

2. Organizational Effectiveness

How do staff, clergy, women religious, and the Catholic community perceive the Diocese and the effectiveness of its programs and services? Is the Diocese positioned to manage the challenges of the 21st century?

Key Findings

Leadership & Management

- Bishop Clark is considered a good spiritual leader who understands the issues facing the Diocese. Many would like him to become more visible in the Catholic community.
- Most staff and clergy, and many in the community, have a negative perception of Diocesan management. Many feel that Diocesan leaders do not respond quickly enough to major issues.
- The Diocese is generally perceived as not having a clear mission.

Meeting Needs

- Most feel that the Diocese is doing a good job in serving the needs of the Catholic community. (But of staff and clergy, only 17% think the needs of parishioners outside Monroe County are being met.)
- Forty percent of staff and clergy think the overall quality of the Pastoral Center services is high; 25% disagree. Pastors feel that the costs of services provided by the Pastoral Center are too high.
- Many staff and clergy feel that the Center does not understand the individual needs of parishes. Parishioners are unfamiliar with the services offered by the Pastoral Center.

Communications

- There is a consistent opinion from all segments surveyed that the Diocese has a severe communications problem. Lack of a clear mission, inadequate communications from the Pastoral Center to the parishes, lack of visibility of the Bishop, ineffective internal communications, ineffective communications relative to the school restructuring, lack of awareness of many of the services offered, and misunderstanding of the relationship between parishes and the pastoral Center were commonly mentioned concerns.
- Only a minority of the Catholic community and key donors feel that the community has enough input into Church decisions that affect them. Less than half of the staff and clergy are satisfied with their level of involvement in decisions which may impact them. Consultative bodies are thought to have little or no influence on Diocesan leaders.

Recommendations

Strategic Planning

- Coordinate planning activities so that there is a clear understanding of how they will come together to form one clearly focused, mission centered plan for the future. Share findings from this study with all planning groups. Integrate the work of the various committees. Use an outside consultant as liaison to the planning groups, insuring coordination of efforts.
- Issue periodic consolidated progress reports.

Communications & Decision-Making

- Improving communications should be an integral part of the overall strategic plan.
- Develop an annual public relations plan including public visibility and education, use of technology, internal communications, training.
- Develop a mission statement and communicate it. There should be daily evidence of the mission at work, and everyone should know how what they are doing ties in.
- Involve laity in more decision making opportunities.
- For controversial or emotional issues (e.g., school closings), develop a communications plan as part of the overall strategy. Solicit input early in the process to be better prepared for opposition.

Internal Organizational Structure

- The Pastoral Center may have to undergo reorganization. Review the structure of the Pastoral Center, how it interfaces with parishes, the services offered, its hierarchical structure, and job functions to determine the optimal structure to achieve the goals.

Actions Planned or Under Way

Strategic Planning

- A three-year "Synod" a diocesan-wide planning process, has begun. The Synod staff and commission have received results of the Winters' study. Commitment to Ministry process, and other studies in preparation for their work.
- A Diocesan mission and goals statement for 1991-1993 has been finalized (see next page) and is being communicated. Pastoral Office and divisional mission statements will be revised accordingly. The Synod will likely revamp the statement.
- There is a continuing effort in the diocesan budgeting process to "sunset" programs that have met their objectives. This effort is spearheaded by the Diocesan Budget Committee. This year the committee also has new criteria for prioritizing objectives.

Communications & Decision-Making

- A full-time professional communications director has been hired.
- A Communications Audit and three-year Action Plan has been completed and will be revised in light of the new mission statement. With completion of the Winters survey, a comprehensive two-way public relations program is being developed with the help of the Stewardship Council, Priests' Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Strategies for improved communication within Pastoral Office, between Pastoral Office and parishes, and between the Church and the Catholic Community are being developed.

- A Stewardship Council has been created to provide a significant volunteer opportunity for leading Catholics to advise the Bishop and serve as trustees of the Diocesan Foundation. A Council Development committee has been established and is working to guide the Development staff and to advocate for sound development practice.
- A telecommunications program has been developed.
- A new phone system has been installed to make it easier to reach Pastoral Center offices, an 800 number has been added for parish staff in outlying areas.
- The Priests' Council is becoming more involved in decision-making.
- A quarterly report to Catholic community leaders and a revised internal newsletter will begin this winter.

Organizational Structure

- Based on the provisional mission statement, the organization of the Pastoral Office will be reviewed this year. Activities are being categorized according to the four specific goals set in the mission statement. The results of the Synod will also most likely call for structural changes. Structural change need not wait for completion of the Synod, but any internal changes will be made in view of the Synod's progress.
- Initiate teambuilding programs among staff and clergy.

... "Diocese must first articulate a strong mission that the majority of Catholics can buy into, and organize its functions and activities to be seen as effective and relevant in today's social climate."