

Who needs a vision?

At the time of an anniversary, it is important to look in two directions – backward and forward. The 2010 Committee has challenged each parish to write a parish history or to update their parish history if they have one already. This is a good project, because we need to know our parish roots, the places from which we have come, and the low and the high points along the way.

We also need to look forward. What is God calling us to be in 2010? Where is God calling us to go? How will we minister within our congregations? How will we serve the community?

The next challenge is that each parish will use this resource to produce a parish specific vision and ministry goals (how to accomplish the vision) by 2010. In 2010, we would like to be able to look across the diocese and say, “Every parish has a vision and they know how they will achieve their goals.”

In 2002, Archbishop Fred called the diocese into a process of gathering, remembering, discussing, brainstorming and sifting. That process produced a vision for the Diocese.

To be Christ centered, mission minded, ministering communities of faith.

We are working toward that vision with specific strategies. The first focuses on developing healthy parishes. Healthy parishes will be able to accomplish the mission of Christ to make disciples, to build the Kingdom of God, and to bring God's reign of justice and joy. It is at the parish level, that ministry happens inside the church with the members, and mission happens outside the congregation in the community with non members. It is the ministry of the congregation to build strong members. Then they can proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, build the Kingdom of God and fulfill the command of Christ - to bring people to Christ, to enable those people to transform the world to Christ's standards, to make the dream of God come true.

So where is your parish in this process? What is your parish vision? Where are you going with all the work your parish does? Is your parish work focused or is it “going madly off in all directions”?

A parish with a clearly-stated vision and defined ministry goals will be well-supported by its members and it will attract new members. The vision will help people to clarify their Christian identity (to be disciples), it will focus the use of parish resources and it will help to build the Kingdom of God - to make the dream of God come to reality.

Put this resource to good use. Be ready for 2010. You can do it. “I am sure that God, who began a good work in you, will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

Bishop Sue