

“Parish Strategic Action Plan” General Guidelines

I. Purpose of a Parish Strategic Action Plan:

- a. This guide is designed to help a committee of parish staff and lay leaders, with the assistance of diocesan personnel, to develop and implement a strategic plan of action designed to effectively address the challenges faced by the parish. The challenges in question are those identified by the Planning Commission and Diocesan Bishop through the strategic planning process *Christ Jesus our Hope*.
- b. The goal of a strategic plan is to enable your parish to be more viable, sustainable and self-sufficient, providing a necessary foundation to support vibrant and effective pastoral ministry.

II. Drafting Committee:

- a. Each pastor will be asked to assemble a committee consisting of Parish Pastoral Council members, Parish Finance Council members, the Parish Trustees, the Parish Accountant, staff members and other lay leaders of his choice, to assist him in drafting his parish's strategic action plan.
- b. Each parish committee will have available the resources of various diocesan offices as well as a facilitator appointed by the Diocesan Bishop. The facilitator's main task will be to assist the committee in following a systematic process by which a strategic action plan can be created for submission to the Bishop. The name of your facilitator will be sent to you by the Office of Pastoral Planning before Monday, December 20, 2010.
- c. All those who served on the parish committee are to be listed in the first section of the strategic plan before its submission.

III. Process:

- a. Before creating a strategic plan of action, the members of the committee should review the nature and scope of the challenges identified for action by the Bishop. They must identify concrete steps that will effectively address each challenge and assemble a plan consisting of specific goals and objectives, to be realized over a specified period of time, providing a comprehensive framework to effectively address them.
- b. The deadline for submitting a parish's strategic plan is February 28, 2011. Once completed, the plan should be sent by the pastor via email to the Office of the Vicar General, for review by the Diocesan Planning Commission.
- c. After reviewing the plan, the Commission will submit it to the Diocesan Bishop for his review and approval. The Bishop will correspond directly with the pastor regarding his decision.

IV. Implementation of your Parish Plan:

- a. Each parish that submits a plan that is approved by the Bishop must periodically assess the progress it makes towards realizing its strategic goals and objectives. It is highly recommended that the committee that created the parish's strategic action plan also monitor this progress.
- b. A sub-committee of the Diocesan Planning Commission will also monitor the progress made by each parish that submits a strategic plan of action. This subcommittee will issue a semi-annual report for each parish, to be shared with the parish's leadership, the Diocesan Planning Commission and the Diocesan Bishop.
- c. In the event that a parish is unable to meet its strategic goals and objectives in a stated timeframe, the Planning Commission, at the request of the Bishop, will re-introduce the parish into the ongoing diocesan-wide process *Christ Jesus Our Hope* for further study and possible additional actions.

Specific Instructions for Completing the Strategic Action Plan

- I. Format:** A parish strategic action plan consists of three parts:
- a. Part One: Introductory Information
 - b. Part Two: Statement of Goals and Objectives
 - c. Part Three: Parish Financial Checklist
- II. General Instructions:**
- a. Please complete **all** information as completely as possible.
 - b. An **electronic** version of the complete worksheet can be found in the folder *Christ Jesus Our Hope* on DioNet. The pastor is asked to **email** an electronic copy of the completed parish strategic action plan to the Vicar General Office or directly to fjaggiano@rcdob.org.
- III. Specific Instructions:**
- a. **Part One: Introductory Information:**
 - i. Please list all those who are members of the committee and their leadership position in the parish.
 - ii. Indicate in the appropriate space the month and year by which the committee expects the **entire** action plan will be completed.
 - b. **Part Two: Statement of Goals and Objectives**
 - i. The Bishop has asked that the parish address specific challenges, as noted in his letters to both the pastor and the parishioners. In the appropriate section, please list each challenge with an adequate description that denotes its scope and nature. You are asked to use a separate worksheet for each challenge.
 - ii. The committee must draft a series of goals and objectives designed to effectively answer each challenge. Please note the following:
 1. A **goal** is a brief statement of what is to be accomplished to comprehensively address the challenge.
 - a. There may be more than one goal for each challenge. If so, each goal must have its own series of objectives.
 2. An **objective** is an action step to be taken over a specific period of time designed to help move the parish to realize its overall goal.
 - a. An objective should:
 - i. Be clear and measurable
 - ii. Clearly identify an accountable parish leader for its implementation
 - iii. List any diocesan offices that the parish believes can offer assistance in accomplishing the objective
 - iv. Articulate a process for evaluation
 - v. Have a deadline for completion
 - b. There may also be more than one objective for each goal. If so, use the space on provided and the additional space worksheet and number each objective.
 - c. **Part Three: Parish Financial Checklist:** This checklist needs to be completed and submitted with your parish strategic action plan, as indicated on the checklist itself.