



Parish, seminary and school review

Preparing to meet the needs of our transforming communities

We entrust to Mary this project, that through her intercession, we may seek only your will, Father, and surrender in loving trust to you.

Timeline

What lies ahead:

November-December 2010

Continue gathering data; develop and assess scenarios for consideration

January-February 2011

Present scenarios and gather feedback from priests, deacons, staff, parish and school leadership and parishioners

March-April 2011

Finalize a plan of action for the parishes and schools; continue review of seminary and Diocesan Pastoral Center and finalize plans

May 2011

Announce Bishop Aquila's decisions and begin implementation

What has been completed:

Months prior to April 2010

Bishop Aquila consulted with the College of Consultors, Diocesan Finance Council, Seminary Finance Council and Deans of the diocese

April 2010

Announced the discontinuation of the seminary program and the review of Fargo, West Fargo, Horace and Kindred churches and schools

May 2010

Selected TeamWorks International, Inc., as the consultant to guide the study, and expanded the study to include all Catholic schools in the diocese and the organizational structure of the Pastoral Center

June-August 2010

Gathered data

September-October 2010

Gathered and analyzed data and developed outcome guidelines

What are we learning from the information gathered so far?

Information shared in October regarding the Parish, Seminary and School Review addressed why and how the review is being done. (You can read it at www.fargodiocese.org/review or in the October issue of the diocesan newspaper, *New Earth*.) This month we will address a few of the things

we are learning from the information that is being gathered.

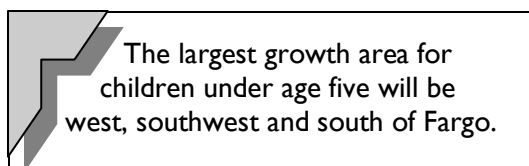
Among the many statistics being studied are:

- Demographic growth and decline by age groups and geography
- Catholicity by geography
- Financial stewardship by parish
- Parish and school membership/enrollment
- Sacramental and ministry data to determine equitable allocation of priests
- Catholic schools' cost of education, tuition and subsidy data
- Housing plat, growth and development data, and much more.

The **demographics** information tells us that the recent and projected growth and decline in the metro area requires a shifting of ministry and facilities for parishes and schools. Projections for the year 2014 show the highest growth in population is expected to occur south and west of Fargo, with a slight decline in population in some areas within the city boundaries of Fargo. For the past few years, the West Fargo Public Schools has been responding to the large increase in student population within West Fargo by adding facilities and planning for future

facilities. The Church cannot ignore this dramatic change in either its parish or Catholic schools' structures.

When reviewing projected population by age, areas within the current boundaries of Holy Cross and Sts. Anne & Joachim parishes will see the greatest increase in children by 2014. The largest growth area for children under age five will be west, southwest and south of Fargo.



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Catholicity, or the number of registered Catholic households in comparison to the total reported household units in a census block, ranges from 2 to 30% of households throughout the metro area, indicating the importance of presence and greater communication and evangelization efforts.

When reviewing **stewardship**, we found that the percentage of income donated to the Church is typically higher for those who have lower household incomes. (Household income was based on census and tax data.) At one parish, for example, those with household incomes up to \$29,000 donate 4.7% of their household income, while those with household incomes above \$80,000 donate 1.6% of their household income. At another parish, those numbers were 5.7% and 2.7%.

We continue to gather data from parishes, schools and public sources to further enlighten understanding of the current status and expected changes for the metro area of Fargo, West Fargo, Horace and Kindred.

Loving Father, help us to discover the best way to serve and to provide for the sacramental life of the faithful, and to teach our young people the gift of the Catholic faith.

Why is this review being conducted?

- To discover how we can best respond to population shifts to the south and west of Fargo and West Fargo through possible parish boundary changes, new construction, consolidation of parishes and schools, and other opportunities, including a new church in Horace and a possible new school facility in Horace and/or West Fargo
- To encourage input from our priests, diocesan and parish staff members and parishioners to ensure effective evangelization of God's people in the Fargo, West Fargo, Horace and Kindred areas
- To ensure accessibility to a Catholic school education for more children in our transforming communities
- To determine whether the current ministerial focus of church and school properties is feasible based on changing demographics or whether the focus should be changed
- To determine the best use for the Cardinal Muench Seminary facility
- To review and possibly reconfigure the organizational structure of the diocesan offices to enhance service to our priests, parishes and the faithful

Diocese of Fargo
www.fargodiocese.org/review

Numerous ideas proposed for future use of seminary facility

During an Oct. 25 meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, representatives from each of the eight deaneries (or regions) of the Diocese of Fargo presented ideas for the future use of the Cardinal Muench Seminary facility.

In April 2010, Bishop Samuel Aquila announced that the seminary program at Cardinal Muench Seminary in Fargo would be discontinued at the end of the 2010-2011 academic year due to the high cost of education and low enrollment. As part of the study regarding how the seminary property could be used in the future, Bishop Aquila asked members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, made up of lay persons, religious sisters, and clergy, to ask their local parish pastoral council members to provide feedback.

Many recommended retaining the facility as a diocesan property, although some said sale of the property should be considered if its value would be substantial enough to provide significant funding for seminarian education or other purposes.



Some suggested using it for housing for retired priests. (The diocesan Vicar for Clergy's office recently surveyed priests regarding this.) Other ideas included converting it to an assisted living center or using it as a retreat center (if it doesn't adversely impact the convents that offer retreats). Ongoing financial feasibility would have to be considered for both of these options, together with the cost of required renovations. Some suggested approaching the University of Mary to see if they may have a need for the property.

Some discussed particular attributes of the seminary facility that would be difficult to lose, such as the chapel and the library. Another possible use could be a Catholic dormitory for North Dakota State University students.

Do you have other ideas you would like considered? Please submit them using the form on the diocesan website at www.fargodiocese.org/review. Your input is an important part of this review process.

Statistics and feedback

- The number of children age five or less could increase by 29% in the Horace area in the next five years, while the number of children in that age group could see a decrease in three of our current parish boundary areas
 - Approximately 40% of Catholic households within the Diocese of Fargo reside in the Fargo metro area — the area included within this current study
 - Maps showing projected population change, Catholicity and other data are available on the Review website at www.fargodiocese.org/review.
 - You can also ask questions and provide feedback online at this website.

Prayer for the Parish, Seminary and Schools Review



Come Holy Spirit, fill our minds and hearts with your gifts, that we might know by the gift of counsel your desires for us as we plan to fruitfully bear the mission of Jesus Christ and his bride, the Church, to the society we serve as it grows, develops and changes. Father, help us to discern your plan for our schools and parishes, that, with Mary, we might receive, embrace and surrender to your will with hearts of courage, trust and hope. Amen.