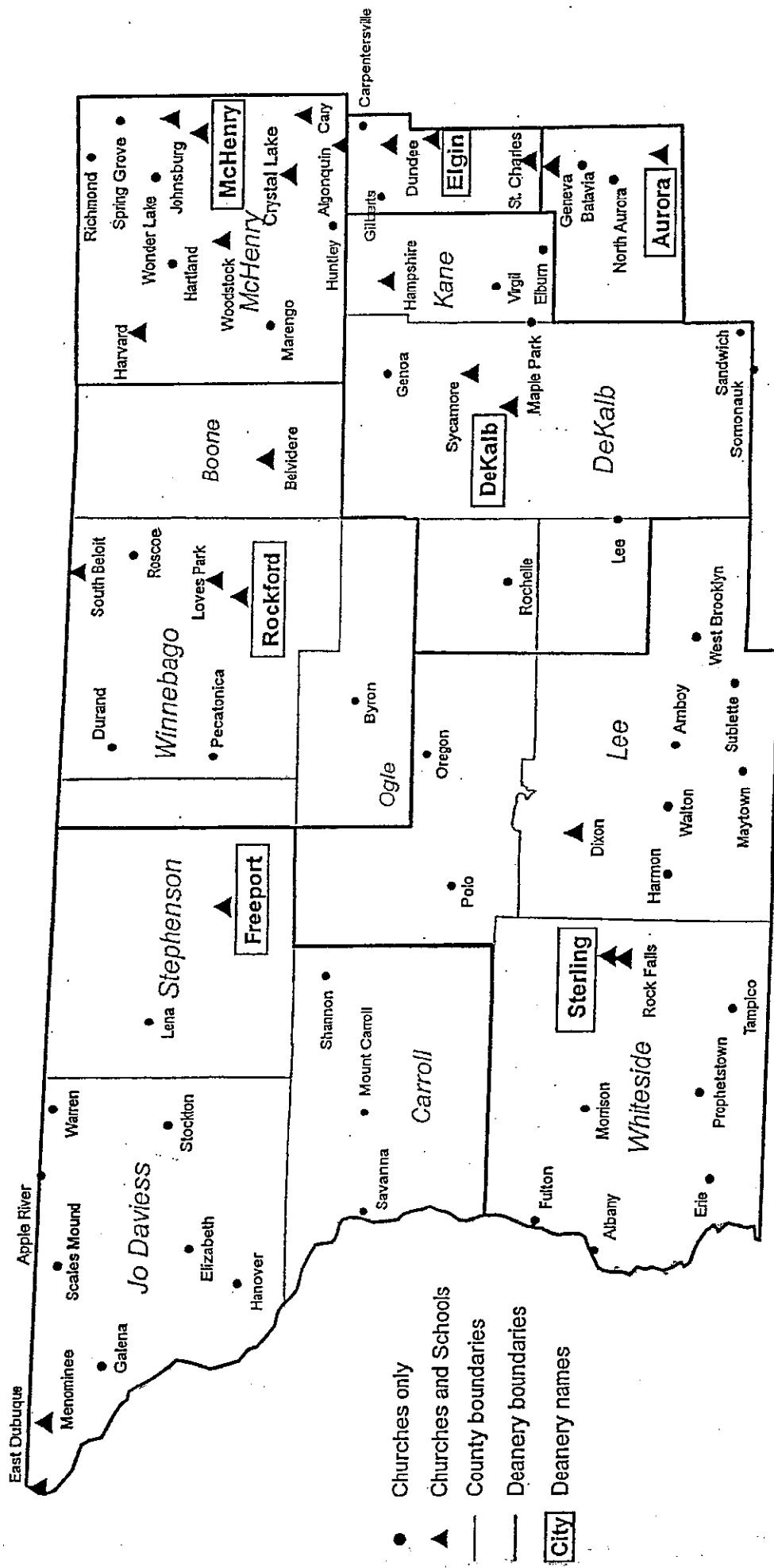


SECTION 1

DIOCESAN STRUCTURE

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The Catholic Diocese of Rockford



DIOCESAN MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

OUR MISSION

We, the People of the Catholic Diocese of Rockford, are called by the Father through baptism to be the new People of God. United in faith and relying on the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, we have access to the redeeming love of Jesus, the Christ, and are called to share in his mission to proclaim the Reign of God in Word, Sacrament and Service.

OUR VISION

We, the Diocese of Rockford, are a community of Catholic believers in 11 Northern Illinois counties. Blessed with great cultural and ethnic diversity and representing a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, we share a bond of faith in Jesus Christ.

We are called in baptism through the Church to be light and salt to a world in need of hope. We are commissioned by Jesus to go out and bear fruit in his name that all may have life and have it in abundance.

We are a pilgrim people who together are constantly drawn to conversion of heart and the transformation of human structures. Thus, our lives become a social, intellectual, moral and spiritual passage toward the fullness of Life: Jesus Christ, without whom religious activity becomes meaningless.

Our mission, then, is integral evangelization: to proclaim the Good News of salvation in word and deed, putting ourselves at God's service in turning human hearts, attitudes, values and structures to the Reign of God.

We affirm His Reign wherever human beings consciously strive to live the ideal of the Gospel in concert with Jesus, and we commit ourselves to seeking the fullness of His Reign.

As an evangelizing people set on God's Reign, we affirm the primary values of justice, freedom and truth as we work to enjoy the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy and peace.

Set as we are, on a journey of faith as the People of the Diocese of Rockford, we take upon ourselves the Gospel call to ever simplify our lives and structures so that Jesus the Lord is always visible and central to our vision.

In an age and place where the gift of individuality often grows into the curse of individualism, leaving people uprooted, we affirm the special grace of small intentional communities, where the Christian life can be lived on a deep level of faith-sharing, prayer and commitment to action.

We are a sacramental people who proclaim and bear witness to the truth that God's grace permeates all of life, human and divine, and we work to draw all Creation to God's Reign.

We are a consecrated people who proclaim and bear witness to the truth that God's grace permeates all of life, human and divine, and we work to draw all Creation to God's Reign.

We are a consecrated people who, united with our shepherd, the Bishop of Rockford, make up a spiritual family whose faith is nourished by the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Eucharist. Our pilgrim journey begins in the human family where the love of God is first revealed. Growing in grace, we come to realize that our lives and our destiny are also rooted in the larger families of parish, diocese, Universal Church and, indeed, the whole human community.

As the Diocesan Church, we participate in the mission of the Universal Church, Christ's own mission: "Christ was sent by the Father >to bring good news to the poor...to heal the contrite of heart= (Lk. 4:18), >to seek and to save what was lost= (Lk. 19:10)@ [Documents of Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, #8].

March 25, 1988

VISION FOR CATECHESIS IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reflects the insights of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Catechesi Tradendae* when it states that catechesis is

“the totality of the Church’s efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ” (#4).

More specifically, the *Catechism* goes on to say that catechesis

“is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life” (#5).

The Diocese of Rockford, guided by its chief teacher in the person of its Bishop, embraces these concepts which reflect our tradition from the very first days of the Church which have been continually re-articulated and re-emphasized by the Magisterium in its efforts to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. In response to the needs of the people of the Rockford Diocese, diocesan Catechetical Leaders in concert with Bishop Thomas Doran look to several key catechetical resources in shaping a vision for catechesis: the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2nd edition, (1994), the *General Directory for Catechesis* from the Vatican (1997), the *National Directory for Catechesis* (2005), *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States* (1999) and *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (1997) from the US Bishops.

The diocesan vision for catechesis believes that faith formation for parishioners of all ages should be guided and directed by the following theological and pastoral principles:

Catechesis Is Christ-centered – The heart of catechesis is Christ. To catechize is to reveal in the person of Jesus Christ the whole of God’s plan fulfilled in Him. Christ is the mediator and fullness of God’s revelation. The object of catechesis is to put people in intimate communion with Christ who is the way, the truth and the life and leads us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and makes us share in the life of the Holy Trinity (CCC 426-427, GDC 36-41, NDC 19B, OHWB 7-11, RV 10).

Catechesis Is Evangelizing – Catechesis is understood to be an essential moment in the process of evangelization. The Church exists in order to evangelize; it is Her deepest identity. Evangelizing catechesis aspires to foster a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith (GDC 63-66, NDC 15-17, OHWB 45-63, RV 36-37).

Catechesis Is Systematic and Comprehensive – Catechesis must be systematic and comprehensive such that a person receives knowledge of the entire content of the faith, especially: the creed, the liturgy and the sacraments, moral formation, prayer, community life and the mission of the Church (GDC 85-87, NDC 20, OHWB 88-96, CCC 5, RV 19-20).

Catechesis Is Modeled on the Catechumenate – Catechesis is more than instruction. It offers a complete initiation into a life of discipleship, which serves as an apprenticeship for the entire Christian life (GDC 29, 65-69, NDC 19D-20, 29H, 35 D, OHWB 81).

Catechesis Interprets and Illuminates Human Experience – Experience is a necessary medium of God’s revelation, and so, the catechist must assist the faithful in learning to interpret and illuminate their experience with the data of faith (GDC 152, NDC 29A, OHWB 82-83).

Catechesis Inculturates the Gospel Message – It is necessary to inculturate catechesis in such a fashion that the Gospel message retains its power and efficacy and resonates with the people to whom it is addressed (GDC 112, 202-206; NDC 21C, 25 F, OHWB 84-87).

Catechesis Is Lifelong – Catechesis of adults is a priority: it is the principal form of catechesis, the organizing principle and axis around which all other catechetical programs revolve (NDC 48A, GDC 59, 275, OHWB 38-44, 129, RV 28-33).

Catechesis Is the Responsibility of the Entire Parish - The Church is the natural environment for growth in the faith, i.e. the origin, locus and goal of catechesis, which necessitates that all parishioners have a role to play in the formation of its members. In this sense, the entire parish is responsible for catechesis and acts as the curriculum (NDC 19C, 29 B, C; GDC 158; OHWB 118-121, RV 11-15).

Catechesis Respects Human Dignity – All catechetical efforts must recognize, reveal and respect the inviolable dignity of every human person which is rooted in each person’s creation in God’s image and likeness (GDC 19, NDC 41).

Catechesis Necessitates Ongoing Catechist Formation – The call to ministry of catechist is a vocation, involving an interior call to serve as mediator, witness, teacher and educator for the mysteries of the faith. This role demands ongoing formation in doctrine, resources and methods for presenting the faith (GDC 156, 238-245; NDC 54B, 55, 29E, OHWB 149-153, RV 40-42).

With God’s blessing and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Catechetical Leaders and catechists throughout the Diocese of Rockford embrace these principles in such a fashion so as to revitalize catechesis, and in doing so, transform believers into disciples of Jesus Christ.

09/06

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE ROCKFORD DIOCESE CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

The Catholic Education Office, under the Chief Teacher for the Diocese of Rockford:

- Leads through service.
- Promotes faith development.
- Fosters excellence in education.
- Facilitates reconciliation and healing within the educational community.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE ROCKFORD DIOCESE DEANERY OFFICES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Deanery Office of Religious Education under the direction of the Dean:

- Encourages and provides catechist formation for catechists in the deanery.
- Mentors and supports all Catechetical Leaders within the deanery.
- Informs Pastors in the deanery about catechetical needs and issues.
- Serves as liaison between the deanery and the diocese as a member of the Catechetical Council, which provides ongoing collaboration with the Catholic Education Office.

DEVELOPING A MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Catechetical Leader recognizes that the mission of the Religious Education Program must be consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church, the Diocese and the Parish. Therefore, when developing a program mission statement it is important to insure that the focus is rooted in the Gospel, the basic teachings of the Catholic Faith, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and guidelines from appropriate and relevant Church documents.

Specifically, a Parish Religious Education mission statement distinguishes the Religious Education Program from other parish activities, making clear what is unique about it. This mission statement should say whom the program is for, what it does, what it stands for and why it is done. An effective mission statement is best developed with input from all those who are involved in the Religious Education Program for the parish.

A mission statement must answer these specific questions:

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?

Tips for writing a great mission statement:

- Keep it short (3-4 sentences long).
- Describe why people will enroll in your program.
- Define your program clearly.
- Define your ideal participant.
- Clarify the benefits you offer the participant.