

# *Space crunch experienced at diocesan Catholic Pastoral Centre*

**By Kiply Lukan Yaworski**

Nestled behind St. Paul's Cathedral at the intersection of 5th Ave. and 22 St. in downtown Saskatoon, the Catholic Pastoral Centre has been the central location for planning and implementing many diocesan programs and ministries over the past 50 years.

Since the building was constructed, however, the diocese has grown both geographically and in population, with more lay people involved in ministry and leadership, and a dramatic increase in the number of programs offered.

As a result, space in the Catholic Pastoral Centre is becoming increasingly inadequate, said Ed Deis, financial officer for the diocese.

"Upstairs on the first and second floor we have 12 offices. Most of them are small and some are occupied by more than one person. We have the remaining staff using cubicles: it's noisy, and cramped. We have three other staff that are actually located elsewhere because there is no room here, which creates some major problems in communication," he described.

"We have other people that work out of their homes and come in occasionally, but who would be here if there was sufficient office space," Deis explained.

The existing building is not wheelchair accessible, and parking in the downtown core creates ongoing challenges, he added.

"Right now the Resource Library is located in the basement – which is really not the best place for a library. The basement is not the best place to work, either, without windows and with poor air quality. And we've spent the last 20-some years fighting a water problem down there. We have two sump pumps going steady during the summer time," Deis said, adding that in addition to the library, the basement includes two other offices.

Plans for a new Catholic Pastoral Centre at Holy Family Cathedral in northeast Saskatoon do not call for an increase in total square footage, but provide for a much more efficient use of space, said Deis, noting that the new diocesan centre will be on one level, with elevator access. Twenty-five offices are planned, most about 10 by 12 feet in size, he said. "It's nothing fancy, but the space is much more effectively utilized."

Plans for the new Catholic centre will also include a kitchen and staff room – the existing building does not have a workable kitchen space at the moment, Deis noted. Sharing space and meeting rooms with Holy Family parish will also provide “considerable synergy,” with the parish needing space mostly at night, and the Catholic Centre during the day, he said.

Making the diocesan Resource Library of faith development and enrichment materials more accessible to the public – including those with mobility issues who can’t manage the existing stairs, or in terms of better parking – would be a great improvement, said librarian Fran Turner. “Plans call for the library to be located adjacent to the reception area, so it would be easier for people to just step in and browse, when waiting for an appointment or stopping by for other business,” she added.

The new Catholic Centre will also include space for the diocesan archives, which are now stored off site at both Ogle Hall on the university campus and in a storage room at St. Paul’s rectory – both of which provide less-than ideal conditions for archive storage, Deis said.

Margaret Sanche, who works part time as diocesan archivist, noted that preservation of diocesan archives is a requirement of canon law. Including environmentally-controlled space for these historic records and materials in a new Catholic Pastoral Centre is a matter of good stewardship, she said, adding that plans for the sale of Ogle Hall mean that a new location will be needed for the archives in any case.

The vision behind the construction of a new Catholic Pastoral Centre is all about adequately serving a growing Catholic population across the diocese, said Leah Perrault, director of pastoral services for the diocese.

“Staff at the Catholic Centre are providing administrative supports and resources to parishes that often go unseen,” she said. “But these are services that are definitely needed now - and others will be needed in the future.”

That vision of providing for growth and outreach into the future is really the motivation for the entire project, Perrault said.

“Living and working in five dioceses has confirmed for me that we are incredibly blessed in the diocese of Saskatoon to have such diverse and substantial diocesan programs and services,” she said. “We’re trying to continue to build a diocesan church that really does take seriously the voice of every member, that really is trying to provide services and resources that meet the needs of every parish, every community, every region of the diocese.”

This building project is really about the people and programs in the diocese, she said, pointing out that adequate space is necessary for the people and the programs to operate.

“You have to put brick and stone to that vision if you are to have a presence in our world,” Perrault said. “Spirituality needs a presence. We are an embodied spiritual people and our building makes a statement about our presence in the community... A homeless family is not going to maintain a state of health for very long. Likewise, our diocesan family has grown to the point of needing a new home.”

The challenge of building for the future can be embraced with hope and optimism, Perrault asserted. “This is a time of new birth and beginning. It’s not a time of old age or decline. That’s exciting.”

## What’s at the Catholic Pastoral Centre?

- **Office of the Bishop** - The bishop is shepherd to a Catholic population of about 90,000 people, coordinating pastoral services to 99 parishes and faith communities.

(See a diocesan map at: [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/pages/diocesan\\_map.cfm](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/pages/diocesan_map.cfm)).

The bishop’s office works in collaboration with the Council of Priests and a Diocesan Pastoral Council which has representation from all of the deaneries across the diocese; while connecting the local church to the church universal through the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops (CCCB); working with many Catholic institutions, organizations and groups, including religious orders, Catholic health care providers, Catholic schools and colleges. The bishop oversees the ministries within the Catholic Pastoral Centre, as well as the Chancery Office.

## Pastoral Services

- **The Director of Pastoral Services** directs the pastoral ministry programs and services offered by the diocese, including:

- **Foundations** - an adult religious education program to form and renew the faith of adults throughout the diocese of Saskatoon. Speakers and courses are offered on a wide range of topics, organized and provided upon request from the local parish. A new program, Theology Uncorked, was also recently introduced, providing information and discussion on topics in a relaxed setting.

- **Home Religion Program** - a religious correspondence course offered through the Catholic Centre, available to families in the rural areas of the diocese, as well as to families who are unable to have their children attend Catholic schools.

- **Rural Catechetics** - a team of resource people providing support and enrichment for the religious education of elementary grade students in parishes across the diocese; helping volunteer catechists in the parishes grow in spirituality, teaching skills and community; providing resources and sacramental programs that invite parish and parental involvement. Coordinated from the Catholic Centre, the Rural Catechetics team includes resource persons who live and work in different parts of the diocese.
- **Youth Ministry** - helping parish communities and parents to act as leaders in supporting the faith development of youth; providing resources to parishes and youth leaders across the diocese upon request; coordinating a Diocesan Youth Retreat Team; organizing Diocesan Youth Events; working with other organizations providing youth ministry in the Catholic community, collaborating on efforts such as Theology on Tap, which reach out to young adults, and acting as a liaison to groups such as the Rock the Mount planning committee; St. Thomas More College; St. Therese Catholic College; Catholic Christian Outreach, etc.
- **Vocations Office** - supports the work of the **Vocation Commission** in promoting general vocation awareness and in discernment for young men and women open to God's call to priesthood or religious life. Workshops, talks, seminars and prayer gatherings are available through the office.
- **Scripture Resources and Small Christian Communities** - provides Bible study materials and faith sharing resources and support to parishes, to small groups and to individuals. A weekly reflection for small group discussion of the Sunday readings is regularly posted on the diocesan website through this office.
- **Justice and Peace** - collaborates with many groups providing services and engaged in ongoing efforts to bring about the Kingdom of God, to reach out to the poor and marginalized, and to address unjust systems and situations. The diocesan Office of Justice and Peace regularly connects with a wide range of ecumenical and community groups, as well as supporting diocesan efforts such as a **Rural Advocacy Committee**, and the justice and peace efforts within local parishes. The office also works to build awareness of justice and peace issues by publishing backgrounders, highlighting a saint of the month, and organizing events such as the ecumenical Way of the Cross through downtown Saskatoon and a multi-faith Peace Vigil on New Year's Eve.
- **Restorative Justice (Prison Ministry)** - works to provide and coordinate Roman Catholic outreach and ministry at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre; spending time with prisoners and their families; connecting with parishes about reaching out to prisoners in various ways (prayer intentions, donations of needed items, organizing volunteers to assist with ministry, liturgy and outreach at the prison, etc.); and working to raise awareness of issues surrounding the prison system and restorative justice.

- **Hospital Chaplaincy** - works to provide and coordinate Roman Catholic outreach and ministry at the publicly-run hospitals in the city of Saskatoon (City Hospital and Royal University Hospital), connecting with priest chaplains, coordinating and nurturing pastoral care volunteers from parishes, and providing a liaison between Catholic pastoral care services and hospital staff and administration.
- **Lay Formation** - provides a comprehensive educational and faith formation opportunity for lay people, exploring scripture, morality, liturgy, social justice, theology, spirituality and community. Participants meet at Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre for one weekend a month from September to June over two years, growing in knowledge, in their prayer life, and in their experience of Christian community. Since the program began 21 years ago, more than 600 people from across the diocese have participated. In recent years, the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon has worked in collaboration with the Roman Catholic diocese in offering the program. This year a third stream of lay formation began – **Aboriginal Catholic Lay Formation** – addressing the formation needs and spirituality of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. A joint effort of three dioceses (Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Keewatin-Le Pas) the Aboriginal program is coordinated out of the Catholic Pastoral Centre.
- **Ministry Development** - coordinates and develops ministry training across the diocese and fosters a collaborative relationship between the lay and ordained as they minister together. Courses, workshops and resources are provided to parishes and deaneries upon request from the parish or the deanery.
- **Office of Marriage and Family Life** - is a resource for groups that offer marriage preparation and enrichment, such as Muenster Engaged Encounter, Worldwide Marriage Encounter, local parishes, and the diocesan **Marriage Task Force**. The office supports troubled marriages through Retrouvaille. Ministry is nurtured to those who are separated and divorced through New Beginnings, Transitions and on-going education to the parishes.
- **Resource Library** - offers a wide variety of books, periodicals and audio-visual resources related to faith, liturgy, catechesis, family life, etc. The library provides resources and materials designed to enrich, educate and equip the faith of individuals and to support the evangelizing efforts of parishes, groups, catechists, teachers and parents.
- **Communications** - publicizes events, issues and initiatives in the Catholic community, through Diocesan Newsletters, Foundations mini-newsletters, regular reports submitted to the Prairie Messenger, the diocesan website, production of promotional materials, and connection with other media outlets.
- **Catholic Pastoral Centre** staff also provide support, input and resources to a number of other commissions and initiatives within the diocese, including:

- **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**
- **Liturgy Commission** (and Diocesan Choir)
- **Diocesan Mission Office** (including the Brazil Mission Awareness Committee)
- **Diocesan Ecumenical Commission** •
- **Deaf Ministry**
- **Spanish Ministry** •
- **Native Ministry**
- **Committee for Inclusive Catholic Communities** (outreach to those with disabilities)
- **Adult Education Opportunities Committee** •

## **The Chancery Office**

- **The Chancery Office** - oversees diocesan operations and includes the **Vicar General, the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Archives,** and the **Marriage Tribunal**, as well as secretarial and clerical support. In financial matters, the Chancery operates with guidance from the Diocesan Finance Committee and the Diocesan Building Committee.
- **Bishop's Annual Appeal** - an annual Appeal to raise funds for many of the ministries in the diocese and for organizations providing outreach and service in the community, founded in 1984 by Bishop James Mahoney (see report on Page 3 of the Newsletter for the 2007 Appeal disbursements).
- **Diocesan Development Office** - overseeing fundraising for major development projects, and planned giving.