January 2017

Dear friends in Christ,

This document is the fruit of the Holy Spirit through the work of the people of God of the Diocese of Jackson. I want to thank the members of the Envisioning Team and all those who attended the 2016 Listening Sessions for giving their input. Going forward, I hope these priorities will take root and bear fruit for each of our communities and for our diocese as a whole.

Yours in Christ,

+ Bishop Joseph Kopacz

11th Bishop of the Diocese of Jackson

The mission of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson is to proclaim Jesus as Savior by living the Gospel, so that all people may experience the crucified and risen Lord.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.”

Matthew 25:35-36
Diocesan Pastoral Priorities
What we will develop and do over an 18-24 month time period, through 2019.

Create inviting and reconciling communities

Jesus proclaimed God’s mercy and love to all; the Church will be actively welcoming to all. Like Jesus, the Church calls all to continuously repent and be reconciled to God and one another so that they may know the unconditional love of Christ and the Church.

“Whoever is in Christ is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation.”

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

Each parish community will joyfully celebrate the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, as the source of reconciliation and unity. Ways to be more inviting will be explored to honor diversity, to overcome prejudices and racism and to reach out to the marginalized. Each community of faith will be active in creating a just social order.

Outcomes:

• The local parishes, in collaboration with the diocese, will be the instruments for reconciliation within the parish community and the community at large.

• Each parish will increase diverse parish community participation based on local demographics.

• Each parish will identify the divisions within the parish and implement a written plan for reconciliation.

Desired outcomes for your community:
Facilitate life-long formation of intentional disciples

Jesus continually calls us all to deepen our relationship with Him. Like Jesus, we will educate and form each person to become intentional disciples.

“And what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well.”

**2 Timothy 2:2**

We will nurture a deeper knowledge and understanding of who and why, and what we are called to be as Catholic disciples. Through that deeper personal relationship with God, neighbor and creation, we will go forth into the world to build the Kingdom of God.

**Outcomes:**

- Increase participation in youth faith formation
- Every parish will develop a plan for life-long adult faith formation
- Create a culture of vocations

**Desired outcomes for your community:**
Proclaim Jesus Christ and our Catholic faith

Being missionary disciples is central to who we are.

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Mt 28:19-20

As individuals, as parishes, and as a diocese, we will reach out to every corner of the diocese in different languages through the use of technology, electronic media, shared resources and any platform necessary to help all people remain faithful to the Gospel of Jesus and our Catholic faith.

Outcomes:

• Communicate and defend our Catholic faith
• Utilize shared resources

Desired outcomes for your community: