

Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls
Office of the Bishop

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June 26, 2024
Wednesday of the Twelfth Week in Ordinary Time

Reverend Richard Fox
Our Lady of Grace Pastorate
417 S Elm Street
Kimball, SD 57355

Dear Father Fox,

Thank you for your prayers, sacrifices and engagement in Set Ablaze. May God bless you and those who participated in your Set Ablaze pastorate pastoral planning! I appreciate how your 2024 Pastoral Planning Proposal Outline details from your perspective: "Where We Are; Where We Want to Go; Our Roadmap for Getting There; and How We Will Know We are Succeeding." Recognizing good pastoral planning requires a lot of prayer and hard work, please know of my gratitude for your labors of love for the souls in your pastorate, the diocese and others.

I am grateful for the ways your pastorate plan strives to accomplish the four aims of Set Ablaze. It will be important to regularly remind your staff, clergy, lay leaders and parishioners of these four aims:

- To prioritize and align our resources, gifts and talents, clergy, and energy towards a focused, sustained and intentional effort to build a culture of *Lifelong Catholic Missionary Discipleship Through God's Love*.
- To maximize the complementarity of Priestly gifts to best advance our diocesan vision
- To scale resources so that each pastorate may be appropriately staffed and equipped for this effort
- To promote the proper Co-Responsibility of the Lay Faithful in the Church's mission.

Your 2024 Pastoral Planning Proposal is extraordinary! You, your planning team and all who assisted receive high accolades. Your aspirational goals, process, documentation and inclusion of both Native American and Hispanic ministries in your areas was so inspiring. I am edified by your acknowledgment that "Despite the forewarned heavy-lifting of this laborious task, we all experienced abundant life and a divine light in it, which now shines brightly upon a future full of hope for our pastorate, diocese, and all of our Church in this Apostolic Age." This brings great joy to me knowing it was so fruitful for you. May God continue His great work through all you and bring great spiritual renewal to everyone in your pastorate.

I appreciated how your plan captured the desire we all have, "to be known/loved and feel connected/belonging to the church community." It highlights the importance of relationships with God and others. I was pleased to hear that you aspire to have a pastorate liturgical coordinator so the clergy can focus on the spiritual, pastoral, educational and liturgical dimensions of your holy calling as priests and deacons.

The Discipleship and Evangelization section focusing on youth formation and engagement, adult education, parish missions and retreats, mass attendance and mission trips is exciting to think about. I like how your plan moves from entrance into friendship with God through the spiritual life, to Discipleship and Evangelization flowing into service from young to old, especially tending to the homebound as it is so important. I am delighted to hear you are reaching out to start a St. Vincent De Paul Society in your pastorate. This is a good example of not duplicating what someone else has already developed, but rather collaborating with what is already “up and running” as you attend to the Catholic Corporal Works of Mercy.

I appreciate you highlighting the need for a youth director and communication director to assist in your important efforts as the communications plan looks robust and well developed. Your leadership team development looks extremely good. I like how you used best practice meeting structures and processes and included a yearly spiritual retreat with your team.

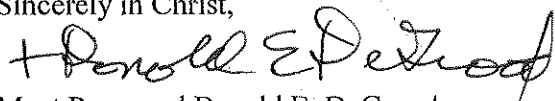
The aspirational goals for the implementation of fruitful discipleship/catechetical and sacramental prep intrigue me. The aspired roadmap for catechesis, each sacrament, vocations and RCIA is superb. I am very impressed and pleased with the great work God has been doing in all of you and look forward to hearing as the years go by the good fruits from the labors of your prayers and aspirational goal development, implementation and measuring of fruitfulness.

It delights me to inform you that I approve of your 2024 Pastoral Planning Proposal aspirational goals and first year efforts. Congratulations! It is my confidence in God, you and those who actively engaged in prayer, discernment and pastoral planning that inspired me to grant my approval. As you implement your 2024 aspirational goals, I look forward to learning how the four aims of Set Ablaze are implemented in your pastorate. This is why good measurements of success, flexibility to adjust as you go through your first year, annual review of goals and setting the following year's goals are really important. The goal measurements allow for tangible data to offer objective encouragement for you, your clergy, staff, lay leaders, and parishioners. It also is helpful to learn what has worked well, what needs to be adjusted or changed so God can continue to do great things through all of you. Lastly, it is a great way for all of us to be reminded of God's faithfulness, blessings and desires to provide for us.

I look forward to meeting with you to hear how you are doing, learn how I or others might best serve you, your clergy, leadership team, staff and parishioners. If there is anything you would like to talk about during our meeting, please know I am happy to do that. I have asked Melinda to reach out to you to schedule a time for us to meet.

As you put into motion your first-year aspirational goals, my hope and prayer is that God will stir into flame a deep desire for holiness of souls in your pastorate as you strive to implement the goals of Set Ablaze. Know of my prayers and best wishes for great spiritual flourishing in your pastorate now and into the future.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood
Bishop of Sioux Falls