

Working with Reformers in India: Using a Diocesan “Health Checkup”

Dioceses within a nation can vary significantly, depending on the bishop currently sitting there, local traditions and practices, ethnic characteristics, even the balance between rural and urban centers. The range of differences expands considerably when comparing dioceses in one nation with those in other nations. But despite such differences, dioceses share many common characteristics: ministries and responsibilities of bishops, clergy, and laity, governance responsibilities, catechesis, social justice, and so on, as well as desires for reform when Church practice falls short of what the faithful need.

The Diocesan Health Check project, launched by Catholic reformers in India who call their movement E-VAAC (Evangelizing for a more Alert and Aware Church), uses such common characteristics in a template designed to measure the effectiveness of diocese ministries. They have asked Voice of the Faithful to help distribute the Health Check in the U.S.

The Diocese Health Check aims to “grade” a diocese in three areas: the bishop as a pastor, the diocese in its functions, and the diocese in its ministries. Qualitative responses (the comments on each section) help round out the numerical grades assigned in each category.

By testing the Health Check in two nations, E-VAAC hopes to demonstrate its utility as a tool for all dioceses to measure their work year to year.

For those participating in the review, the Health Check can show which activities the diocese performs well and which activities need improvement. For reviewers comparing dioceses, it shows which dioceses demonstrate good governance and which ones fail to meet the needs of the faithful.

Equally critical, it demonstrates areas where the diocese has failed to support ministries that should be part of each diocese. E-VAAC hopes that shining the spotlight on dioceses with inadequate programs for youth, education, families, and others will encourage bishops to address the problem areas.

Consider measuring your own diocese using the Diocese Health Check. Use the Health Check instructions for details.