DIOCESAN LIFE CYCLE

MATURITY

Stable, Healthy Maturity

- Stability provides base for change, new ways, risk. Allows more choices about how to shape diocesan life
- A balance between stability and change
- Regular and reliable processes to reengage issues of formation -- "listening process."

Static Maturity

- Stuck in status quo; on a plateau
- Planning seen as way to control future (an illusion)
- Fussing over small things
- Not responding to new opportunities
- Losing sense of vision & purpose; identity is focused on the past
- If not addressed at the stage the system will in time decline

Improvement Process might involve redefining

FORMATION

- Organizational Redefining & Development Process
- Vision for and development of identity, purpose, mission, culture and related programs/activities
- New people Bishop, staff, clergy, lay leaders
- Increasing level of competence & commitment
- A "fit" between vision, program, resources, and culture. A sense of integration.
- Establishing relationships with external "publics" or constituencies that have a stake in the diocese



- The "Idea", the "Dream"
- Founder(s) first bishop, others
- Initial funding

- · Denial, avoiding, stress,
 - nostalgic climate Low or fragmented energy
 - "Fear-blame" cycle increasing

DISINTEGRATION

- Rigidity, numbness, defensiveness
- All "fear-blame" cycle
- No internal leadership able to facilitate development

Developmental interventions need to fit where the system is in the life cycle. Seek the maximum degree of inclusion, open information, free choice from options, and internal commitment that can be attained at that stage (the further into decline the less this is possible). Diocese's tend to have "reasons" to not engage the formation issues: In first formation - getting caught up in building projects or growth and not also spiritual formation. In Stable, Healthy Maturity - "we don't need it." In Static Maturity - embarrassment and denial. In Decline - denial, getting caught in trying to blame someone. As the system moves from Static to Decline to Disintegration there is more need for external assistance.

DEATH

DECLINE

Where are we in the life cycle?

The perspective in this model is to determine the position of the diocese in its life cycle by taking into account several factors:

- How well the diocese focuses on the church's mission and the diocese's primary task of shaping health and faithful parish churches.
- How healthy the diocese is in terms of spiritual practice, emotional intelligence, and leadership competence.
- How strong the diocese is in terms of institutional factors such as finances and property upkeep.

These elements are all interdependent. Strength or weakness in one will feed strength or weakness in the others.

The best starting place in making this assessment is to work with the descriptors in the diagram above.