



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 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 of Fargo and the organizational structure of the Diocesan Pastoral Center

June-August 2010

Gathered data from churches, schools and communities

September-October 2010

Analyzed data and developed guidelines for possible outcomes

What lies ahead:

November-December 2010

Develop and assess various scenarios for consideration

January-March 2011

Gather feedback from priests, deacons, staff, parish and school leadership and parishioners and reflect upon that feedback

April-May 2011

Develop a plan of action and complete the review

June 2011

Announce Bishop Aquila's decisions and begin implementation

Shifts in demographics and development prompt review that will help the Church respond to changes and look to the future

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. The loss of the seminary program is difficult for past and seminarians people who supported throughout CMS played the history and we are



current and the many have the seminary the years. a vital role in of the diocese thankful to God for the gift it has been. This change, however, as with every change God places before us, provides an opportunity. Today we are called to look at the seminary property through a new lens, and to ask the question: How can the seminary facility best serve the faithful of the diocese in the future?

There is also a need to review how the Catholic churches and schools in the Fargo metro area (Fargo, West Fargo, Horace and Kindred) should respond to changing demographics. Everyone who has lived in these communities in the past few years has seen the dramatic growth that has taken place, primarily to the south and west of Fargo. We must look at how we can effectively carry out the mission of the Church in light of these changes in our communities.

Statistics and data will help shape these decisions. TeamWorks International, Inc., has been retained to assist us with gathering and analyzing church, school, community and demographic data and forecasts. TeamWorks International has helped the Archdiocese of St.

Paul/Minneapolis and several other Catholic dioceses conduct similar reviews.

The study will help all of us understand the current demographics of the area and the expected changes that lie ahead.

It will provide the framework for an honest and in depth review of our current parish and school facilities and organizational structures and help us develop a comprehensive plan for educational and parochial ministry for the future.

Through the commitment, planning, building and sacrifices of the faithful before us, we have been gifted in faith, facilities, and Catholic life in our parishes and schools.

Serving the common good by serving the metro area in unity

In a September letter to priests, Bishop Samuel Aquila wrote about the review.

“Examining and analyzing these developments, from demographics to our own ecclesial structures, will help us to identify how the needs of the Fargo metro area have changed and how we can effectively plan and carry out the mission of the Church in light of these developments. This all serves the common good of this local Church as our parishes and institutions can be structured to work in cooperative and collaborative ways and serve the metro area in unity.”

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 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

How will my church or school be affected?

To be able to express God's love to others, we must first receive his love and develop a personal relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit through prayer and reception of the sacraments.

How could our churches and schools, then, effectively share and teach the Catholic faith if we don't, from time to time, also take an in depth look at them — their facilities, organizational structures, strengths and weaknesses?

Through this review of the metro area, we will see projections for the future of our communities and be better able to work together in our churches and Catholic schools to meet future needs. What we learn through this assessment will help us understand how to change together with our transforming communities.

In his September column in the diocesan newspaper, *New Earth*, Bishop Aquila wrote, "This study has been prompted because of extensive growth and change in the population within the

Fargo, West Fargo, Horace and Kindred areas, the need to develop a new parish in the southwest area of the metro and the goal of finding a sustainable fruitful mission for Cardinal Muench Seminary."

In a second *New Earth* article, Bishop Aquila said, "The objective of this analysis is to design and develop a configuration of Catholic parishes and schools in the entire metro area which will best meet

the sacramental, pastoral and educational needs of the communities involved in the study and, ultimately, all communities within the diocese."

In the coming months, Bishop Aquila, in consultation with TeamWorks International, will develop multiple institutional scenarios based on the information gathered. These scenarios will be shared and feedback will be requested.

"Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each scenario will be a critical part of this process," he said. Bishop Aquila is hopeful the laity will be active participants in this evaluation.

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What is being studied?

Among the many things being reviewed are:

- Demographic developments and forecasts
- Location of churches and schools in relation to other churches/schools and residential/industrial properties
- Current and potential membership/enrollment
- Number of priests needed at each facility
- Spiritual care needs at hospitals and care facilities
- Expansion potential
- Flooding issues

What can I do to help?

The faithful are asked to:

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as information is reviewed and decisions are made
- Participate by providing input at parish and school meetings
- Ask questions and provide feedback through the diocesan website. You'll find a comment submission form at www.fargodiocese.org/review. Although we will not be able to personally respond to every comment, all comments will be read and considered.