

Stewards of Hope: A Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Salina

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INTRODUCTION

Duc in altum (“Put out into the deep!”) (Lk. 5:4)

The Lord calls the Catholic Diocese of Salina to conversion, communion, solidarity, service and evangelization. Carefully discerning God’s grace in the present moment, we have adopted a strategic pastoral planning process.

This Pastoral Plan is an affirmation of hope. We know well the challenges our diocese faces: a scarcity of clergy and trained lay leaders, shrinking small-town parish communities, slender financial resources, and the growing secularization even of rural culture. Confident in God’s promises and fidelity, we prayerfully dedicate ourselves to stewardship as a way of life, to the worship of God, and to the spread of a civilization of love.

The Catholic Church exists for our salvation, and ultimately for the salvation of all. Its mission is universal: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt. 28: 19-20). The Diocese of Salina, which embodies the Catholic Church in north central and northwest Kansas, shares this great mission.

As faithful Catholics, we obey what Jesus named the two greatest commandments: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:37-39). Grateful to God for His abiding love, we share this love with our families, with the Catholic community and with all the world.

There is nothing easy about the love Scripture describes. It is as demanding as Jesus Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross, an act of love offered for our redemption. This love is entirely selfless; it seeks the good of the beloved. In a world ruptured by violence and stained with sin, love is balm for humanity’s hurts. It is God’s final response to evil. In

his first encyclical, *God Is Love*, Pope Benedict XVI says: “Love of God and love of neighbor form a single commandment..... Love grows through love” (18). To follow Christ is to imitate in our modest way his example. We draw strength from his love, using that strength for good. In this way, a light spreads like dawn from Jesus’ cross and flows around us, so we in turn become light for others.

The Catholic people of north central and northwest Kansas have a long history. The Diocese of Salina (Concordia), founded in 1887, was established soon after the opening of the American West, one of humanity’s great leaps of faith. Creating community was often a struggle on the plains. Yet our ancestors succeeded in establishing a strong, stable local Church that remains youthful and energetic more than 120 years later. The first Catholics in this land helped build their own parish churches, often quarrying native limestone and hauling it in wagons to the construction site. As good stewards of God’s gifts in the 21st century, we must devote time, talent and treasure to strengthen our parishes and diocese, and to reach out in love to others. Like the sculpted figures in procession on the front of Sacred Heart Cathedral, we must walk together, sharing burdens, sharing joys.

The episcopal motto of our spiritual leader, Bishop Paul S. Coakley, is taken from the Gospel according to St. Luke (5:4). Jesus tells his disciples: *Duc in altum* (“Put out into the deep!”). This bold saying calls the Catholics of the Diocese of Salina to face today’s challenges with confidence. Pope John Paul II, addressing himself to the Church Universal, said: “A new millennium is opening before the Church like a vast ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ. The Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, is at work even today. We need discerning eyes to see this and, above all, a generous heart to become the instruments of his work” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 58).

The Diocese of Salina looks to the future with this same hope, sure of the Holy Spirit’s guidance. We wish to become instruments of God’s love in the world, to keep the faith

vibrantly alive and growing. We submit this *Stewards of Hope* as a committed Catholic community and offer fervent prayer for its success.

PREAMBLE

Stewards of Hope aims to organize and inspire our people at the diocesan, parish, family, and personal levels to adopt a stewardship way of life. Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.¹ As in the parable of the Good Samaritan, we recognize as our neighbor anyone who needs our help--family member, parishioner, co-worker, friend, stranger.

All we have, including life itself, is a gift from God. We are thankful for our faith, our strength of character, our capacity to love, our sensitivity to others' needs, our willingness to serve the common good, our intelligence and aptitude for learning, our generous hearts, our community life, and the skills and talents that enable us to be good servants of the Lord and one another. As Christian stewards, we pray for the strength to use these gifts well.

Receiving and sharing God's love creates the Catholic community of the Diocese of Salina. We express and realize this communion every time we celebrate the Eucharist. We embrace an ecclesiology and a spirituality of communion. Through Baptism, we are bound together in the intimate communion of the life of the Holy Trinity. Therefore, we treat one another as members of the Body of Christ, as brothers and sisters. We offer one another true friendship, sharing joys and sufferings, recognizing in others those virtues that benefit the whole community.

Priests, deacons, religious women and men, lay ministers and all the people of the diocese support and serve one another in our different states of life (Eph. 4:11-12). We do so, moreover, not just in our own parishes, but across the diocese, from Manhattan to Goodland, and in all the small towns and open country between. We strive always to be one in faith, one in hope, one in Christian charity.

¹ We gratefully adopt this definition of stewardship which the Diocese of Wichita developed in 2008.

FIRST PHASE: THE SPIRITUALITY OF PARISH LIFE (2011)

Section One: The Call to Holiness

The Lord said to Moses, “Speak to the whole...community and tell them: Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy” (Lv. 19:2).

This is the will of God, your holiness (1 Thes. 4:3).

Conversion leads to fraternal communion, because it enables us to understand that Christ is the head of the Church, his Mystical Body; it urges solidarity, because it makes us aware that whatever we do for others, especially for the poorest, we do for Christ himself. Conversion, therefore, fosters a new life, in which there is no separation between faith and works in our daily response to the universal call to holiness. In order to speak of conversion, the gap between faith and life must be bridged. Where this gap exists, Christians are such in name only (John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, 26).

Goal: We will promote the call to holiness among all Catholics.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Bishop will prepare and distribute a pastoral letter on the universal call to holiness, explaining its implications for individual Catholics and for the parish, which exists to spread the Gospel through word, worship and witness.
2. Staff will develop a resource to help parishes study, understand and act on the Bishop’s pastoral letter.
3. Staff will develop an annual/biannual conference promoting the universal call to holiness, and the riches of the Catholic faith and spirituality, which are available to all.
4. The diocese will explore ways to make spiritual direction more accessible to pastoral leaders.
5. The Offices of Religious Education and Catholic Schools will help ensure that religious education, both in the parishes and in Catholic schools, appropriately emphasizes every Catholic’s call to holiness.
6. The Office of Worship will develop a resource explaining how faithful participation in the Mass and sacraments inspires holiness of life. The Office will stand ready to advise clergy on how best to use this resource.
7. Staff will identify and provide parishes with information regarding mission speakers, spiritual renewal programs, parish-based retreat experiences, and other spiritual formation opportunities.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. The parish, or a group of parishes, will establish a schedule of regular annual/biannual parish missions.
2. The parish is encouraged to actively promote available spiritual renewal experiences such as Christ Renews His Parish, Renew 2000, That Man Is You, Endow and Cursillo as expressions of the stewardship of time.
3. Using the Bishop's pastoral letter, the pastor and parish pastoral council will discuss the phrase "pursuing holiness" as it applies to individual Catholics and their parish as a whole. They can then discern and implement practical ways (e.g., inspiring liturgies, personal and family devotions, Marian devotions, prayer and Bible study groups, retreats, missions, renewal programs, service opportunities) in which parishioners can respond to the universal call to holiness.

Section Two: Stewardship as a Way of Life

As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.... [W]hoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever (1 Peter 4:10-11).

Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ leads naturally to the practice of stewardship. These linked realities; discipleship and stewardship, then make up the fabric of a Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 2002, p. 14).

Goal: We will adopt stewardship as the way of life expressing our vocation as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Office of Stewardship will provide training and formation to diocesan staff and personnel on the principles of Christian stewardship, so all understand that it encompasses time, talent and treasure.
2. The Office of Stewardship will provide training and resources to help parishes adopt and faithfully pursue a stewardship way of life.
3. The Office of Stewardship will provide ongoing opportunities for education and formation, including electronic and printed materials, retreat speakers, conferences, and access to resources from other dioceses and from experts in the field.
4. The Office of Stewardship will serve as a clearinghouse enabling the parishes of the diocese to make the best use of print and electronic tools, share ideas, solve problems, and implement best practices.
5. The Offices of Religious Education, Catholic Schools, and Stewardship will provide stewardship materials for Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. They will also offer Catholic Charities, Catholic schools and parish religious education programs suggestions for stewardship-oriented service projects.
6. Staff are encouraged to view their particular ministries through the lens of Christian stewardship, creating programming that supports an integrated vision of discipleship for the people of the diocese.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. The parish, or group of parishes, will create and maintain an active Stewardship Committee to help the community grow and mature in the stewardship way of life.
2. The Stewardship Committee will conduct a yearly stewardship renewal process for the parish or group of parishes, inviting parishioners to make concrete commitments of time, talent, and treasure.

3. The pastor, the Parish Life Coordinator (if any), the parish pastoral council, and the Stewardship Committee will steadily stress the holistic nature of stewardship and its intimate relationship to Christian discipleship, and will encourage regular use of the Stewardship Prayer.
4. The Stewardship Committee, in collaboration with the Director or Coordinator of Religious Education, is encouraged to offer regular formation opportunities to children, youth, and adults to help the community deepen its understanding of stewardship.

Section Three: The Lord's Day and the Sunday Eucharist

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.... Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him (Jn. 6:54-56).

On the first day of the week when we gathered to break bread, Paul spoke to them... (Acts 20:7). “

By a tradition handed down from the apostles, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day; with good reason this, then, bears the name of the Lord's Day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place so that, by hearing the word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God... (Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 106).

The Sunday Eucharist...is...the privileged place where communion is ceaselessly proclaimed and nurtured. Precisely through sharing in the Eucharist, the Lord's Day also becomes the Day of the Church, when [it] can effectively exercise [its] role as the sacrament of unity (John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 35-36).

Goal: We will reaffirm, against the rising tide of secular culture, the importance of the Lord's Day and the Sunday Eucharist as the heart of parish life and the source and summit of our lives as Catholics. We will promote the renewal of sacramental practice, especially the Sacrament of Penance.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Office of Worship will alert priests and deacons to online and print resources useful for preparing homilies emphasizing the importance of the Lord's Day and Sunday Eucharist, and of frequent reception of the sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Penance.
2. The Office of Worship will advise parishes on practical ways of keeping holy the Lord's Day and Holy Days of Obligation (e.g., encouraging parishioners to avoid unnecessary work and shopping, stressing the uniqueness of Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation in posters and bulletin announcements, promoting household devotions, scheduling family-friendly and parish social events).
3. The Office of Worship will help pastors identify and use best methods for invigorating parish liturgies.
4. The Office of Worship will increase training for parish liturgical ministers (extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, lectors, musicians, etc.).

5. Through its training and resources, the Office of Stewardship is encouraged to show that keeping the Lord's Day holy is an expression of the stewardship of time, talent and treasure.
6. The Office of Communications will assist the Bishop to prepare articles for the *Register* and the diocesan website that emphasize the importance of the Lord's Day and Sunday Eucharist for Catholic life.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. The parish, or group of parishes, is strongly encouraged to establish and maintain an active Liturgy Committee to schedule and invigorate worship throughout the liturgical year.
2. The priests and deacons will preach on the Sunday Eucharist and the Lord's Day as necessary nourishment for Catholic life in the face of secular culture.
3. The parish pastoral council, mindful of its responsibility to strengthen the parish's spiritual life, is encouraged to regularly devote time to evaluating and improving the joyful and reverent observance of the Lord's Day, based on suggestions from the Office of Worship, the Stewardship Office and the Liturgy Committee, and on the parish's (or group of parishes') own experience of worship, participation and hospitality.
4. The parish is encouraged to cooperate with local churches and organizations to promote public acceptance of Sunday as a day of rest and religious observance.
5. The parish is strongly encouraged to help its people deepen appreciation for the Mass and the richness of the Church's liturgy by offering regular opportunities for Eucharistic adoration and the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.
6. Priests are strongly encouraged to preach and teach regularly on the importance of the Sacrament of Penance and encourage its frequent celebration by making it available regularly at convenient times.

Section Four: Evangelization: Proclaiming the Gospel in Word and Witness

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age (Mt. 28: 19-20).

Our hope is always essentially also hope for others; only thus is it truly hope for me too. As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking “How can I save myself?” We should also ask “What can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them too the star of hope may rise?” Then I will have done my utmost for my own personal salvation as well (Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 48).

Goal: We will proclaim the Gospel of God’s faithful love revealed in Jesus Christ within our own parish communities and to the wider world, bearing witness to hope even as our rural communities face rapid cultural and demographic change.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. Staff will develop a resource to help parishes study, understand and act on the Bishop’s pastoral letter (see diocesan objective #1, Section 1) to become lights to their local communities, and to contribute to the larger society by generous financial support of Catholic missions and works of justice and charity, especially those of the Holy Father.
2. The Office of Evangelization (not yet established) will review national programs for reconciling inactive Catholics (e.g., Landings, Catholics Come Home, Catholics Returning Home, Awakening Faith). The Office will recommend an appropriate program or programs, and offer support as needed.
3. The Office of Evangelization (not yet established) will review national programs from such organizations as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association for evangelizing unchurched people. The Office will recommend an appropriate program or programs, and offer support as needed.
4. The Office of Propagation of the Faith will promote mission awareness through the annual Mission Cooperative Plan, through understanding and use of the Mission Rosary, and through the establishment of a Mission Advisory Board.
5. The Offices of Propagation of the Faith, Evangelization (not yet established), Religious Education and Catholic Schools are encouraged to help ensure that religious education, both in the parishes and in Catholic schools, appropriately emphasizes evangelization through word, worship and witness.

6. The Office of Worship and the Clergy Continuing Education Committee are encouraged to offer assistance to priests and deacons in effective preaching and homily preparation, to provide access to online and print resources, and to periodically treat themes of evangelization and mission in clergy continuing education sessions.
7. Through its training and resources, the Office of Stewardship is encouraged to show that evangelization is an expression of the stewardship of time, talent and treasure.
8. The Office of Youth Ministry is encouraged to help young Catholics in parishes and campus ministries understand and live out the Gospel message, developing new programs as necessary or adapting one offered in other dioceses or on the national level.
9. The Office of Communications will assist the Bishop to proclaim the Gospel in the Catholic and secular media. His topics will range from Catholic practice--the Sacrament of Penance, for example--to questions of public policy.
10. The Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs is encouraged to work with other churches and religious bodies on observance of the National Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and on common efforts to witness the Gospel message.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. The pastor, in consultation with the parish pastoral council, will study the Bishop's pastoral letter (see diocesan objective #1, Section 1), discerning how the parish, as part of the diocese and the Universal Church, can proclaim the Gospel effectively through word, worship and witness. They will use the letter as a basis for planning.
2. The parish, or group of parishes, is strongly encouraged to establish and maintain an active Evangelization Committee to study and implement the goals set forth in the USCCB document *Go and Make Disciples*.
3. Through an active RCIA process and other means (personal invitation, public advertisement), the parish or a group of parishes will offer the blessing of membership in the Catholic Church to all.
4. The Evangelization Committee (if any) will launch a program that graciously invites inactive Catholics to return to the practice of the faith. In doing so, it may seek the support and cooperation of such organizations as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic women's groups.
5. The parish or a group of parishes is encouraged to advertise liturgies and other programs, and will actively evangelize in the local media (TV, radio, print).

SECOND PHASE: FORMATION FOR MINISTRY (2012)

Section Five: Vocations to the Priesthood, Diaconate, and Consecrated Life

At the sight of the crowds, [Jesus'] heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest" (Mt. 9:36-38).

Certainly, a generous commitment is needed—above all through insistent prayer to the Lord of the harvest (cf. Mt 9:38)—in promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life.... In some traditionally Christian countries, the situation has become dramatic, due to changed social circumstances and a religious disinterest resulting from the consumer and secularist mentality. There is a pressing need to implement an extensive plan of vocational promotion, based on personal contact and involving parishes, schools and families... (John Paul II, *Novo Millenio Ineunte*, 47).

Goal I: We will engage Catholics in promoting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated life in our homes, parishes and Catholic schools.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Director of Vocations will work with the Bishop, clergy, teachers, catechists, parents and Catholic organizations to identify and recruit candidates for the priesthood. He will assist in and cooperate with the recruitment of candidates to religious life. He will utilize such programs as National Vocation Awareness Week, Andrew Dinners, Quo Vadis retreats, the Encounter with God's Call weekend, and will make school visits. He will also attend the Kansas Catholic College Students Convention and such programs as Totus Tuus and Prayer and Action to meet young people and foster vocation awareness.
2. The Director of Vocations will meet regularly with seminary personnel and diocesan seminarians to supervise seminarians' training and assist in their human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation.
3. The Diaconate Office will identify and recruit candidates for the diaconate, and will provide a three-year curriculum for their formation and training.
4. The Bishop will monitor the progress of seminarians and diaconal candidates toward ordination, offering appropriate encouragement and assistance.
5. The Director of Vocations will help parishes and groups of parishes establish active, effective Vocations Committees, offering guidance and resources as necessary.
6. The Director of Vocations is encouraged to collaborate with the local Serra Club and help establish new chapters to assist in fostering, promoting and supporting vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
7. The Director of Vocations will develop and maintain a dynamic and appealing website employing up-to-date digital technology.

Objectives: Parish/School Level

1. The parish, or group of parishes, will establish and maintain an active Vocations Committee charged with publicizing the need for vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate and religious life; providing information and resources to interested parishioners; identifying possible candidates; and serving as a point of contact with the Director of Vocations. The committee may seek the support and cooperation of such organizations as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic women's groups.
2. Each priest and deacon is encouraged to recognize his crucial role in vocations ministry and include among his pastoral concerns, first, guiding young people in discerning their vocations to the priesthood and religious life and, second, guiding men as they discern their vocation to the diaconate.
3. All parishioners, especially parents and teachers, are encouraged to recognize and embrace their responsibilities for fostering vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.
4. Parishes may choose to "adopt" a seminarian or religious, offering him/her spiritual, emotional and even financial support.
5. Catholic schools and religious education programs will give special attention to vocation promotion and awareness in their curricula and planning.
6. Each parish will have a plan for praying regularly for vocations at Mass, and on other occasions such as Eucharistic Holy Hours and school events.

Goal II: We will support existing forms of consecrated life, and welcome expressions of consecrated life new to the diocese.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Office of the Bishop will strive to maintain and strengthen relations with communities of consecrated women and men who serve in the Diocese of Salina.
2. The Office of the Bishop will seek to establish a community of contemplative religious women in the Diocese of Salina.
3. The Office of the Bishop will work to recruit communities of women religious dedicated to teaching in Catholic schools and undertaking other forms of apostolate within the diocese, such as Hispanic ministry.
4. The Office of the Bishop will seek to secure more religious priests to serve in parishes and special ministries.

Section Six: Forming Lay Ecclesial Ministers and Lay Leaders

You too go into my vineyard (Mt. 20:4).

But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.... And he gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ... (Eph. 4:7, 11-12).

Hence the active presence of the laity in the temporal realities takes on all its importance. One cannot, however, neglect or forget the other dimension: the laity can also feel themselves called, or be called, to work with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community...by exercising a great variety of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord is pleased to give them... (Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 73).

[T]he Church of the Third Millennium will need to encourage all the baptized and confirmed to be aware of their active responsibility in the Church's life. Together with the ordained ministry, other ministries, whether formally instituted or simply recognized, can flourish for the good of the whole community, sustaining it in all its many needs... (John Paul II, *Novo Millenio Ineunte*, 46).

Goal: We will form lay leaders and lay ecclesial ministers according to the mind of the Church to collaborate with the bishop, priests and deacons in service to God's people.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. Guided by the USCCB statement *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* and the *National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers*, the lay ministry training program, Vinea, will offer three-year curricula for formation and training of Parish Life Coordinators and Pastoral Associates.
2. The Bishop, after consultation with the Parish Life Coordinator Committee, will certify Vinea graduates as eligible for appointment as Parish Life Coordinators.
3. The lay ministry training program, Vinea, in consultation with priests and other pastoral leaders, will recruit and screen candidates for Parish Life Coordinator and Pastoral Associate from all geographical areas of the diocese.
4. The lay ministry training program, Vinea, will offer parishes guidance and resources for recruiting candidates.
5. The lay ministry training program, Vinea, in cooperation with the Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established), will identify, recruit and screen Spanish-speaking candidates for Parish Life Coordinator and Pastoral Associate.
6. The diocese will develop guidelines for recruiting, training and authorizing Pastoral Associates.

7. The lay ministry training program, Vinea, in conjunction with the Clergy Continuing Education Committee, is encouraged to offer workshops on practical collaborative parish ministry for priests, deacons, Parish Life Coordinators and Pastoral Associates.
8. The Office of Communications, in collaboration with the lay ministry training program, Vinea, will maintain the diocesan website as a means of accessing online resources for ministry formation.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. The pastor, in consultation with the parish pastoral council, is encouraged to make parishioners aware of the value, when needed, of Parish Life Coordinators and Pastoral Associates in the Diocese of Salina.
2. The pastor will encourage parishioners to participate in the Vinea program, and nominate individuals for consideration as candidates for Parish Life Coordinator and Pastoral Associate.

Section Seven: Marriage and Family

He said in reply, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator “made them male and female” and said “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate” (Mt. 19:4-6).

After three days they found him in the temple.... And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”... He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man (Lk. 46-52).

The Church is built on a foundation of marriage and family life, which it cherishes as the school of a deeper humanity and a cradle of the civilization of love. For this reason, both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI have emphasized that pastoral ministry in service of marriage and family life should be an urgent priority for the Church (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, 2009, p. 58)

Goal: We will promote and strengthen the family as the domestic church, and the dignity of marriage as the heart of family life.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Family Life Office will establish a Family Life Commission that will develop and oversee implementation of a diocesan family life plan.
2. The Family Life Office, working with the Diocesan Family Life Commission, the Diocesan Tribunal, the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers, and the USCCB Office of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth (especially its National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage), will provide support and training for parish Family Life Committees/Coordinators on best practices for supporting Catholic marriage and family life.
3. The Family Life Office will promote a wider understanding and appreciation of the Theology of the Body, and will integrate this theology into marriage preparation, marriage enrichment and other family life programs.
4. The Family Life Office will work to promote and enhance appreciation, knowledge and availability of Natural Family Planning services throughout the diocese.
5. The Family Life Office will provide support and training for engaged and married couples, and will facilitate their participation in such programs as FOCCUS,

- REFOCCUS, Engaged Encounter, Marriage Encounter, Retrouvaille and Natural Family Planning. It will also offer programming for separated, widowed and divorced people.
6. The Family Life Office will assist parishes with training and resources to address such issues as the single life, marriage enrichment, parenting, and the care of elderly family members.
 7. The Offices of Religious Education and Catholic Schools are encouraged to help ensure that religious education, both in the parishes and in Catholic schools, appropriately emphasizes support for Catholic marriage and family life.
 8. Through its training and resources, the Office of Stewardship is encouraged to show that supporting and strengthening marriage and family life is a fundamental expression of Christian stewardship.
 9. Catholic Charities will offer marriage counseling and counseling for couples and families.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. The parish, or a group of parishes, will establish a Family Life Committee/Coordinator to promote and support Catholic marriage and family life in cooperation with the Diocesan Family Life Commission.
2. The clergy, pastoral council(s), and Family Life Committee(s)/Coordinator(s) of a parish or group of parishes are encouraged to promote and support Catholic marriage and family life. This effort may include:
 - promotion of authorized marriage preparation programs for all engaged couples;
 - a liturgical (and perhaps social) celebration of the Feast of the Holy Family;
 - occasional homilies and/or workshops on the Theology of the Body and on the family as the domestic Church;
 - promotion of marriage and family workshops and conferences available through the diocese;
 - discreet and sensitive pastoral intervention in troubled marriages, including referrals to resources through the diocese;
 - parish social events, such as picnics, dinners, bazaars and fairs, designed as specifically family activities;
 - promotion of Natural Family Planning, including the recruitment of couples to be trained as NFP instructors, and...;
 - cooperation with such organizations as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic women's groups.

Section Eight: Religious Education

[Jesus prayed:] “Consecrate [my disciples] in the truth.... I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their words, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me” (Jn. 17:17-21).

When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority... (Mt. 7:24-29).

I thank my brother bishops, priests and deacons, men and women religious, parents, teachers and catechists. The fidelity and courage with which the Church in this country will respond to the challenges raised by an increasingly secular and materialistic culture will depend in large part upon your own fidelity in handing on the treasure of our Catholic faith (Benedict XVI, [Homily at Nationals Park, Washington, D.C., April 17, 2008, 7](#)).

Goal: We will promote vibrant parish faith formation programs rooted in the word of God for Catholics of all ages. We will promote the excellence of our Catholic schools and ensure their continued viability.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Office of Religious Education will provide support, training, resources, retreats, annual diocesan and statewide conferences, and fellowship opportunities to teachers and administrators of parish religious education programs.
2. The Offices of Religious Education and Catholic Schools will review and strengthen certification standards for catechists teaching in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. The Offices will encourage and assist all catechists to meet these standards through the lay ministry training program, Vinea, and/or online coursework.
3. The Office of Religious Education will review national resources for adult faith formation from such organizations as the National Catholic Educational Association and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Office will recommend an appropriate program or programs, and offer parishes support and guidance in implementing them.
4. The Offices of Religious Education and Catholic Schools are encouraged to conduct a thorough review of curriculum guidelines for grades K-12 with the goal of strengthening them, giving appropriate attention to selection of approved texts and materials.
5. The Office of Stewardship, in collaboration with the Office of Religious Education, is encouraged to develop curriculum materials presenting stewardship as an expression of Christian discipleship.

6. The School Superintendent, in collaboration with the Office of Religious Education, is encouraged to develop a strategy to strengthen the quality of religious education in the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Salina.
7. The Office of Communications will assist the Bishop, the School Superintendent and school principals to prepare articles for the *Register* and the diocesan website that emphasize the importance of Catholic education.
8. The Development Office will advise pastors, principals and school councils on effective short- and long-term fundraising strategies for Catholic schools.

Objectives: Parish/School Level

1. The parish, or group of parishes, will maintain a K-12 (or pre-K-12) religious education program for the young people of the parish.
2. Each parish, or group of parishes, will have a Director or Coordinator of Religious Education, who will administer the religious education program for children and adults, recruiting teachers, selecting textbooks, designing curricula, assisting catechists to attain certification through the diocese, and generally providing leadership and inspiration to teachers, parents and students.
3. The pastor, parish pastoral council and school council will exercise appropriate responsibility for the content and spirit of the parish's religious education program, overseeing the work of the Director or Coordinator of Religious Education and school principal. Moreover, the parish as a whole should actively support passing on the faith from generation to generation.
4. Parents must recognize their primary role in passing on the faith, attending Sunday Mass and the sacraments with their children, ensuring that they attend religious education sessions, and reinforcing religious education in the home.
5. School principals are encouraged to ensure that religious education and formation occupies a prominent place in the school curriculum, and to assist religion teachers in attaining catechist certification through the diocese.

Section Nine: Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity (1 Tim. 4:12).

I think in particular of our need to speak to the hearts of young people, who despite their constant exposure to messages contrary to the Gospel continue to thirst for authenticity, goodness and truth. Much remains to be done, particularly on the level of preaching and catechesis in parishes and schools, if the new evangelization is to bear fruit for the renewal of ecclesial life in America (Benedict XVI, [Address to U.S. Bishops, Washington, D.C., April 16, 2008](#), 47).

Goal: We will engage youth and young adults, calling them to serve as valued members of the Church. We will strengthen and support college campus ministries.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Office of Youth Ministry will collaborate with others to provide the Prayer and Action Mission Experience, the Totus Tuus summer catechetical program, and annual conferences for college and high school students; and a camp for Catholics in junior high. The Office will also facilitate young people's participation in the biannual National Catholic Youth Conference.
2. The Office for Youth Ministry will collaborate with the Vocations Director to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life at diocesan and national youth gatherings.
3. The Office of Youth Ministry will provide support, training, an annual conference, and fellowship opportunities for parish youth ministers.
4. The Office of Youth Ministry will offer parishes advice and support on creating and sustaining an active youth ministry.
5. The Office of Religious Education will review national resources for post-Confirmation faith formation from such organizations as the National Catholic Educational Association and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Office will recommend an appropriate program or programs, and offer support as needed.
6. With the assistance of the Catholic Campus Ministry Association, the Office of Youth Ministry is encouraged to provide support and resources to campus ministers.
7. The Office of Stewardship is encouraged to prepare youth-oriented stewardship resources for use with the Prayer and Action Mission Experience and for distribution at youth conferences and events.
8. The Office of the Bishop in collaboration with local campus ministers will explore the possibility of inviting FOCUS to serve in the Diocese of Salina.

The pastor, the parish pastoral council and the Stewardship Committee, working closely with the Office of Youth Ministry, are encouraged to strive to include young people in parish life. This effort may include:

- encouraging young people to participate in Totus Tuus, Prayer in Action and other youth-oriented programs;
- creating and supporting active groups for youth and young adults, with opportunities for prayer, catechetical formation, fellowship and service;
- inviting young people to serve on the parish pastoral council and other committees;
- inviting young people to receive training and assignment as parish ministers (e.g., music ministers, cantors, greeters, lectors, catechists, altar servers);
- inviting young people to express their Catholic identity in appropriate ways through parish liturgies, service opportunities and social events; and
- cooperating with such organizations as Catholic Charities, the Knights of Columbus and Catholic women's groups.

Section Ten: Human Dignity and the Sanctity of Life

You shall not kill (Ex. 20: 13).

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest...passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite...passed by on the opposite side.... But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him.... Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise” (Lk. 11:29-37).

The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus’ message.... Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must be felt in the Church’s very heart; it cannot but affect [the] ... mission of proclaiming the Gospel of life in all the world and to every creature (*cf. Mk. 16:15*) (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 3).

We are well aware of the differences involved in the taking of human life in warfare and the taking of human life through abortion. Nothing, however, can justify direct attack on innocent human life, in or out of warfare. Abortion is precisely such an attack. (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace*, 286).

Goal I: We will protect and affirm the dignity of every person and promote the sanctity of every human life, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. Working with the Respect Life Commission, the Respect Life Office will organize and maintain a network of parish Respect Life Committees charged with implementing the USCCB’s Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities, *A Campaign in Support of Life*.
2. The Respect Life Office will offer support and training to parish Respect Life Committees through an annual conference and individual guidance.
3. The Respect Life Office will organize participation in the annual March for Life, and/or other observances of the anniversary of Roe v. Wade (January 22), and will distribute materials for celebrating Respect Life Month and Respect Life Sunday in every parish.
4. The Respect Life Office will assist in providing information about Catholic Charities pregnancy and adoption services, and about Rachel’s Vineyard retreats for women and men struggling with the emotional or spiritual pain of an abortion.

5. The Offices of Religious Education and Catholic Schools will help ensure that religious education, both in parishes and in Catholic schools, clearly emphasizes the Catholic Church's teaching on the consistent ethic of life. This ethic includes a broad spectrum of issues, including abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, embryonic stem-cell research, the death penalty, poverty, racism, unemployment, access to adequate health care, pornography, and the exploitation of women and children.
6. Catholic Charities is encouraged to offer programs in parish social ministry, to offer internship opportunities in social ministry for high school and college students, and to provide speakers on teachings and traditions that provide the foundation for the work of charity.
7. The Respect Life Office and the Social Concerns Office (not yet established), working with the Kansas Catholic Conference, are encouraged to monitor proposed state and federal legislation and regulation affecting human dignity and the right to life, and to advise pastors and parish Respect Life Committees on effective ways of joining in the public debate on such legislation.
8. The Office of Communications will assist the bishop and other diocesan officials to prepare articles for the *Register*, the diocesan website, and the secular media that analyze public policy issues in the light of the Church's teaching on human dignity and the right to life.
9. Through its training and resources, the Office of Stewardship is encouraged to show that promotion and protection of human dignity and the right to life is a fundamental expression of authentic Christian stewardship.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. The parish will establish a Respect Life Committee to develop and implement an action plan that promotes respect for life and human dignity. The committee may seek the support and cooperation of such organizations as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic women's groups.
2. The Respect Life Committee will publicize diocesan participation in the March for Life, and plan parish observances of the anniversary of Roe v. Wade (January 22) and of Respect Life Month and Respect Life Sunday.
3. Either alone or in cooperation with other parish organizations, parishes or churches, the Respect Life Committee is encouraged to consider other concrete steps, such as assisting pregnant women and engaging in public advocacy, to defend human dignity and the right to life.
4. The pastor is encouraged to announce the availability of Rachel's Vineyard retreats and make referrals as need be.

Goal II: We will welcome newcomers, immigrants, elderly people, people with disabilities and marginalized people into our parish communities with gracious hospitality.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Offices of Evangelization (not yet established) and Worship will advise parishes on practical ways (e.g., contacting new residents in the parish, reaching

- out to recent immigrants, placing prominent welcoming signs on church property, advertising liturgies in homeless shelters and bus stations) of creating an open and inclusive Eucharistic community that welcomes newcomers, immigrants, and people who are poor and marginalized.
2. The Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established) is encouraged to keep parishes apprized of the growth and changing pastoral needs of ethnic communities, especially Hispanics, within the diocese.
 3. The Office of Religious Education is encouraged to ensure that parish religious education programs appropriately emphasize the importance of creating an open and inclusive community that welcomes newcomers, immigrants, and poor and marginalized people.
 4. Catholic Charities will participate in programs promoting justice for immigrants, will advise parishes on immigration issues, and will offer support to immigrants and people who are poor and marginalized.
 5. The Office of Worship, working with the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, is encouraged to advise pastors, parish advisory councils and parish finance councils on making church buildings accessible to elderly Catholics and Catholics with disabilities.
 6. The Office of Worship, working with the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, is encouraged to advise pastors on making appropriate accommodations for elderly Catholics and Catholics with disabilities at parish liturgies.
 7. Through its training and resources, the Office of Stewardship is encouraged to show that hospitality, expressed by welcoming the stranger and accommodating the needs of ill people, elderly people, shut-ins and people with disabilities, is one of the foundations for parish vitality and renewal.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. The Evangelization Committee, or other designated parish group, will welcome and orient newcomers, immigrants, persons with disabilities, and poor and marginalized people into the parish community.
2. The pastor, perhaps with the assistance of lay volunteers, is encouraged to minister to people incarcerated within parish boundaries.
3. The pastor, parish pastoral council and parish finance council will make reasonable accommodations to render church buildings, parish liturgies and parish social events accessible to people with disabilities. In doing so, they may seek the support and cooperation of such organizations as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic women's groups.
4. Parishioners, treating others as Jesus did, will welcome and accommodate newcomers, immigrants, people with disabilities, and poor and marginalized people into the parish community.

FOURTH PHASE: TO THE WHOLE WORLD (2014)

Section Eleven: Communications

Every day [the disciples] devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:46-47).

Christ commanded the Apostles and their successors to “teach all nations,” to be “the light of the world,” and to announce the Good News in all places at all times. It is now necessary that the same message be carried by the means of social communication that are available today. Indeed it would be difficult to suggest that Christ’s command was being obeyed unless all the opportunities offered by the modern media to extend to vast numbers of people the announcement of the Good News were being used (Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Communio et Progressio*, 126).

Goal: We will make use of the media and communications technology to evangelize, and to foster a stronger sense of community within the Diocese.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Office of Communications will maintain the diocesan website employing new digital technology, including social networking, as a tool for evangelization, for sharing information within the diocese and beyond, for linking the diocesan offices with parishes, for linking parishes with one another, for enabling the Bishop to teach and offer pastoral guidance through audio and video messages, and for taking positions on public policy issues of interest to the Church.
2. The Office of Communications will create a secure website that links together the bishop, the clergy, Parish Life Coordinators and other pastoral leaders of the diocese through a shared e-mail system.
3. The Office of Communications will produce the diocesan newspaper, the *Register*, and will seek to increase its circulation and its effectiveness as a means of communications, evangelization and catechesis.
4. The Office of Communications will explore the creation of a network of satellite learning sites across the diocese for training and continuing education.
5. The Office of Communications will alert parishes to programming of interest on the Eternal Word Television Network and other Catholic media outlets.
6. The diocese will explore the use of Catholic radio as an evangelization and communication tool.
7. The Office of Communications is encouraged to establish cordial working relationships with media professionals in order to facilitate the dissemination of Catholic views on events of the day.

The pastor is encouraged to appoint a parish media representative to report local news stories to the Office of Communications for possible publication in the *Register*, posting on the diocesan website or, occasionally, dissemination to the media. The media representative will also remind fellow parishioners to visit the diocesan website and will alert them to other media resources through occasional bulletin inserts.

Section Twelve: Ministry with Ethnic Groups, especially Hispanics

When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you: have the same love for him as for yourself, for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt (Lv. 19: 33-34).

A new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups. This should be done, however, with the respect due to the different paths of different people and with sensitivity to the diversity of cultures in which the Christian message must be planted, in such a way that the particular values of each people will not be rejected but...brought to their fullness (John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 40).

America...has recognized in the *mestiza* face of the Virgin of Tepeyac...an impressive example of a perfectly inculturated evangelization. Consequently, not only in Central and South America, but in North America as well, the Virgin of Guadalupe is venerated as Queen of all America (John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, 11).

Goal: We will minister to and with members of ethnic groups, especially Hispanics.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established) will research significant groups of ethnic Catholics within the diocese, with particular attention to established or new communities of Hispanic Catholics. Through this research, the Office will become familiar with these groups' size, demographic characteristics, social characteristics, religious practices, and attitudes toward the Church.
2. The Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established), working with the Hispanic Ministry Council (not yet established), will create programs to meet the particular pastoral needs (e.g., encouragement of popular religiosity) of ethnic groups, especially Hispanics.
3. The Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established) will recruit Hispanic women religious to serve the pastoral needs of Hispanic people.
4. The Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established) will train lay leaders drawn from ethnic groups to minister with those groups. Such training may include enrollment in outside formation programs offered by such agencies as the Mexican American Catholic College.
5. The Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established) is encouraged to consult with the USCCB Office of Cultural Diversity, other national-level agencies, and Catholic dioceses with large Hispanic populations on best practices for building harmonious, vital and pastorally effective multi-ethnic parishes.
6. The Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established) is encouraged to advise the Vocations Director regarding the recruitment of Hispanic seminarians, and regarding training for seminarians in language skills and in ministering with ethnic groups, especially Hispanics.

7. Catholic Charities will provide social and legal services to immigrants and to Hispanic youth.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. In parishes with significant Hispanic Catholic populations, the pastor and parish pastoral council, working closely with the Office of Hispanic Ministry (not yet established), will strive to build a harmonious, vital and pastorally effective multi-ethnic community. This effort, gentle but persistent, may include inviting group members:
 - to serve on the parish pastoral council and other committees,
 - to receive training and assignment as parish ministers (e.g., extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, greeters, lectors, catechists, altar servers), and
 - to express their Catholic identity in appropriate ways through parish liturgies and social events.
2. Parishioners, treating others as Jesus did, will welcome and accommodate Hispanic Catholics into the parish community.

Section Thirteen: Catholic Social Teaching

Then the king will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.... [W]hatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Mt. 25:34-40).

Faced with the grave social problems which...are present throughout America, Catholics know that they can find in the Church’s social doctrine an answer which serves as a starting-point in the search for practical solutions.... It is therefore important that in America the agents of evangelization (Bishops, priests, teachers, pastoral workers, etc.) make their own this treasure which is the Church’s social teaching and, inspired by it, become capable of interpreting the present situation and determining the actions to take (John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, 54).

Goal: We will promote Catholic social teaching and integrate it into every level of Church life and secular society.

Objectives: Diocesan Level

1. The Social Concerns Office (not yet established) will offer workshops on the inseparability of faith and works.
2. The Social Concerns Office (not yet established), working with the Kansas Catholic Conference, will monitor proposed state and federal legislation and regulation affecting a broad range of public policy issues to which Catholic social teaching is relevant (e.g., welfare, immigration, food, housing, the environment, debt, civil rights, war and peace, foreign aid); and will advise pastors and parish Social Concerns Committees on effective ways of joining in the public debate on such legislation.
3. The Offices of Religious Education and Catholic Schools are encouraged to help ensure that religious education, both in the parishes and in Catholic schools, appropriately emphasizes the riches of Catholic social teaching.
4. Through its training and resources, the Office of Stewardship is encouraged to show that the diligent study of Catholic social teaching, its application in everyday life, and advocacy for social justice are expressions of Christian stewardship.
5. The Office of Communications will assist the bishop and other diocesan officials to prepare articles for the *Register*, the diocesan website, and the secular media that analyze public policy issues in the light of Catholic social teaching.
6. The Rural Life Commission, in consultation with the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and other agencies, will keep abreast of issues impacting rural life and rural parishes in the diocese’s 31 counties and assist parishes to address critical rural life issues and social concerns.

Objectives: Parish Level

1. Priests and deacons are encouraged to devote occasional homilies to forming parishioners in Catholic social teaching.
2. The parish, or group of parishes, is encouraged to establish and maintain a Social Concerns Committee.
3. Whenever possible, the parish is encouraged to maintain an Assistance Fund to help the local poor.
4. The parish pastoral council is encouraged to devote time regularly to evaluating and improving the parish's familiarity with and application of Catholic social teaching.
5. The Social Concerns Committee (if any) is encouraged to organize groups to study Catholic social teaching, to apply it to issues of interest to the Church, and to act on it by advocating for sound public policy.
6. The Social Concerns Committee is encouraged to organize activities, either alone or in cooperation with other parish organizations, parishes or churches, that express the parish's commitment to social justice in the local community (e.g., service in food banks, soup kitchens, nursing homes and homeless shelters; donation of Poor Box offerings to worthy charities; advocacy for just social policies). In doing so, it may seek the support and cooperation of such organizations as the Knights of Columbus and Catholic women's groups.