

Foundation of the Vision – Three Legs of the Stool

The foundation for our vision is based on the Bishop's three key priorities. These have often been described metaphorically as the three legs of the stool that will support our vision.

1. Catholic Identity and Catholic Pride – By confidently promoting and integrating Catholicism into all we do, we will provide a living witness to our faith that is the bedrock of our Church.
2. Catholic Formation – Strong, consistent and lifelong formation is a key underpinning for building our lives in Christ. Strong formation encourages and deepens evangelization and contributes toward an improved appreciation and experience of:
 - a. A personal encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior
 - b. The Eucharist as the source and summit of our Christian lives
 - c. The intimate connection between faith and life
 - d. The dignity of the human person and the gift of human relationships
 - e. The social teachings of the Church
 - f. The role of the Church in continuing the ministry of Jesus
3. Catholic Development – it is critical that we have sufficient financial resources to carry out the mission of the Church. This priority is especially important given that many of our parishes, schools, and other organizations are struggling financially or lack adequate funds to achieve their full potential.

Vision

Our vision is a declaration of our aspirations and our guide for the future of the Catholic Church in New Hampshire. It is built on the Bishop's three key priorities discussed above and is composed of our mission, guiding principles, and picture of the future. Additionally, we have established five strategic priorities to address key issues and support the implementation of the vision.

Mission

***To bring a New Hope and the Good News of Jesus Christ
through our Catholic faith
to all in New Hampshire***

Our mission is the purpose, the goal, and the essential reason for our existence and serves to focus our efforts. All our actions should contribute toward this mission.

At its very core, our mission is one of evangelization: to bring the Good News of Jesus into every human situation.

The “*New Hope*” reflects our desire to help everyone, regardless of their status or situation, to realize that Jesus Christ is the only true way to peace and that His love for them is without limit – no matter their circumstances. This “*Hope*” is Christ, and heaven is our ultimate goal for all! The term “*New*” reflects the Bishop's desire to rededicate ourselves and renew our energies on this essential work.

With this “*Hope*,” we will be able to understand and digest “*the Good News of Jesus Christ*” and all that this encompasses. We know that “the Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the center of the Good News...” (CCC 571).

“*Through our Catholic Faith*” demonstrates that our mission will always be directed by the one true Church as founded by Jesus Christ – by Holy Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium.

Lastly, our audience is “*all in New Hampshire*.” We are called to evangelize and make disciples of all people. Accordingly, our emphasis is to invite and encourage every person within our state to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ, irrespective of their socio-economic situation, wealth, cultural background, religion or status – everyone! We accomplish this through formation, sharing our faith, invitation, service, and promoting Gospel values.

Guiding Principles

Our four guiding principles represent the standards and values that dictate how we will operate throughout the Catholic Church in New Hampshire. These principles apply to all individuals and organizations, including the Chancery, parishes, schools, and other Catholic organizations. They are the unwavering and unchanging norms meant to guide our behaviors, actions, and decisions.

1. *We will be guided by the Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church*

To be successful, we must be authentically Catholic. Accordingly, it stands to reason that everything we do will be based on Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church without deviation.

2. *We will instill a strong sense of Catholic identity and Catholic pride in all our work*

We know that our most successful parishes, schools, and other organizations have a strong Catholic identity woven into the fabric of how they function. They provide an excellent example for us all.

3. *We will deliver our mission with a spirit of love, compassion, respect, joy, and collaboration*

The love of Christ is at the heart of this guiding principle as we are called to love each other as He has loved us. With His life as our example, we can truly have the love and respect for one another that will allow us to deliver our mission together, as a team, with collaboration and joy.

4. *We will operate with uncompromising integrity and the highest moral, ethical, and professional standards*

As followers of Jesus Christ, this is expected from everyone. Furthermore, living these principles on a daily basis will go a long way toward building the trust, confidence, and support of the people of New Hampshire – both Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Picture of the Future

A thriving, vibrant Catholic Community in New Hampshire

As we put our mission and guiding principles into action, we are dedicated to creating an exciting future for our Diocese.

Strategic Priorities and Action Teams

We have established five strategic priorities designed to help deliver the mission over the coming years as we build toward our picture of the future. For each priority, an action team has been formed to develop recommendations and spearhead the implementation of initiatives to achieve our objectives.

1. Develop strong and consistent Catholic formation in our parishes, schools, and home schools

As discussed above, one of the Bishop's key priorities is strong, consistent and lifelong formation. Strong formation is a necessary foundation to achieve our mission and gives us the background, knowledge and grace to bring the *New Hope and the Good News of Jesus Christ through our Catholic Faith to all in New Hampshire*.

The Faith Formation Action Team is charged with delivering this goal and is led by Mary Ellen Mahon, Cabinet Secretary for Faith Formation. The cross-functional team consists of pastors, lay religious leaders, representatives from Schools and home schools, and Diocesan staff. Included in the scope of the team's responsibilities are to evaluate opportunities to share resources among our schools and parishes, engage home school families, and support Hispanic and other multicultural communities.

The role of this team was recently bolstered on May 8, 2017 by Bishop Libasci's announcement of the "*Restore•Renew•Proclaim the Hope that is Christ*" initiative to strengthen lifelong faith formation and to renew sacramental preparation.

2. Provide our parishes and schools with a stable financial foundation

Consistent with our Bishop's key priorities, it is critical that we have sufficient financial resources to carry out the mission of the Church in New Hampshire.

To deliver this goal, the Finance Process Improvement Team has been formed, led by Mac Bryant, our Finance Officer and Cabinet Secretary for Temporalities. Members include pastors, school representatives, cemetery personnel, community financial leaders, and Diocesan staff.

The team will be evaluating current parish, school, and cemetery business models, identifying best practices, and determining capital and other funding needs. Development will be an important part of this initiative, as we work to expand our fundraising capabilities in support of our parishes and schools.

3. Address the priest shortage issue

Currently, we have approximately 80 active diocesan priests. Assuming our priests retire at age 72, we will require 60 new ordinations over the next 20 years to maintain the current number of priests (or about 3 per year). To address this critical issue, a Priest Shortage Action team has been formed under the leadership of Father Gary Belliveau, Pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Portsmouth. The team, consisting of 10 pastors, is focused on significantly increasing the number of active diocesan priests on a long-term basis, as well as recommending short-term measures that can help increase or maintain the number of priests in our diocese.

Strategic Priorities and Action Teams (continued)

4. Develop leaders and build capacity in our parishes, schools and administration

We know that great parishes and great schools have great leaders. In support of this priority, an action team has been established to provide the infrastructure to help form strong leaders and expand our leadership capabilities. The team is led by Diane Quinlan, Chancellor, and its members include clergy, school personnel, a representative of Catholic Charities, and Diocesan staff. The members are currently developing a comprehensive roadmap, tailored to our needs, that will not only provide training, but also include on-going mentoring, support, and implementation assistance.

5. Renew and reinvigorate our Catholic schools

Despite the steady and significant decline in both enrollment and the number of our Catholic schools, we know our schools are vital to the mission of the Church and our community. Our Catholic schools have always been places of hope, inspiration and success. Catholic education promotes lifelong commitment to faith, prayer and virtue, a strong understanding of social justice, and a greater numbers of religious vocations. They develop our future Catholic leaders through strong formation, a robust academic foundation, service to others, and a solid infusion of joy and the good news of Jesus Christ!

In line with this priority, Dave Thibault, superintendent, and our Catholic Schools Office is developing a new five-year strategic plan. Their mission is

To live out the Bishop's mission of bringing hope and the good news of Jesus Christ to all by making Catholic schools accessible, available, and affordable to any family that desires it.

Actions already underway include:

- Increased emphasis on Catholic identity
- Expanded enrollment initiatives in each of our schools
- Streamlined and seamless matriculation from PreK to high school graduation
- New schools in underserved areas (e.g. the North country)
- Leadership training and support for our school principals and other leaders (working with our Leadership Development Action Team)
- Manchester area initiatives that include the formation of Cardinal Lacroix Academy and focus on making Trinity a flagship school for the diocese
- New advancement models and other actions to deliver financial viability for our schools (working with the Financial Success Action Team)

It is imperative that we all work together, across the diocese, to renew and reinvigorate Catholic education in New Hampshire – in so many ways, it is our future!

We entrust our vision to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and pray that through His grace and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit we will achieve our goal of building a thriving, vibrant Catholic Community in New Hampshire according to His will.