

# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SUPERIOR

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February 2, 1988

Reverend and Dear Fathers:

I am enclosing, with this letter, a new Status Animarum Questionnaire (SAQ), which we will use to collect sacramental data and other important pastoral information on a calendar year basis (i.e., for the 12 month period ending December 31). This information will provide us with a fairly comprehensive profile of the sacramental services and pastoral practices in the parishes of the diocese.

As Diocesan Bishop, I am responsible for linking the Local Church to the Universal Church. This is done by always seeking unity of faith and service among ourselves and by remaining united to our Holy Father and the other local churches around the world. It is also done by evaluating our progress and by sharing information. As you know, I must report annually the sacramental and pastoral activities of the diocese to the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), Province of Milwaukee, National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), as well as the Vatican. Most importantly, however, I must be informed about these matters on an ongoing basis that I may more effectively govern and lead the diocese and provide for the vigorous growth and nourishment of the Faith while assuring that our planning and diocesan services are properly focused.

The new format of the SAQ, although quite comprehensive, asks only questions which are of basic importance to me and our diocesan staff. I know you, too, will find this information valuable in providing a more comprehensive profile of your parishes. There is much happening within our faith communities and we should carefully record it and take credit for it.

The new SAQ, although lengthier than prior reporting forms, should establish a data collection system, which will in the long run be more efficient and non-redundant for the following reasons:

1. Parishes will no longer be required to complete a listing of the names and information of parishioners who have received sacraments during a given year. This 40-year practice seems to be an unnecessary duplication of effort since all of us understand and appreciate the need for an importance of our parish registers and since the bishop or deans will inspect these records at the parish level annually.
2. The Official Catholic Directory staff has been instructed to discontinue mailing annual questionnaires for you to complete concerning your sacramental records. In the future, OCD forms will be sent directly to the Chancery and the Chancery staff will complete these parish forms for you.

3. Sacramental data are currently collected on a fiscal and calendar year basis. Beginning this year, sacramental data will be collected only on a calendar year basis so as to be congruent with the reporting requirements of the Universal Church.
4. After you have completed the SAQ and returned it to the Chancery, these data will be computerized and you will receive a computer printout of the data you have submitted.
5. Next year you will be asked to update the sacramental and other data for the following year (1988) rather than rewriting the responses on a new questionnaire.

You will note that some of the data requested reference the census data you have just completed. Parishes with computers should have little difficulty extracting this data from their computers. For the most part, parishes without computers probably have fewer parishioners and the hand counting of the census data sheets should not be too burdensome, especially if the enclosed instructions for census data tabulation are followed.

So that I may make my reports in a timely manner, I asked that you complete the SAQ and return it to the Chancery by March 1, 1988.

I know the many demands on your time, but I also know of your generosity and your spirit of cooperation. I thank you sincerely for the assistance you and your parish staff are giving me and our Local Church by the timely completion of this questionnaire.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Raphael M. Fliss  
Bishop of Superior

Enclosures