

FLOURISHING *families*

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR A FLOURISHING FUTURE

DIOCESE OF RAPID CITY

“The parish is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach.”

-POPE FRANCIS, THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL



Deanery 1 Discussion Group

Session #1: March 18, 2023

Blessed Sacrament Parish

Rapid City, South Dakota

Session Summary Report

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Deanery 1

First Session Agenda

- 8:30 am Mass
- 9:10 am Introduction of the Group Discussion Process & Moderator
- 9:15 am Introduction of each participant
- Fifty (50) participants consisting pastors, associate pastors, deacons, 4 religious sisters, and two parish representatives from 13 parishes and the Newman Center representatives were introduced.
- 9:30 am Video presentation about the strategic planning process and the materials received by each participant. (Fr. Brian Christensen, Fr. Tim Hoag, and Bishop Peter Muhich)
- 10:10 am Participants divided by parish to discuss and list what their respective parish's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities are. A copy of each report was submitted to the moderator and is included in this report.
- 10:50 am In a large group setting the participants were asked to perform the same task (SWOT) but from a deanery perspective. The lists were written on poster board paper and compiled into this report.
- 11:10 am Wrap-up and Closing Prayer
- 11:30 am Lunch served by Blessed Sacrament Altar Society

Deanery SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

Deanery #1

Dean: Rev. Kerry Prendiville

This Deanery SWOT analysis reflects what the majority of the parishes observe in the region (Deanery #1). While many parishes may experience a particular strength, weakness, threat, and opportunity an individual parish might have the opposite or different experience. This Deanery overview and individual parish SWOT analyses will be used as part of the final report to the Strategic Planning Executive Committee and the Bishop.

Strengths

- There is a strong Catholic presence within the region. (e.g., It is the largest religious affiliation in Rapid City Metro Area)
 - Rapid City Metro Area population = 139,074
 - Number of congregations = 193
 - % of adherents by population = 46.1% (64,077)
 - Catholic congregations (parishes) = 10
 - % of adherents by total adherents = 18.9% (12,113)
- Deanery with highest number of active priests. [number = 13 (52.0%)]
- Deanery has a high population growth within the diocese.
 - Rapid City area = +15.4%
 - Piedmont area = +27.0%
 - Hill City area = +11.7%
 - Custer area = +13.1%
 - New Underwood area = +24.5%
 - Hot Springs area = -1.6%
- Has Catholic schools (elementary, middle, and high school)
- Has a strong VSI certified catechists' presence
 - Deanery 1 = 121 (64.7% of the diocese total)
- Has a large Native American population
- Many of the parishes are experiencing growing youth programs.

Weakness

- There are many members who do not have a good understanding of the Catholic Church's teachings, traditions, and practices.
- Many parishes have a declining youth program attendance.
- The percentage of Catholics attending Mass is declining.
- In many parishes there is a decline of male leadership and volunteers
- There is evidence of an increase of self-serving attitudes. There is a large "me" first attitude.
- There is a lack of understanding and meaning of the Eucharist, especially transubstantiation.

Possible Opportunities

- There is an opportunity to obtain new membership due to the increasing population trends.
- The Eucharist Revival emphasis is an opportunity to promote and teach about the Eucharist.
- The Newman Center members are an asset for local parishes to reach out to the youth.
- There is an opportunity to take advantage of the availability technology to promote connectivity and participation in parish activities, events, and faith formation.
- Promoting the availability of an affordable Catholic School education.
- Reaching out to the growing Hispanic and Native American populations within the deanery.
- Providing more support and programming for the youth, especially at the high school and college levels.
- There is an opportunity to help families and the community create spiritual environments for the promotion of the Catholic faith.

Possible Threats

- Scheduling of sports and other recreational activities conflicting with parish schedules for liturgy and faith formation.
- Some school schedules (four-day school week) impacting faith formation programs.
- Competition for church membership by other congregations promoting "easier" faith engagement practices.
- Anger against the Catholic Church for past happenings or treatment of members
- Many families and individuals are enduring economic hardships – two jobs to support family, low wages, poor housing, etc.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

Newman Center • SDSMT • Rapid City

Associate Pastor: Rev. Mark McCormick

Strengths

- Young Catholic membership
- A sense of family and home.
- Good campus relationship and environment
- Transitory – new lay ministers who bring new ideas and challenges to the Center.

Weakness

- Low Rapid City population representation
- A high percentage of single members
- Lack of long-term membership – changes every four years.
- Website does not identify the Pastor or the ministers working at Center.

Possible Opportunities

- There is a lot of local parishes in which the Center members can help and assist in various activities and programs.
- Can reach out to the young Catholic membership for evangelization and other work.
- Can assist with youth faith formation programs within the diocese.

Possible Threats

- Loss of Pastor – Father Mark
- Apathy of students – especially those who away from home for the first time
- Lack of understanding the Newman Center's mission by local parishes
- If a priest from another parish is assigned to the Newman Center will they be able to provide the same support and ministries as a permanently assigned pastor?
- Job conflicts and opportunities that prevent members from fully participating the Center's work.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

St. Anthony • Hot Springs

Pastor: Rev. Collins Igwilo

Deacons: Craig Pearson; Tom Adams

Strengths

- Large facility capacity that is well kept including dining capacity.
- Strong financial outlook – solid budget
- Met facility campaign target.
- Large footprint in Southwest South Dakota
- Influx of people to Black Hills region from out of state

Weakness

- Lack of faith formation catechists
- Large percentage of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence
- Large percentage of congregation members are not involved in parish activities and ministries.
- Burnout of active laity in parish ministries and work
- Hill terrain makes it hard to travel during the winter months for both the priest and laity.
- Increase percentage of retired population

Possible Opportunities

- Faith formation opportunities for the young members
- An opportunity for more adult conversion – evangelization
- Sacramental renewal including reconciliation and celebration of the Eucharist.
- Missionary outreach in the community
- Meaningful places and times for adult to participate in Book Clubs, Prayer Groups, Bible Study, etc.
- Pastor's presence in community events
- Dedication to Mary

Possible Threats

- The possible closure of the VA clinic and support programs
- Sports and activities conflict with Church schedule especially on Sunday
- Long four-day school schedule – comprises weekday Church activities and youth faith formation
- Recovery from pandemic effect on Church attendance and participation
- Impact of high divorce and marital separations which impact participation in sacraments, Mass, etc.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

St. Michael Parish • Hermosa

Pastor: Very Rev. Brian Christensen

Parochial Vicar: Rev. Matt Fallgren

Strengths

- Motivated members
- Membership is growing.
- There is a pool of retired members with skills that can help the parish.
- Parish has a good reputation in the community.
- Strong source of donations and financial support
- Great leadership
- There is a self-sufficient attitude among the members.
- A sense of family
- A quality mission statement

Weakness

- Lack of reaching out to the community especially non-Catholics
- Members are spread out – they have to travel many miles to come to Church.
- Outgrowing our Church capacity – few pews and classrooms

Possible Opportunities

- None listed

Possible Threats

- None listed

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

Immaculate Conception • Rapid City

Pastor: Rev. Gregory Bartholomew, FSSP

Strengths

- Growth of the parish over the past two years
- Self-sufficient attitude by members
- Rich and lengthy history
- There is a sense of family.
- Strong source of donations and financial support.
- Welcoming Church to newcomers
- Restoration project

Weakness

- Technology that does not work
- Lack of parish hall – meeting space
- Lack of children recreational area
- Consistent volunteers to help with the Church's work.
- Antiquated facilities which require constant upkeep and maintenance

Possible Opportunities

- Parishioners take part in opportunities and activities at nearby parishes.
- Active youth adult group
- Members have community influence that contributes to parish mission.
- Increase membership in children and young adults
- Improved Church security system

Possible Threats

- The neighborhood has high rate of crime, drugs, etc.
- The influence of social media and the internet on members especially the young
- Lack of understanding of the parish's mission and work in promoting the Catholic faith and Christ's teachings.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

St. John the Evangelist • New Underwood

Pastor: Rev. Kerry Prendiville

Strengths

- Growing population in the areas of New Underwood and Box Elder
- Parish is attracting younger families with children.
- Music ministry is very good.
- Financial strength with ability to pay debts and outstanding obligations.
- There is a sense of family and history.
- Small parish increases quality communication and connections.

Weakness

- Parish does not do a good job of evangelization.
- Aging Church and worship area
- There is a reluctance to change especially from the senior members
- Low turnout for adult faith formation activities.

Possible Opportunities

- Population growth will contribute to increased church membership.
- There is Church Hall that can be used for community events.
- With the increase in young families, there is an opportunity for more youth engagement in both faith formation and ministries.
- There is an opportunity to take advantage of the various social media and other technologies

Possible Threats

- Economic hardships for families
- Parish competition for new members from other Catholic parishes and denominations.
- Strong reliance on the material rather than the spiritual

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

St. Therese of the Little Flower • Rapid City

Pastor: Rev. Kerry Prendiville

Associate Pastor: Rev. Michael Oli

Strengths

- The parish is welcoming to all newcomers.
- Most of the members have been with the parish a long time.
- There is a capacity to accept more new members into the congregation.
- A self-sufficient attitude by the members.
- There is a sense of family.
- Parish members speak the same language.

Weakness

- Antiquated technology
- Congregational members that are inflexible and resist change.
- Parish has a low attendance rate of children and young people in faith formation and sacramental services.
- Parish does not do a good job in inviting people into the various activities and ministries.
- Volunteers are worked hard – potential burnout.
- Low turnout at community outreach events.

Possible Opportunities

- Constant presence and availability of a priest.
- Conscience awareness of the parish members and their work times
- Generosity of parishioners with time, talent, and treasure.
- Take advantage of tourism opportunities – presentation of decorative and historical church
- Take advantage of members with influence in other organizations throughout the community.

Possible Threats

- Scheduling of sports and other recreational activities that conflict with parish schedule.
- As a result of Covid-19 pandemic more parishioners are watching Mass on television or Facebook.
- There is a growing anti-religious culture and environment.
- Anger against the Church surrounding the sex scandal.
- School schedules and events prevent students from participating faith formation activities.
- Too many rules (legalism) for the Church. Many students and adults want more freedom of choice and not condemnation.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

St. James • Edgemont

Pastor: Rev. Collins Igwilo

Deacons: Craig Pearson; Tom Adams

Strengths

- Most of the members have been with the parish a very long time.
- The parish has a good reputation in the community.
- It has the capacity to accept a lot of new members.
- Many of the parish members are community leaders.
- There is strong financial support and donations.
- The parish has a large center hall to hold community events. It is the only one in town with this capacity.

Weakness

- A congregation that is inflexible and stubborn to change.
- Parish membership is declining.
- A lack of faith formation (catechesis) for adults. Many of the adults are weak in the understanding and knowledge of the teachings of the Church.
- Lack of courage to spread the teachings of the Church – low level of evangelization.
- A growing percentage of lukewarm parents and children toward the Church.

Possible Opportunities

- None listed.

Possible Threats

- None listed.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

Our Lady of the Black Hills • Piedmont

Pastor: Rev. Andrzy Wyrstek

Deacons: John Osnes, Greg Sass, Walt Wilson (Retired)

Strengths

- Strong sense of community
- Parish has a good reputation.
- Strong personal investment in parish (stewardship).
- Both the ordained and laity provide forward-thinking leadership.
- Positive membership growth at all age levels.
- There is a desire for personal spiritual growth by the majority of the members.

Weakness

- It is a “bedroom” community with most members working outside of the community.
- There is a need for more family and individual commitments. Too many secular distractions.
- There is a transitory population (military and job transitions).
- 50% of member families donate less than \$100 per month.
- Low high school (post confirmation) faith formation and religious participation
- Administrative leadership comes from the pastoral council and the commissions. Laity at large are minimum in many leadership needs.

Possible Opportunities

- High traffic area – Church is accessible to the general population.
- Population growth
- 50% of the parish families contribute \$100 or more per month.
- There are many opportunities for community involvement and stewardship.
- Eucharistic Revival

Possible Threats

- Many other non-Catholic churches are attracting parishioners.
- Economic hardships requiring some individuals to work two jobs.
- Expanding bedroom community contributing to less community enrichment and events.
- Club and school sports and other extracurricular activities reduce participation in Church services, activities, and faith formation.
- Limited number of priest or overworked priest in diocese.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help • Rapid City

Pastor: Very Rev. Brian Christensen

Associate Pastors: Rev. Matt Fallgren; Rev. Leonard Ssenyonjo

Deacons: Raul Daniel; Jim Scherr; Rich Olsen

Strengths

- Near Hospital
- Perpetual Adoration (April 2014 to April 2023).
- Demographic growth in Rapid City Metro Area
- Increased and improved parish facilities (Hall, classrooms, offices, etc.)
- Access to Air Force Military base and supporting families.
- Committed, motivated and reliable parish staff.
- A visitor destination in Rapid City
- Visible and active within the Rapid City community
- Effective evangelization efforts and achievements
- A good sense of family within the parish
- Rapid City Newman Center
- Good music (instrumental, choir, and cantors) and other ministers

Weakness

- Large size of parish – challenges to unite and include all parishioners in all activities and services.
- Adult formation participation and scheduling
- Service within the parish for the youth and their specific needs
- Many are not fully in touch with the Catholic traditions, liturgies, and teachings.
- Parishioners identify and distracted by secular influence – sports, celebrities, etc.

Possible Opportunities

- New larger Parish Hall for welcoming celebrations, religious events, and gatherings
- Reaching out to the growing populations of Rapid Valley and Box Elder
- Continuation and support for Perpetual Adoration at OLPH.
- Expansion of evangelization efforts to engage the “unchurched”.

- More adult formation opportunities with different scheduling options to help individuals strengthen their faith and spiritual commitments.
- Help individuals recognize their personal gifts and talents to help others grow in their faith and serve those in need.

Possible Threats

- Anger at the Church – sex abuse, lack of moral positions, too political, etc.
- Those seeking another parish or congregation to join.
- Appeal of some protestant churches and congregations to the general population (feel good, minimum expectations and “rules,” etc.)
- Club and school sports and other extracurricular activities reduce participation in Church services, activities, and faith formation.
- Lack of understanding of the Sacraments, Mass, and other liturgical services.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

Blessed Sacrament • Rapid City

Pastor: Very Rev. Tim Hoag

Associate Pastor: Rev. Francis Nsubuga

Deacons: Greg Palmer; Larry Kopriva; Rob Hrabe

Strengths

- Growing active young families (serving on committees, religious classes, and ministries)
- More families with children at Mass.
- Strong sense of community by all parishioners
- Beautiful physical presence in a beautiful location.

Weakness

- Older population decreasing at Mass and other services.
- Public school children are less plugged into the parish.
- Self-serving attitudes are increasing. “I do not like what you are doing so I will leave and go elsewhere.
- Music ministry in Mass is lacking.
- People attend Mass and check it off their obligation’s list.
- There appears to be more of lack of understanding of the Catholic faith and its teachings.

Possible Opportunities

- Promote and expand the music ministry (program) for all masses and for those who appreciate good liturgical based music.
- Continue and expand the work to engage young families and youth in the parish.
- Reach out to and engage those Catholics who have left the Church.
- Need to take advantage of the two priests and deacons to assist with the various committees and activities needed for the parish.
- Develop a Blessed Sacrament APP for the telephone.

Possible Threats

- Many individuals are parish hopping and not identifying membership in one parish.
- There is a lack of faith formation which contribute to a lack of understanding the Church’s traditions, practices, and teachings. – What you do not know you cannot pass on.
- Lack of ability of caregivers to teach their children and others about the Catholic Church or cannot afford Catholic School for their children.

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel • Keystone

Pastor: Rev. Mark Horn

Deacons: Chuck Loehr; Bob Ackerman

Strengths

- Welcoming parish to visitors and new commers
- Sense of community and family
- Good reputation
- Has financial strength and self-sufficiency.

Weakness

- Aging parishioners
- Very small parish
- There is a reluctance to change.
- Divided parish with different persuasions

Possible Opportunities

- Availability of the parish and church to visitors and tourist
- Close to other services

Possible Threats

- Small town and community with limited growth
- Declining population – especially young families and children
- Declining ministry support

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

Saint Rose of Lima • Hill City

Pastor: Rev. Mark Horn

Deacons: Chuck Loehr; Bob Ackerman

Strengths

- Great parish leadership from clergy and laity
- A pool of retired parishioners with numerous skills
- The parish is a welcoming church.
- Good condition of property and debt free
- Near Rapid City

Weakness

- The parish is divided based on language.
- Unengaged and committed young families to the parish.
- Lots of demands place on pastor.
- A reluctance to change – large support for the status quo.
- Declining youth formation programs and activities
- Declining Mass attendance especially after Covid 19

Possible Opportunities

- Taking advantage of the growing population to support parish growth.
- Many members have influence within the community – capitalize on this influence to reach out to the community at large.

Possible Threats

- Strong emphasis on sports and other secular activities – making choices between recreation and spiritually center activities (e.g., Mass, faith formation, etc.)
- Competition for members by other denominations

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

St. John the Baptist • Custer

Pastor: Rev. Collins Igwilo

Deacon: Pat Coy

Strengths

- Parish is in a high traffic zone and neighborhood.
- A pool of retired parishioners with numerous skills
- A strong source of seasonal donations
- A self-sufficient attitude by the parishioners
- Rich and lengthy history
- Capacity to accept new members.

Weakness

- The parish membership is declining due to a lack of young families and children.
- A “welcoming process” is lacking. Parish does not do well in welcoming or inviting members.
- The current volunteers work very hard. Possible burn out.
- Antiquated technology
- Lack of full-time pastor

Possible Opportunities

- Taking advantage of the growing population to support parish growth.
- Taking advantage of technology – social media, internet, etc.
- Parish show host more community events.

Possible Threats

- Small town with a growing older population – no opportunities for younger families and people
- Declining young population
- Competition among churches for membership
- Potential loss of staff

Parish SWOT Analysis

March 18, 2023

St. Isaac Jogues • Rapid City

Pastor: Rev. Ed Witt, SJ

Deacon: Lou Usera

Strengths

- Parish has a sense of being a family.
- Is a welcoming parish.
- Stable membership
- Stable donation base with some external support
- Has a mission statement which includes serving the Native community.
- Great leadership and staff
- A strong link with Lakota spirituality and cultural traditions

Weakness

- The parish has a lack of young families and children.
- The parish is in a low traffic area away from residences.
- There is a high decline in elders due to death (Covid-19, cancer, etc.)
- Struggle for volunteers for different ministries – parish council, servers, lectors, etc.
- There is a reluctance to change and challenge the status quo.
- There is a self-serving attitude among some members.

Possible Opportunities

- Taking advantage Oglala Lakota College for evangelization and collaboration.
- Having Mass at different times
- Taking advantage of technology – social media, internet, etc.
- Increase community outreach especially getting involved in more Native events.

Possible Threats

- Competition among churches for membership
- Declining young members
- Issues (high crime area) in the neighborhood keep people away from the Church
- Conflict with sports and other recreational activities on Sunday
- A steady and reliable income to support parish.