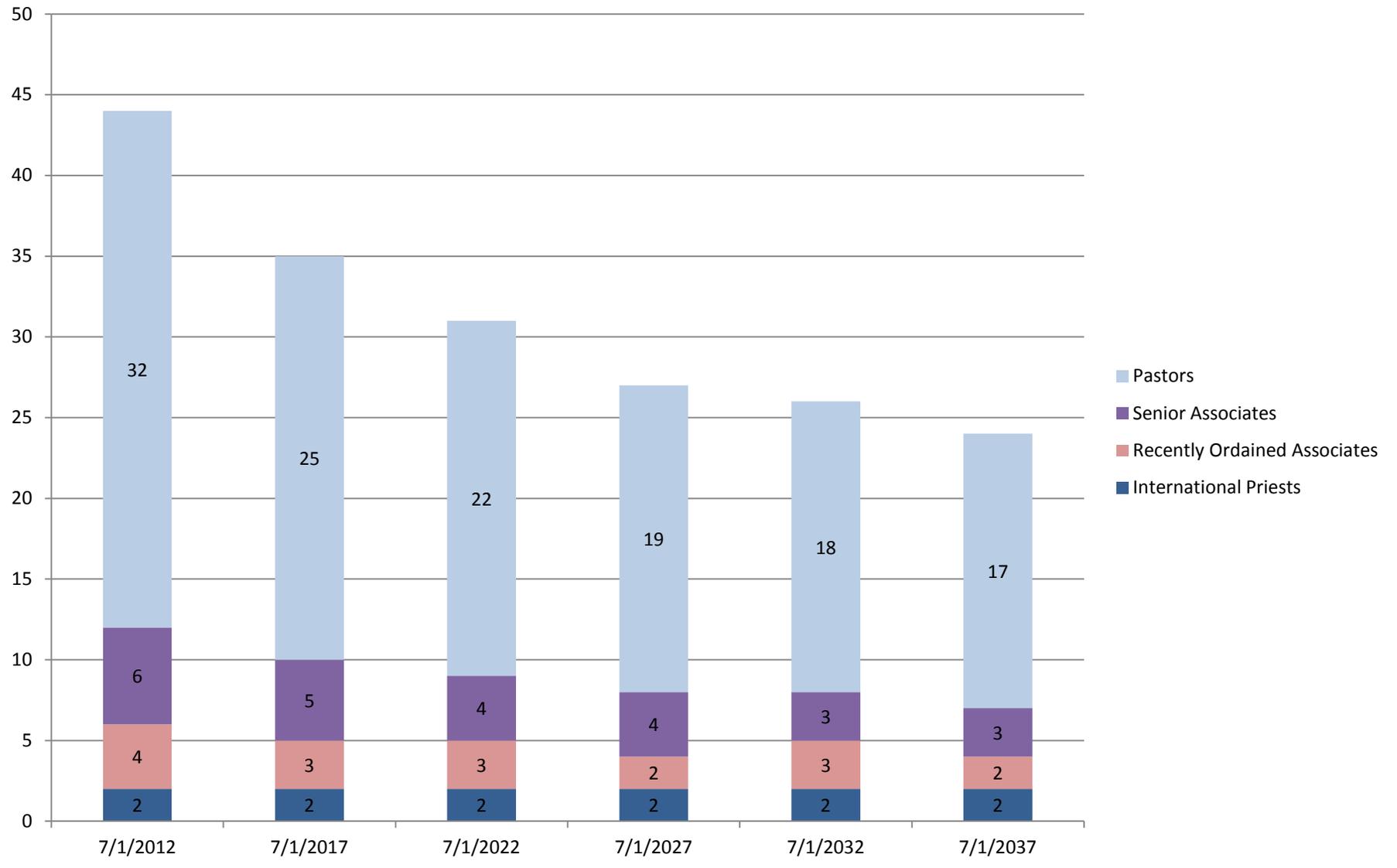


Figure 5.8
 Diocese of New Ulm Area Faith Communities as of July 2, 2012
 With One Quasi-AFC and Two Independent Parishes

| Region | Name | Constituent Parishes | Date Established |
|--------|--------------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1 | Apostles Peter and Paul | St. Paul, Nicollet; St. Peter, St. Peter | 3/10/2010 |
| 1 | Faxon - Henderson | St. John-Assumption, Faxon Township; St. Joseph, Henderson (not formally an AFC; a "quasi-AFC") | N/A |
| 1 | Holy Cross | St. Gregory the Great, Lafayette; Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm; St. Mary, New Ulm; St. John the Baptist, Searles; St. George, West Newton Township | 11/22/2005 |
| 1 | North Mankato | Holy Rosary, North Mankato | N/A |
| 1 | Ss. Michael, Mary, and Brendan | St. Michael, Gaylord; St. Mary, Arlington; St. Brendan, Green Isle | 11/8/2010 |
| 2 | Divine Mercy | St. Paul, Comfrey; Japanese Martyrs, Leavenworth; St. Michael, Morgan; St. Mary, Sleepy Eye | 2/22/2007 |
| 2 | Light of the World | Our Lady of Victory, Lucan; St. Mary, Seaforth; St. Anne, Wabasso; St. Matthias, Wanda | 3/21/2007 |
| 2 | Morton - Redwood Falls | St. John, Morton; St. Catherine, Redwood Falls | |
| 2 | Vine and Branches | St. Joseph, Lambertton; St. Raphael, Springfield | 5/1/2008 |
| 3 | Bread of Life | St. Mary, Cottonwood; St. Clotilde, Green Valley; Holy Redeemer, Marshall | 10/15/2007 |
| 3 | Christ the King | SS. Peter and Paul, Ivanhoe; St. Genevieve, Lake Benton; St. Dionysius, Tyler; St. John Cantius, Wilno | 4/9/2009 |
| 3 | Good Teacher | St. Peter, Canby; St. Eloi, Ghent; St. Edward, Minneota; St. Leo, St. Leo | 3/25/2008 |
| 3 | Our Lady of the Prairie | St. Michael, Milroy; St. Mary, Tracy; St. Paul, Walnut Grove | 3/28/2011 |
| 4 | Beardsley - Graceville | St. Mary, Beardsley; Holy Rosary, Graceville | |
| 4 | Holy Family | St. Andrew, Granite Falls; St. Clara, Clara City; St. Joseph, Montevideo | 6/10/2005 |
| 4 | Nassau - Ortonville - Rosen | St. James, Nassau; St. John, Ortonville; St. Joseph, Rosen | |
| 4 | Prince of Peace | St. John, Appleton; St. James, Dawson; St. Michael, Madison | 12/1/2009 |
| 4 | St. Isidore the Farmer | St. Francis, Benson; St. Malachy, Clontarf; St. Bridget, De Graff; Sacred Heart, Murdock | 12/1/2010 |
| 5 | All Saints | St. Andrew, Fairfax; Sacred Heart, Franklin; St. Willibrord, Gibbon; St. Francis de Sales, Winthrop | 3/21/2011 |
| 5 | Heart of Jesus | St. Mary, Bird Island; St. John, Hector; St. Aloysius, Olivia; Holy Redeemer, Renville | 12/8/2005 |
| 5 | Jesus Our Living Water | St. Patrick, Kandiyohi; St. Thomas More, Lake Lillian; Our Lady of the Lakes, Spicer; St. Mary, Willmar | 10/25/2006 |
| 6 | Blessed John Paul II | St. Pius X, Glencoe; Holy Family, Silver Lake; Holy Trinity, Winsted | 10/22/2011 |
| 6 | Good Shepherd | St. Philip, Litchfield; Our Lady, Manannah | 11/2/2007 |
| 6 | Hutchinson - Stewart | St. Anastasia, Hutchinson; St. Boniface, Stewart | |
| 6 | Seeker of Souls | St. John, Darwin; St. Gertrude, Forest City | 10/1/2009 |
| 6 | Watkins | St. Anthony, Watkins | N/A |

Figure 5.9

Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Leaders and Permanent Deacons as of July 2, 2012

| Region | Area Faith Community | Pastors | Senior Associates | Recently Ordained Associates | International Priests | Total Priests | Pastoral Administrators | Pastoral Leaders | Permanent Deacons |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Apostles Peter and Paul | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1 | Faxon - Henderson | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | Holy Cross | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| 1 | North Mankato | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1 | Ss. Michael, Mary, and Brendan | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Divine Mercy | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| 2 | Light of the World | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Morton - Redwood Falls | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 2 | Vine and Branches | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 3 | Bread of Life | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 3 | Christ the King | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 3 | Good Teacher | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| 3 | Our Lady of the Prairie | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 4 | Beardsley - Graceville | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 4 | Holy Family | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 4 | Nassau - Ortonville - Rosen | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 4 | Prince of Peace | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| 4 | St. Isidore the Farmer | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 5 | All Saints | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 5 | Heart of Jesus | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 |
| 5 | Jesus Our Living Water | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| 6 | Blessed John Paul II | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| 6 | Good Shepherd | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 6 | Hutchinson - Stewart | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 6 | Seeker of Souls | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | Watkins | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total Assigned | | 31 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 42 | 8 | 50 | 14 |
| Not Assigned to Parishes | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 31 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 45 | 8 | 50 | 14 |

Figure 5.10

Diocese of New Ulm Pastoral Leaders and Permanent Deacons as of July 2, 2012

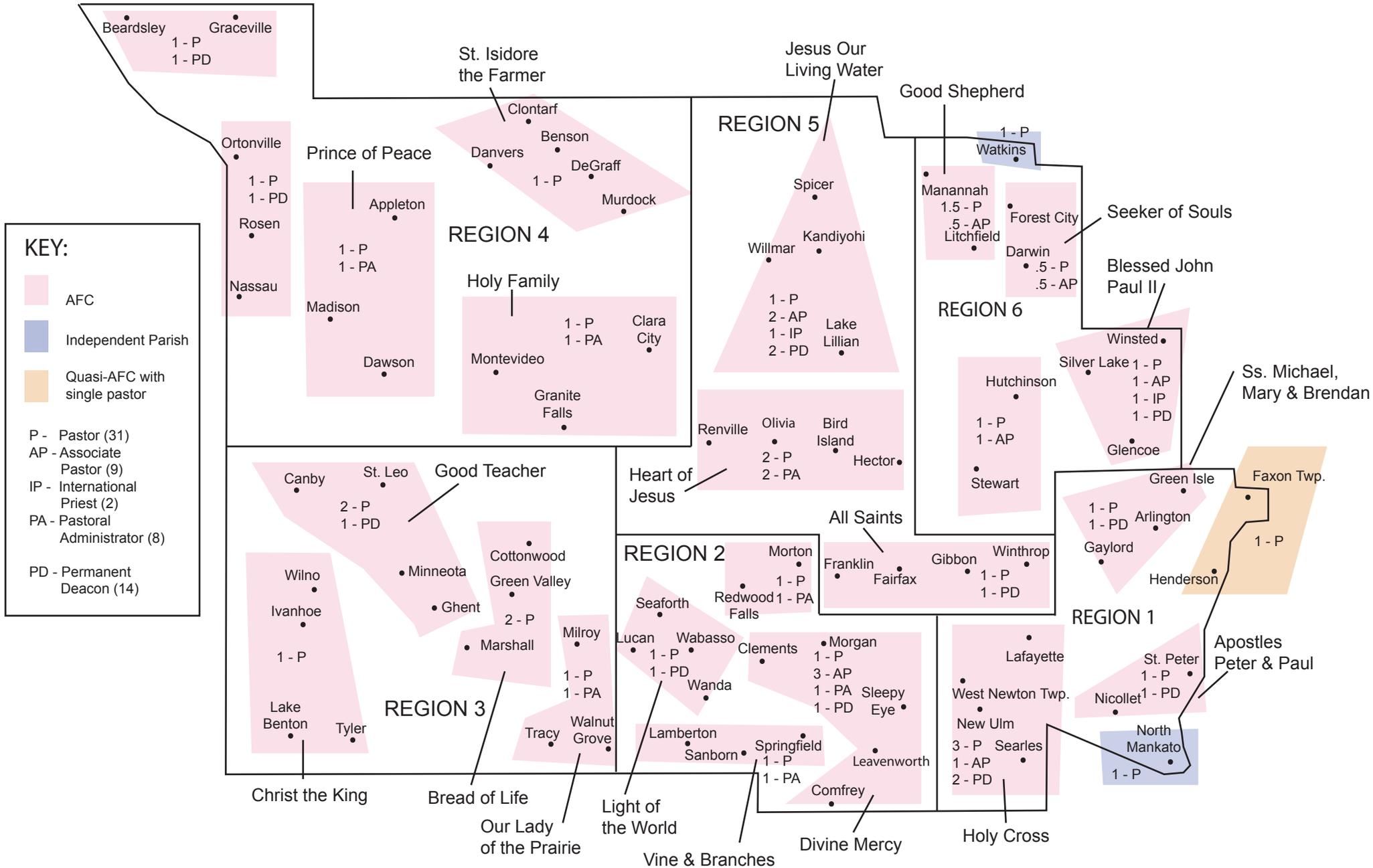


Figure 5.11
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Current and Projected Allocation of Priests by Region

| Allocation as of July 2, 2012 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Region | AFCs/ Clusters/ Parishes | Pastors | Senior Associates | Recently Ordained Associates | International Priests | Total Priests |
| 1 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| 3 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 4 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| 6 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| Unassigned | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 26 | 31 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 44 |

| Projection as of July 1, 2022 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Region | AFCs/ Clusters/ Parishes | Pastors | Senior Associates | Recently Ordained Associates | International Priests | Total Priests |
| 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| 2 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| 6 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| Unassigned | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 23 | 23 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 33 |

Figure 5.12
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Parishioners Per Priest and Per Pastoral Leader in Each AFC, 2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study

| Area Faith Community | Region | Parishes | Parishioners | Households | Assigned Priests | Parishioners Per Priest | Pastoral Leaders | Parishioners Per PL |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----------|---------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| North Mankato | 1 | 1 | 2,491 | 954 | 1 | 2,491 | 1 | 2,491 |
| Apostles Peter and Paul | 1 | 2 | 2,431 | 1,143 | 1 | 2,431 | 1 | 2,431 |
| Bread of Life | 3 | 3 | 4,191 | 1,928 | 2 | 2,096 | 2 | 2,096 |
| St. Isidore the Farmer | 4 | 4 | 1,883 | 825 | 1 | 1,883 | 1 | 1,883 |
| Holy Family | 4 | 3 | 1,805 | 778 | 1 | 1,805 | 2 | 903 |
| Morton - Redwood Falls | 2 | 2 | 1,759 | 792 | 1 | 1,759 | 2 | 880 |
| Christ the King | 3 | 4 | 1,745 | 789 | 1 | 1,745 | 1 | 1,745 |
| Holy Cross | 1 | 5 | 6,730 | 3,241 | 4 | 1,683 | 4 | 1,683 |
| Vine and Branches | 2 | 2 | 1,647 | 667 | 1 | 1,647 | 2 | 824 |
| Blessed John Paul II | 6 | 3 | 4,655 | 2,321 | 3 | 1,552 | 3 | 1,552 |
| Hutchinson - Stewart | 6 | 2 | 3,065 | 1,211 | 2 | 1,533 | 2 | 1,533 |
| Light of the World | 2 | 4 | 1,459 | 600 | 1 | 1,459 | 1 | 1,459 |
| Good Teacher | 3 | 4 | 2,876 | 1,105 | 2 | 1,438 | 2 | 1,438 |
| Heart of Jesus | 5 | 4 | 2,786 | 1,145 | 2 | 1,393 | 4 | 697 |
| Jesus Our Living Water | 5 | 4 | 5,299 | 2,149 | 4 | 1,325 | 4 | 1,325 |
| Watkins | 6 | 1 | 1,295 | 453 | 1 | 1,295 | 1 | 1,295 |
| All Saints | 5 | 4 | 1,185 | 606 | 1 | 1,185 | 1 | 1,185 |
| Seeker of Souls | 6 | 2 | 1,179 | 409 | 1 | 1,179 | 1 | 1,179 |
| Prince of Peace | 4 | 3 | 1,099 | 519 | 1 | 1,099 | 2 | 550 |
| Our Lady of the Prairie | 3 | 3 | 1,089 | 469 | 1 | 1,089 | 2 | 545 |
| Divine Mercy | 2 | 4 | 4,259 | 1,850 | 4 | 1,065 | 5 | 852 |
| Ss. Michael, Mary, and Brendan | 1 | 3 | 1,026 | 456 | 1 | 1,026 | 1 | 1,026 |
| Good Shepherd | 6 | 2 | 2,032 | 883 | 2 | 1,016 | 2 | 1,016 |
| Nassau - Ortonville - Rosen | 4 | 3 | 873 | 402 | 1 | 873 | 1 | 873 |
| Beardsley - Graceville | 4 | 2 | 778 | 377 | 1 | 778 | 1 | 778 |
| Faxon - Henderson | 1 | 2 | 754 | 244 | 1 | 754 | 1 | 754 |
| Total | | 76 | 60,391 | 26,316 | 42 | 1,438 | 50 | 1,208 |

Figure 5.13
Diocese of New Ulm
Sacramental Responsibility Analysis by Parish, 2012
Source: Annual Parish Self Study

| Parish | Hours | Parish | Hours | Parish | Hours |
|-------------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Marshall | 1,820 | Morgan | 507 | Renville | 246 |
| New Ulm Cathedral | 1,449 | Ortonville | 474 | Morton | 245 |
| Willmar | 1,353 | Graceville | 430 | Murdock | 245 |
| Sleepy Eye | 1,189 | Green Valley | 427 | Walnut Grove | 240 |
| Litchfield | 1,152 | Cottonwood | 409 | Granite Falls | 237 |
| Winsted | 1,069 | Wilno | 399 | Seaforth | 233 |
| New Ulm St. Mary | 1,010 | Lafayette | 388 | Appleton | 228 |
| North Mankato | 903 | Henderson | 377 | Gibbon | 220 |
| Silver Lake | 901 | Ivanhoe | 364 | Lamberton | 216 |
| Glencoe | 888 | Nicollet | 355 | Nassau | 216 |
| Hutchinson | 830 | Wabasso | 346 | Lake Benton | 214 |
| Springfield | 792 | Clara City | 322 | Leavenworth | 212 |
| St. Peter | 758 | Tracy | 321 | Kandiyohi | 211 |
| Manannah | 747 | West Newton Twp. | 317 | Wanda | 207 |
| Watkins | 706 | Rosen | 310 | Stewart | 206 |
| Redwood Falls | 705 | Fairfax | 303 | Gaylord | 204 |
| Olivia | 675 | Lucan | 302 | Winthrop | 204 |
| Bird Island | 638 | Comfrey | 297 | St. Leo | 202 |
| Canby | 610 | Hector | 287 | DeGraff | 196 |
| Montevideo | 602 | Tyler | 279 | Beardsley | 194 |
| Minneota | 581 | Milroy | 269 | Forest City | 193 |
| Arlington | 560 | Lake Lillian | 255 | Clontarf | 186 |
| Spicer | 559 | Franklin | 254 | Dawson | 186 |
| Benson | 558 | Ghent | 253 | Green Isle | 180 |
| Darwin | 558 | Madison | 249 | Faxon Township | 170 |
| | | Searles | 249 | | |

Figure 5.14
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Sacramental Responsibility Analysis by AFC, 2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study

| Name | Region | Priests | Sacrament Hours | Current Hours Per Priest | Reduced Hours | Reduced Hours Per Priest |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Bread of Life | 3 | 2 | 2,656 | 1,328 | 2,152 | 1,076 |
| Christ the King | 3 | 1 | 1,256 | 1,256 | 1,256 | 1,256 |
| St. Isidore the Farmer | 4 | 1 | 1,185 | 1,185 | 1,185 | 1,185 |
| Holy Family | 4 | 1 | 1,161 | 1,161 | 1,161 | 1,161 |
| Apostles Peter and Paul | 1 | 1 | 1,113 | 1,113 | 777 | 777 |
| Light of the World | 2 | 1 | 1,088 | 1,088 | 1,088 | 1,088 |
| Vine and Branches | 2 | 1 | 1,008 | 1,008 | 840 | 840 |
| Nassau - Ortonville - Rosen | 4 | 1 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 832 | 832 |
| All Saints | 5 | 1 | 981 | 981 | 981 | 981 |
| Blessed John Paul II | 6 | 3 | 2,858 | 953 | 2,690 | 897 |
| Morton - Redwood Falls | 2 | 1 | 950 | 950 | 950 | 950 |
| Good Shepherd | 6 | 2 | 1,899 | 950 | 1,563 | 782 |
| Ss. Michael, Mary, and Brendan | 1 | 1 | 944 | 944 | 776 | 776 |
| Heart of Jesus | 5 | 2 | 1,846 | 923 | 1,510 | 755 |
| North Mankato | 1 | 1 | 903 | 903 | 735 | 735 |
| Holy Cross | 1 | 4 | 3,413 | 853 | 2,909 | 727 |
| Our Lady of the Prairie | 3 | 1 | 830 | 830 | 830 | 830 |
| Good Teacher | 3 | 2 | 1,646 | 823 | 1,646 | 823 |
| Seeker of Souls | 6 | 1 | 751 | 751 | 583 | 583 |
| Watkins | 6 | 1 | 706 | 706 | 538 | 538 |
| Prince of Peace | 4 | 1 | 663 | 663 | 663 | 663 |
| Beardsley - Graceville | 4 | 1 | 624 | 624 | 624 | 624 |
| Jesus Our Living Water | 5 | 4 | 2,378 | 595 | 2,042 | 511 |
| Divine Mercy | 2 | 4 | 2,205 | 551 | 1,869 | 467 |
| Faxon - Henderson | 1 | 1 | 547 | 547 | 379 | 379 |
| Hutchinson - Stewart | 6 | 2 | 1,036 | 518 | 868 | 434 |
| Total | | 42 | 35,647 | 849 | 31,447 | 749 |

Figure 5.15
 Diocese of New Ulm Region 1
 Church Sizes and
 Mass Attendance, 2012

Source: Annual Parish Self Study

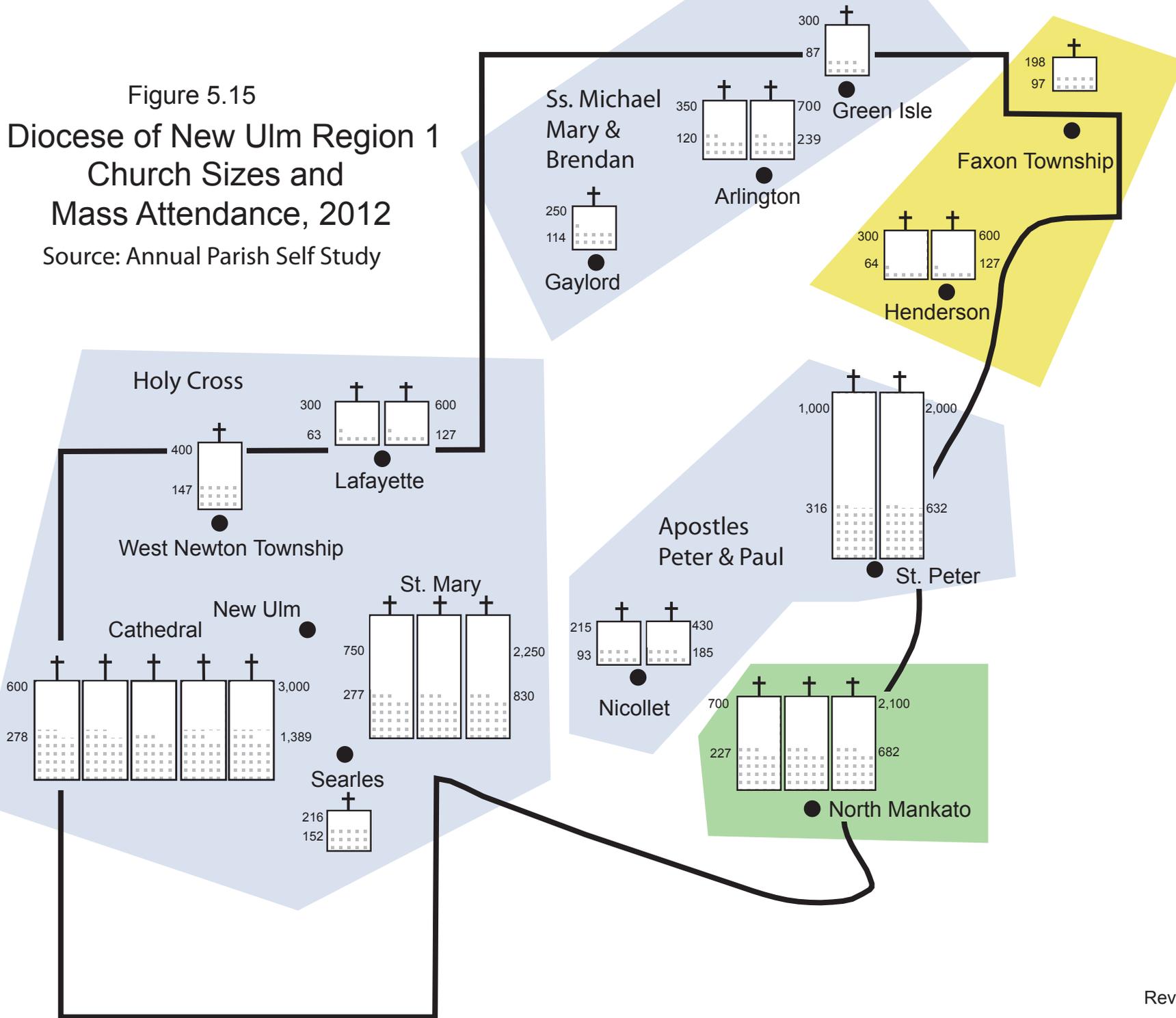


Figure 5.16
 Region 2
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Church Sizes and Mass
 Attendance, 2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study

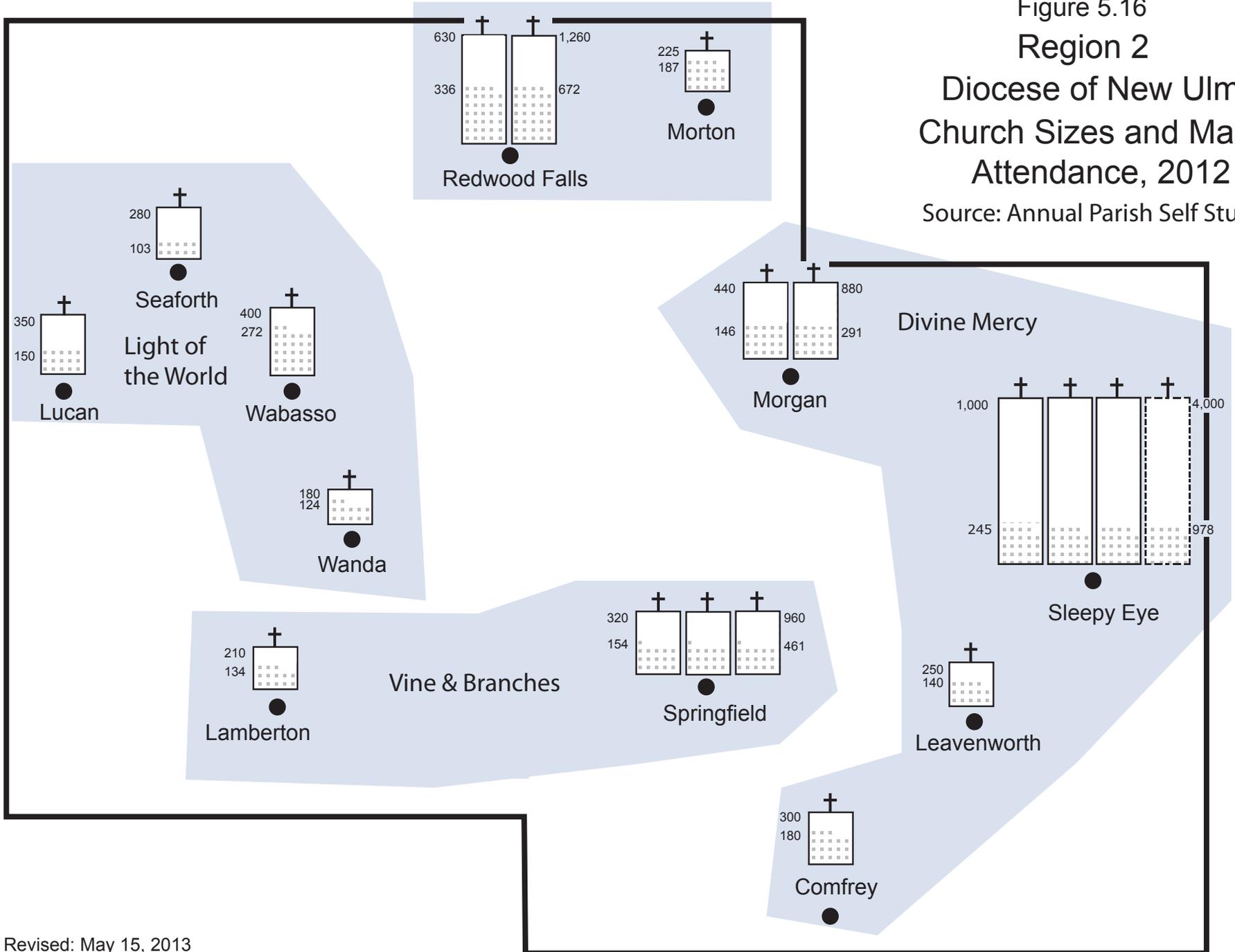
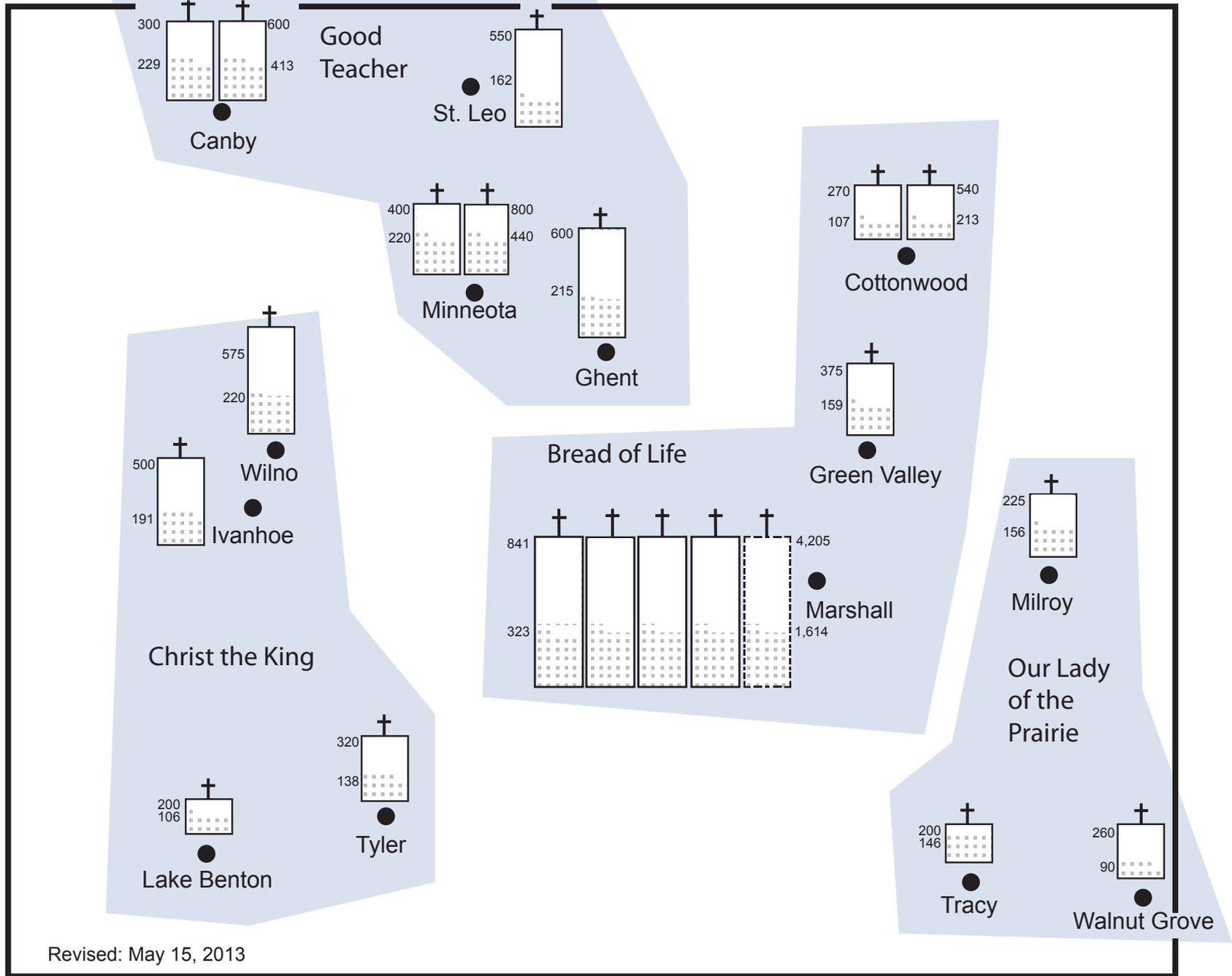


Figure 5.17
 Diocese of New Ulm Region 3 Church Sizes and Mass Attendance, 2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study



Revised: May 15, 2013

Figure 5.18
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Region 4
 Church Sizes and Mass Attendance, 2012
 Source: Annual Parish Self Study

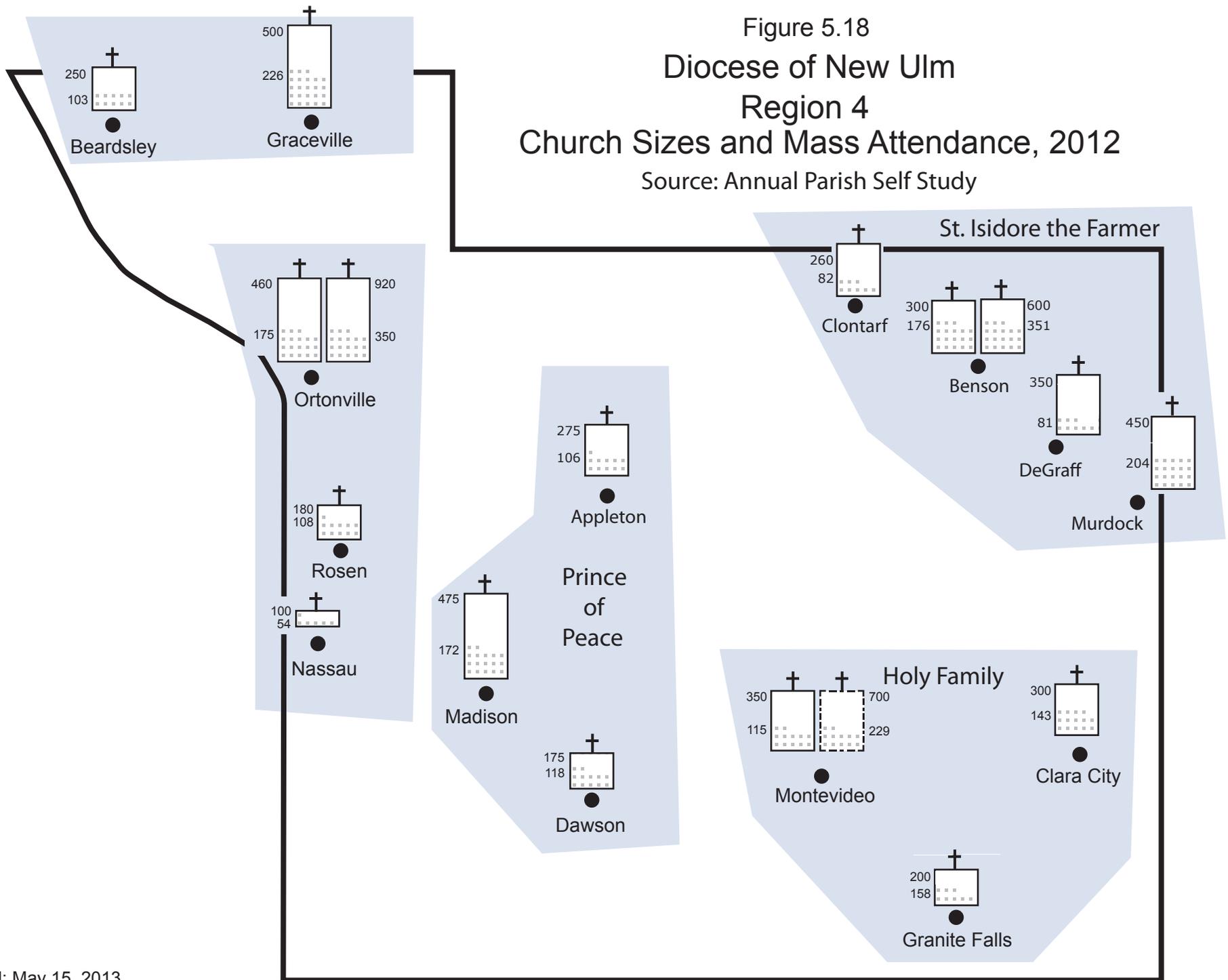


Figure 5.19
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Region 5
 Church Sizes and
 Mass Attendance, 2012

Source: Annual Parish Self Study

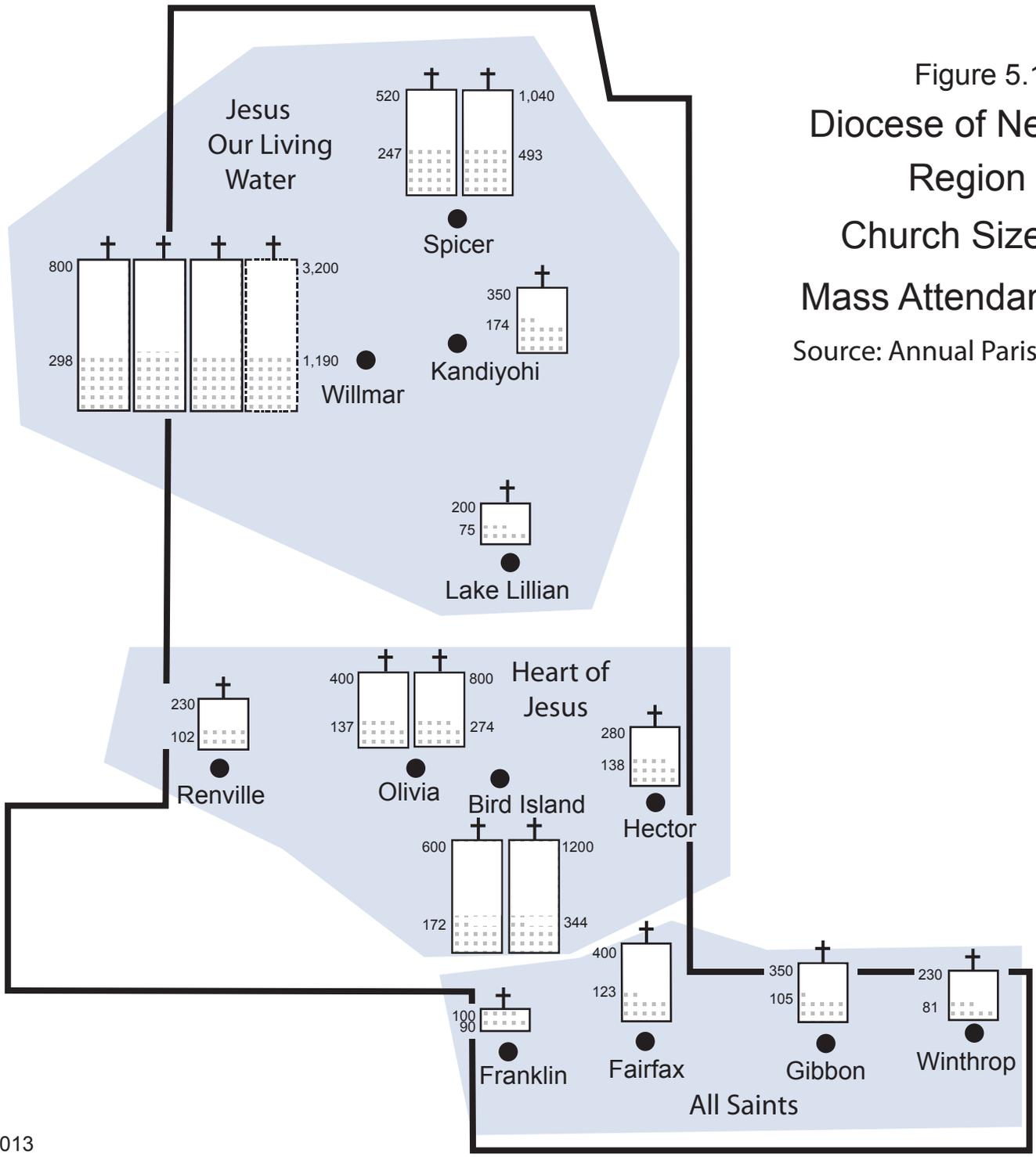


Figure 5.20
 Diocese of New Ulm
 Region 6
 Church Sizes and
 Mass Attendance, 2012

Source: Annual Parish Self Study

