

Timeline for the Diocese of Helena pastoral planning process

2005



- Approximately a year after being installed as Bishop of Helena on June 4, 2004, Bishop George Leo Thomas announced plans for a new Diocesan Pastoral Council and pastoral planning.
- **Effective June 1, 2005**, Sister Rita McGinnis, SCL, was appointed director of pastoral planning for the diocese.
- **On Sept. 23**, Bishop Thomas met for the first time with the Diocesan Pastoral Council he had appointed. He and Sister McGinnis both addressed the council, whose mandate was to set a course leading to a diocesan pastoral plan.
- **In its Oct. 21 issue**, *The Montana Catholic* newspaper began profiles of the DPC's 25 members.

2006



- **In January and early February 2006**, the parish preparation process was launched. It included a meeting in each parish, in which members reflected on their parish's needs and future, and what the diocese can do to support parish ministries. More than 1,400 people participated throughout the diocese.
- **Beginning Feb. 12** in Bigfork, regional listening sessions were held. Other sessions were March 5 in Browning; March 12 for the St. Ignatius area; March 14 at St. Anthony's Parish in Missoula; March 16 at St. Helena Cathedral; March 19 at St. Ann's in Butte; March 22 at Holy Rosary, Bozeman, and March 26 at St. Michael's in Conrad.
- **The DPC met April 7-8** to sort and study information gathered through the listening sessions.
- **On June 9-10**, the council met to form work groups, which then focused on five themes identified from the listening sessions: quality pastoral care in parishes, formation, resource management, outreach and communication.
- **On Oct. 6-7**, Bishop Thomas and the DPC began reviewing a preliminary planning document.

2007



- **On Jan. 31, 2007**, the Presbyteral Council formed ad hoc committees to consider each of the nine points of the plan document and how to act upon the plan's recommendations.
 - **On Feb. 2** Bishop Thomas issued a letter of promulgation for "Come to the Light – Vision, Priorities and Goals for the Diocese of Helena for the Years 2007-2012."
 - **In March**, Bishop Thomas announced that Doug Tooke had accepted the position of Youth and Young Adult Minister for the diocese and that Mark Frei had accepted the position of Director of Pastoral Services for the diocese.
 - **On April 16**, the priests and pastoral administrators of the diocese were presented with advance copies of the plan and met in small groups to offer their insights on how the major themes might be addressed.
 - **In June**, Bishop Thomas announced that Bernie Hewitt had accepted the position of Director of Development Services for the diocese.
- The "Come to the Light" document was distributed throughout the diocese, both in print and via the Web site.
- **Early in 2008**, the Diocesan Pastoral Council will meet to gauge implementation of the pastoral plan. They will meet every year thereafter through 2012.